

# Winterham, long remembered as 'Dr. Payne's house'

By John T. Toler

## New regulations, public sentiment saved the historic home in the center of Haymarket

Winterham, a Victorian-era home at 15101 Washington Street in Haymarket, has stood by quietly as commercial development has taken place elsewhere on the 3.4-acre lot it occupies. In the 120-or-so years of its existence, the old house has witnessed a lot of change, especially during the last decade.

The site occupied by Winterham goes back to 1799 and the establishment of the Town of Haymarket, when the land at the corner of Washington and Fayette streets was designated as Lot 80. The first recorded owner was Thomas Fallup, who purchased the lot in 1801.

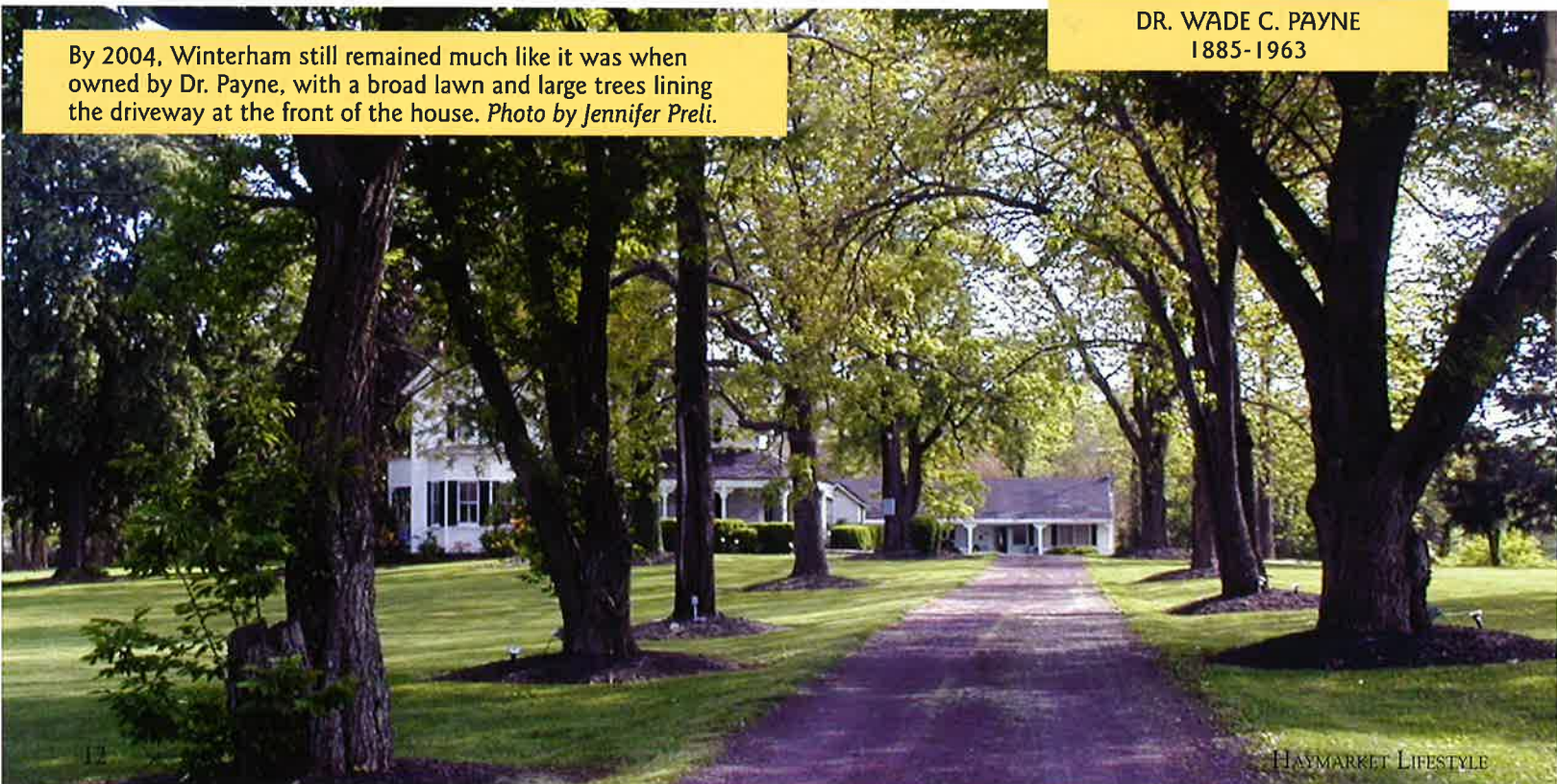
Lot 80 was later owned by Dr. Cyrus C. Marsteller, who built a large brick home on the property, likely on the site of the existing house. Dr. Marsteller and his wife Eliza raised their seven children, while adding to his land holdings in Haymarket.



DR. WADE C. PAYNE  
1885-1963

*winterham continued on page 14*

By 2004, Winterham still remained much like it was when owned by Dr. Payne, with a broad lawn and large trees lining the driveway at the front of the house. *Photo by Jennifer Preli.*



winterham continued from page 12

In 1849, Dr. Marsteller sold his property – by then consisting of four town lots (80, 81, 88 and 89), and additional land in Haymarket, totaling 24½ acres – to Thomas A. Smith.

Unfortunately, the house was destroyed when Union troops burned Haymarket in November 1862. In 1870, Mr. Smith sold the land to James A. Pattie for \$980; it was sold again in late 1876 to David R. and Elizabeth R. Meade, who also owned Beale's Mill near Haymarket.

The next owner was William Sheid, a construction company owner from Washington, D.C., who purchased the property from the Meades in March 1890. Mr. Sheid wanted a summer home where his family could escape the heat and diseases of the city, and with the fresh country air and convenience of the nearby railway station, Haymarket was a good choice.

Work started immediately on the



Mrs. Muriel Gilbertson owned Winterham from 1972 until 1994. During that time, the property was surveyed and photographed by architectural historian Frances Jones. The home was ornately furnished, as shown in this photo of the east parlor. Courtesy of RELIC.

house, which was built by Mr. Sheid's construction crew, assisted by George William Shirley of Waterfall, a noted local builder.

In April 1893, Mr. Sheid sold the house and 24½ acres to J. B. and Mary Harrison Smith for \$1,000, appar-

ently taking a large loss. After about four years, the property was sold again, this time to a widow, Mrs. William H. "Nannie" Selden, of Washington, D.C. for \$2,300 in cash.

It was Mrs. Selden who named the property "Winterham." She died in October 1913 in Roanoke, and in her will, designated that Helen E. Shoemaker inherit the house and everything in it.

Miss Shoemaker held on to Winterham until October 1917, when the property was sold by special court order to Dr. Wade Cleveland Payne (1885-1963) and his wife Roberta Boxley Payne (1885-1947). They paid \$8,000 for the house and 24½ acres, and were issued a Special Warranty Deed.

## Remembering Dr. Wade C. Payne

Dr. Payne had earned his M.D. degree from the University of Virginia in 1907, and came to the Haymarket area in 1912. At the time, Dr. William Rod-

ham Tulloss was also practicing medicine in Haymarket, but he was gone by 1915, leaving Dr. Payne the only doctor between Warrenton and Manassas.

For the next four decades, Dr. Payne provided medical care for generations of Prince William County resi-

dents at his office at Winterham, and on thousands of house calls.

Dr. and Mrs. Payne had three children while living in Haymarket: Wade C. Jr. (died c. 1990), who was married to Ann Carmines (1924-1955); Roberta (1918-1961), who married long-time Haymarket Postmaster Charles R. Jordan; and Stuart Boxley (1927-1951).

In 1912, Dr. Payne became a member of Hay Market Masonic Lodge No. 313, A.F. & A.M., an affiliation he enjoyed for the rest of his life. An officer of the Hay Market Lodge for many years, he served as Master in 1925, 1935 and 1942, and as Deputy Grand Master of the 58<sup>th</sup> Masonic District in 1938.

During World War I, Dr. Payne was a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical corps, and was sent to France during that conflict. After completing his military service, he returned to Haymarket to continue his medical practice.

Soon becoming involved in civic affairs, Dr. Payne served on the Haymarket Town Council, and was the first president of the Gainesville District Volunteer Fire Department. He was also active with the Gainesville-Haymarket Ruritan Club, as well as a member and vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Dr. Payne was also the president of the Bank of Haymarket, which opened in 1921, but closed in 1933 during the Great Depression.

Throughout his long career as Haymarket's physician, Dr. Payne is remembered as the archetypical country doctor – compassionate, knowledgeable and available. "Dr. Payne not only had office hours, he made house calls," according to the late Louise Lightner Jamison. "He came out with his little black bag in all kinds of weather, day or night. He delivered all the children in our family. My sister, Charlotte Payne Lightner, was named for him."

Sadly, Dr. Payne was on a rare vacation when little George Lightner suffered appendicitis, and before he

winterham continued on page 16



winterham continued from page 14

could get treatment his appendix ruptured, and he died. "We always felt that if we could have gotten George to Dr. Payne, he could have saved him," recalled his sister, Helen Lightner Ray of Haymarket.

Indeed, getting around during the early years of Dr. Payne's practice was often difficult. Brownie Bass Tullous, a beloved citizen of Haymarket for many years, came to town in 1912, the same year as Dr. Payne. In a newspaper account published in 1953, she noted that,

"One of the greatest improvements (in the Haymarket area) is the good road system we have. The younger generation cannot realize what this means when they have not known what bad roads were, but to Dr. Payne and our faithful mail carrier J. W. Garrett, and all of us 'horse and buggy folks,' good roads mean everything."

Mrs. Charles Gardner, of Haymarket, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Pickett, knew Dr. Payne well. She was born on March 14, 1931 at the family home, delivered by Dr. Payne, "In the first bedroom on the left in the house at Waterfall."

When Mrs. Gardner was just two years old, her mother was stricken with appendicitis, and before she could be taken to the hospital in Warrenton, her appendix burst, putting her in critical condition.

"The hospital called my grandmother (Mrs. "Allie" Gossom), and told her to bring me to the hospital, because they didn't think my mother would make it through the night," she recalled. "Dr. Payne came to the hospital and sat up with her all night, giving her bourbon or whiskey or something – that's all they had in those days – and she survived and lived into her 90s. I give Dr. Payne credit for saving her life."

When she was older, Mrs. Gardner visited Dr. Payne's office on the first floor of the house at Winterham. "You went in through a side door, and there was a waiting room with a couple of chairs, and just one examining room,"

she recalled. "He had the dullest needles. I used to hate to get a shot from him, because in those days, the needles weren't very sharp."

Lee Pearson of Haymarket was also a patient of Dr. Payne, and didn't like the old injection needles either. "Winterham was Dr. Payne's home and office. I got my first shot there. I knew he was correctly named," he recalls. "He once asked me to find a hubcap that he lost off his car, and there was a dollar reward. I sure could have used the money. I looked for it for years. I think I still look for it sometimes."

Dr. Payne took care of a lot of people, and didn't always get paid for his services, a situation described by historian Eugene M. Scheel in *Crossroads and Corners* (1996). "One patient, when approached for payment, would offer Dr. Payne a \$1,000 bill and ask for change," wrote Mr. Scheel. "After many replays of this scenario, Dr. Payne took the bill and wrote the patient a check for \$990."

When the U.S. Army first opened Vint Hill Farms Station in 1942, Dr. Payne was called upon to provide medical services for the troops stationed there until Army medical personnel could be assigned to the post.

For several years, Dr. Payne rented the tenant house behind Winterham to Belle Price, who kept his books. In the early 1950's, Aubrey "Butch" Strong and his wife Jane moved into the tenant house, and Mrs. Strong, of Gainesville, also worked as Dr. Payne's bookkeeper.

But Mrs. Strong knew Dr. Payne long before she arrived at Winterham. He delivered her and her brother, and later her children, James B. Strong and Joan D. Strong Duckett. "Dr. Payne was a wonderful man," she recalled. "When you were sick, you would start to feel better as soon as he walked into the room."

In 1954, Haymarket was hit by a terrifying hurricane, and Mrs. Strong recalls seeing rain being driven in the front door of the tenant house, and the ceiling in the kitchen collapsing. Her biggest fear was that one of the large



During Dr. Payne's ownership, a generator and batteries in this small outbuilding provided electrical power for Winterham's lights. Courtesy of the Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center (RELIC).

trees on Winterham would fall on the house, where she was huddled with her infant son.

Because his health and his hearing were failing, Dr. Payne began limiting his practice in about 1955, and fully retired in 1960. In June 1962, Dr. Payne received the 50-year Masonic emblem

winterham continued on page 18



winterham continued from page 16

from the Grand Lodge of Virginia, in recognition of his half-century of service as a Mason and a doctor.

Taken ill later that year, Dr. Payne died in Warrenton on Oct. 5, 1963, and was buried in the family plot at St. Paul's. He was survived by his son, Wade C. Payne Jr., of Norfolk; his sister, Mrs. A. Stuart Jones, of Fredericksburg; and his grandchildren, William Wade Jordan (1955-2007) and Richard Boxley Jordan of Haymarket, and Roberta K. Payne of Norfolk.

"Dr. Payne probably would have been voted Haymarket's 'Outstanding Citizen of the First Half-Century,' had there been a vote for such worldly honors," said Mr. Scheel in an account presented on April 1, 1996 at a public hearing concerning the rezoning of Winterham.

## Winterham under new ownership

No longer in need of a large house and medical office, in June 1960 Dr. Payne sold Winterham for \$26,000 to John R. Friant, who had a lumber business in Manassas.

It was during Mr. Friant's ownership that the 24½-acre property was subdivided. The house at Winterham and 3.4 acres were sold to retired Col. Harry B. and Kathryn Vensel in June 1965 for \$60,000, and the rest sold off by 1972.

Col. Vensel "...had a concrete-block outbuilding built, where he refinished and worked on furniture, his hobby," according to Mr. Scheel. "(Mrs. Vensel) ran an antique shop in the frame outbuilding, which may have been built close to the building date of the house. They really spruced the place up."

The Vensels owned the property until April 1972, when they sold Winterham to C. Gunderson and Muriel V. Gilbertson for \$70,000. Mrs. Gilbertson was the Mayor of Haymarket from 1978



The eastern elevation of Winterham facing Fayette Street still maintained its residential appearance in 2004, with its manicured lawn and flowering bushes. Photo by Jennifer Preli.

to 1984, and for a time the property was known as "the Mayor's House."

In May 1979, Winterham was photographed and surveyed by architectural historian Frances Jones, as part of the application to have Winterham registered as a Virginia Historic Landmark.

Mrs. Jones described the exterior as "...covered with narrow-gauge weatherboards, painted white. The doors and windows are trimmed with plain, box trim with mitered corners. The windows, 2/2 sliding sash, have shutters, painted black. The house has several porches and bay windows, which appear to date from the first construction period."

Inside, the house had ten rooms, including four bedrooms, 1½ bathrooms, and three fireplaces. Mrs. Jones described the interior as, "...very ornately decorated, and is furnished with predominantly Victorian pieces. The hall contains a 4-flight, 2-landing closed-string stair having turned newels, turned balusters and a molded rail. The floors throughout are narrow-board tongue-and-groove, of pine or spruce and oak."

Mrs. Jones noted that the house

had a partial basement, and that the brick foundation was laid in 6-course American bond in two levels. Apparently, the original house was built in the 1890s, and the living room wing added in the early 1900s.

She also described Winterham's outbuildings, including the Delco shed, where "...in the early days of electricity, batteries and a generator to electrically light the house were kept," until electrical service came to Haymarket. Empty by then, the Delco shed was used for storage, as was another small outbuilding with a flat roof.

Surveying the rest of the setting, Mrs. Jones described Winterham as "surrounded by a great number of various trees... the grounds are like an arboretum," adding that there were two wells on the property at the time. Also on the property was the tenant house, which likely was originally a barn or carriage house.

One of the more interesting events to take place during the Gilbertsons' ownership was the "Winterham Decorator's Show House," a fundraising event benefiting the Prince William Sympho-

winterham continued on page 20

ny Orchestra and the Manassas Museum.

The event ran from Oct. 7-29, 1989, during which 14 areas of the “charming Victorian home” were given over to interior designers to show off their skills. Tea and light lunch were served in the parlor, and art and furnishings offered for sale.

Acting for their mother, in May 1993 C. Gunder Gilbertson Jr. and Julie Christine Gilbertson submitted a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, as the first part of the process to have Winterham nominated to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, events were unfolding that prevented that from reaching completion.

## Changes and challenges

Haymarket residents and others the surrounding region were surprised, when in November 1993, the Disney Corp. announced its plans to build the “Great America” theme park northwest of town. As a result, there was a brief “gold rush” for development property in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Winterham’s days as a private home ended when the Gilbertsons sold it to Able Properties, a group of investors, for \$401,000. The deed was recorded in March 1994.

Able Properties initially offered a plan that retained the house as part of the development, but in April 1994, the partners requested a permit to demolish it, possibly to make way for a modern motel to serve theme park visitors.

But the Town of Haymarket had adopted a Historic Dis-

trict Overlay in January 1994, establishing strict conditions and requirements that had to be addressed before any building in the town erected before 1900 could be demolished. In addition, there was a groundswell of public sentiment to save Winterham.

In September 1994, Disney suddenly canceled its theme park project. Haymarket businessman Don Costello, owner of the nearby Century Stair Co., acquired Winterham in December 1995. He requested that the property be rezoned for commercial use, and in April 1996, the request was granted under the terms of a detailed, eight-page proffer agreement, which included several options for saving the house at Winterham.

Mr. Costello’s initial plan was to remodel the house and use it for office space for his growing stair manufacturing business, and perhaps later, to be converted to house a fine restaurant. Starting in 1996, Winterham received a major facelift. The house and the property around it were well maintained during Mr. Costello’s ownership, and nothing new was built there.

In 2004, Mr. Costello sold the property to Winterham Development LLC, and by 2006, work started on a mixed-use project on the western edge of the property. As approved by the town, the complex featured commercial/office space on the street level, and apartments above. Parking lots were built in front of the old Winterham house, as well as behind it.

In January 2013, the current owner, Winterham II LLC of Rockville, Maryland, acquired the land and buildings from the lien holder.



Built around the same time as the main house, the guesthouse at Winterham was later rented to Dr. Payne’s tenants, including his bookkeeper, Belle Price.  
*Courtesy of RELIC.*



*Author John Toler is a writer and historian and has served Fauquier County for over 50 years, including 4 decades with the Fauquier-Times Democrat. He has written and lectured about many legendary characters in Fauquier County’s history. Toler is the co-author of 250 Years in Fauquier County: A Virginia Story, and author of Warrenton, Virginia: A History of 200 Years.*