



Virginia Room, Arlington County Library

Cherry Hill (the Basil Hall house), just prior to its demolition.

The Bazil Hall House/Cherry Hill

Bazil Hall's original house stood on the hill somewhere behind the present-day Trinity Presbyterian Church on 16th Street North. During the Civil War, the Confederates burned the house, claiming that Union forces were using it to spy upon the Rebel lines.¹ Subsequently, Bazil and his family moved down the hill and adapted an existing structure, probably a barn, for their dwelling. It was this house and an accompanying 21 acres that Gaillard Hunt purchased in 1900 for one thousand dollars from the estate of Frances Hall, Bazil's widow.² Hunt and his family used the house as a summer residence and called it "Cherry Hill" after large cherry trees near the house.³

Gaillard Hunt's second son, Henry Goodfellow Hunt, was an architect. In 1933, shortly after graduating from Yale, he did the drawing and measured plan of the Bazil Hall House/Cherry Hill, that appears on page 15, stating that Hall had built it around "a barn of earlier date." Two years after Gaillard Hunt's death, his widow, Mary Goodfellow Hunt, sold approximately 14 acres of the property to Ashton Jones who included it in his Tara subdivision.⁴ The remaining property was further divided following Mrs. Hunt's death. The Hunts' daughter, Eleanor Hunt O'Donoghue, and her husband Ross O'Donoghue acquired the house and approximately three acres in 1946.⁵ Here they raised their family of four children and lived until their deaths in 1997.⁶ Thereafter a developer acquired the property, demolished the house, and built the Tara Manor subdivision with eleven large houses. The photograph of the house was taken just prior to its destruction.

¹ Donald A. Wise, "Bazil Hall of Hall's Hill," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1979, pp. 20-23.

² Alexandria County Deed Book 103, pp. 203-206.

³ Interviews, author with G.T. Hunt, March 24, 2007 and Ross O'Donoghue, Jr., July 16, 2007.

⁴ Arlington County Deed Book 244, pp. 308-309.

⁵ Arlington County Deed Book 728, pp. 5-6.

⁶ *Washington Post*, May 27, 1997; December 2, 1997.