

## Proceedings of the Arlington Historical Society 1956 - 1957

The Arlington Historical Society came into existence on September 14, 1956, at 1318 24th Street, South, when a group of interested citizens met to adopt a constitution and elect officers.

The members of the Committee appointed by Mr. Harrison Mann, Chairman pro tem, to draft a constitution were Mr. Robert Nelson Anderson, Sr., Chairman; Mr. Walter E. Bell, Jr., and Mr. Percy A. Crittenden. The proposed Constitution, as amended in two slight respects by the meeting, was adopted.

The Nominating Committee appointed by Mr. Mann consisted of Mr. Frank L. Ball, Sr., Mr. H. Bruce Green, and Mr. C. L. Kinnier. It presented the following slate which was unanimously elected:

<i>President</i> .....	Harrison Mann
<i>First Vice President</i> .....	Frank L. Ball, Sr.
<i>Second Vice President</i> .....	Robert Nelson Anderson, Sr.
<i>Secretary</i> .....	Cornelia B. Rose, Jr.
<i>Treasurer</i> .....	Ashton C. Jones, Jr.

### *Board of Directors*

J. Foster Hagan *	J. Elwood Clements **
Percy A. Crittenden *	Walter E. Bell, Jr. ***
Paul A. Hill **	Anna A. Green ***

\* For a one-year term.    \*\* For a two-year term.    \*\*\* For a three-year term.

It was agreed that all those who joined the Society within 60 days should be charter members.

The program to be pursued by the Society was discussed. It was agreed that the Society should publish an annual report and sponsor the publication of papers dealing with various phases of Arlington's history. Close association with the County Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee appeared to be desirable.

### **Meeting of November 9, 1956**

The first county-wide meeting of the Society was held on November 9, 1956, at the Custis-Lee Mansion by special arrangement with the National Park Service and the Superintendent of the Arlington National Cemetery.

Since the President and First Vice President were both out of town, Mr. Anderson, Second Vice President, was in the Chair.

It was reported that the President had been appointed by the County Board as a member of the County Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee.

The following Committee chairmanship appointments were announced: Research and Historical Records, Mrs. Frances C. Bell; Membership, Mr. C. L. Kinnier; Program, Mr. Walter E. Bell, Jr.; Publications, Mr. Robert Nelson Anderson, Sr.

It was reported that as of the opening of the meeting the membership count was: 39 regular members, 3 sustaining members, and 3 junior members.

Mrs. Frank L. Ball, Sr., told the Society of experiences of the group of Virginians of which she and former Senator Ball had been members on the journey to England which had just been concluded. Among other sites visited had been the grave of Pocahontas.

Miss Cornelia B. Rose told something of the contents of some old Arlington County records uncovered a few years ago in a cupboard on the third floor of the original Court House. They have been transferred to the Virginia State Library in Richmond and offer rich rewards for anyone with time and opportunity to make a careful study of them. An inventory of the contents of the "Arlington Transfer" is in the Society's files.

Miss Agnes Downey, Historian of the Custis-Lee Mansion, dressed in costume of the Civil War period, gave a history of the Mansion, after which she escorted the members of the Society to the front (riverside) of the Mansion. After everyone had had a chance to view the beautiful panorama, the door was opened by a "servant" in costume. Inside, all the candelabra and chandeliers were lighted with hundreds of candles. Following a tour of the gracious rooms downstairs, Mrs. Lelia Lewis and Miss Elizabeth Slattery presented a program of music and songs using the same books and music as had been used by the Custis and Lee families when they had lived in the Mansion.

### **Meeting of January 11, 1957**

The Society met in the multi-purpose room of the Elementary School at Fort Myer, the successor to the Civil War Fort Whipple.

The President reported that the Directors had authorized the preparation of an exhibit based on a reproduction of an Indian village of the type that was found in Arlington when Captain John Smith came up the Potomac in 1608, as part of the Society's contribution to the celebration of the 350th Anniversary

of the Settlement at Jamestown, and that Mr. Robert Nelson Anderson, Jr., had agreed to undertake this project.

As a representative of the Society, the President on December 20 attended at Norfolk the ceremony of the christening of the three ships, replicas of those which made the original landing.

The Society is cooperating with the Historical Exhibits Subcommittee of the Arlington Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee in providing, in addition to the scale model of the Indian village referred to above, a display of almost every original map pertaining to Virginia from 1547 to 1827, loaned by one of its members; and a display of the early Codes of Virginia, to be loaned by two of its members.

Mrs. Elizabeth Kimball presented to the Society a gavel used by her mother, the late Mrs. Florence Cannon, both as presiding officer of the Columbia Pike Citizens Association, as President of the Arlington Civic Federation, and as Chairman of the County Board.

The program centered around the Civil War, especially in Arlington. Mr. Frank Lord displayed a number of interesting objects which had belonged to volunteer soldiers of the Civil War and told something of the life led by these soldiers. Major General H. W. Blakely, retired, spoke on the history of Fort Whipple and its metamorphosis into Fort Myer. A copy of the published history of Fort Myer, and one of the Civil War forts of the Washington area are in the Society's files.

The climax of the evening was reached when it was announced that the Pocahontas bell had been found, as a result of the publicity given to it through the Society. This bell, weighing 600 pounds and cast in 1907 out of metals including the spurs of a Civil War General and plate belonging to an early Governor of the Commonwealth, donated by prominent families throughout Virginia, had been displayed at the Tercentennial Exposition at Jamestown in 1907. Thereafter it had disappeared from view. It was disclosed that it is now on Elk Hill in Goochland County, owned by Mr. Buford Scott of Richmond.

#### **Meeting of March 8, 1957**

The Society met in the auditorium of Barnes and Kimel Company.

The President reported on the activities of the Executive Committee: The County Board and the County Manager have been approached on the matter of having the plans for the new

portion of the Court House include display cases for documents of historical interest; the County Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee has agreed to finance the construction of the model of an Indian village; the National Park Service and the National Capital Planning Commission have responded favorably to the request of the Society to include old Fort Marcy within the George Washington Memorial Parkway taking lines so that the site may be preserved; and a special committee with Mrs. Eleanor Lee Templeman as chairman has been appointed to inventory historical sites in Arlington.

Mrs. Templeman, chairman of the special committee, reported that the following were working with her: Mr. Walter Bell, Dr. Harold Peterson, Mr. Stanley W. McClure, Miss Agnes Downey, and Mrs. Robert McKinley. Many of the historic sites have already fallen victim to the bulldozer, but it is hoped that some may be saved. In order to elicit more authentic information than is presently available about historic sites in Arlington, the *Northern Virginia Sun*, printed in Arlington, has agreed to run a series of articles prepared by Mrs. Templeman, requesting its readers to supply supplemental data. (These have been appearing at weekly intervals.)

Mrs. Frances Bell resigned as chairman of the Historical Records and Research Committee on the advice of her doctor.

The program for the evening was a talk, illustrated by slides, on the "History of Potomac Bridges in the Washington Area," given by Mr. Robert L. Taylor of the District of Columbia Department of Highways. Mr. Taylor agreed to make his slides available to the Society for copying. This has been done by Mr. Walter Bell. The set is available for interested groups.

#### **Meeting of April 26, 1957**

A special meeting in the form of a reception was held on the evening of April 26 in the parish hall of St. Mark's Church to honor the rector of the Church at Gravesend, Kent, England, where Pocahontas is buried. Selwyn Gummer, Rector and Rural Dean, St. George's Church of Unity, spoke on "Our Historic Links." This was a joint project with the County Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee. Members of historical societies in the neighboring jurisdictions of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church were invited.

#### **Meeting of May 10, 1957**

The Society met in the parish hall of the Community Methodist Church.

The President announced that Mrs. Eleanor Lee Templeman had been appointed Chairman of the Committee on Historical Records and Research. He also announced that Mrs. Anna Green had donated to the Society a family heirloom, the globe of one of the first three street lights used in Clarendon. The lights burned kerosene and were tended by individuals. They were turned off at 9:30 each night for by that time all respectable people were at home.

Mr. P. C. Smith presented to the Society a framed copy of a voucher issued in payment of salaries and mileage for members of the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy in 1863.

Mr. Anderson, Chairman of the Publications Committee, announced the intention to publish a first annual volume of the proceedings of the Society which would include interesting papers on Arlington History. The price has been set at \$2.50 a copy and it is hoped that it will be ready by Fall.

Since the March meeting, the display of old maps belonging to Mr. Harrison Mann, sponsored jointly by the Historical Society and the County Jamestown Anniversary Festival Committee had been put on view. For two successive evenings Mr. Mann had also shown slides of these maps and given a commentary. The slides, and a recording of the commentary, had been made by the Virginia State Board of Education in cooperation with the Arlington County Public Schools, so that they can be used throughout the State.

The President appointed a Nominating Committee to secure a slate of candidates for officers for the coming year. The members of this Committee were: Mrs. George Goebel, Mr. C. L. Kinnier, and Mr. Walter Bell.

The speaker of the evening was Mr. John F. Burns whose topic was the history of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad.

Subsequent to the last meeting of the year, three displays arranged for by the Historical Society were open to the public in the Court House. These were the scale model of an Indian village, constructed by Mr. Robert Nelson Anderson, Jr.; a collection of Indian artifacts found in Arlington, lent by the Smithsonian Institution; and a selection of the early Codes of Virginia, lent by Mr. Robert Nelson Anderson, Sr., and Mr. Harrison Mann.

*By Cornelia B. Rose, Jr., Secretary*