

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Minutes of September 10, 1976

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum. The treasurer reported an operating fund balance of \$4,748.06. In addition, the to-date sales of *Arlington County, Virginia: A History* totaled \$3,490.92. The Society is purchasing the photographic portrait of Cornelia B. Rose, Jr., which was made for the Bicentennial Commission.

Dean Allard, chairman of the Ball-Sellers House Fund, reported on the continuing restoration of the property. The log cabin fireplace has been rebuilt, other interior floor and wall work done, and removal of the roof of the lean-to has been completed. The project is still seeking funds to assist in the restoration.

Sandra Doptis, a graduate of Marymount College (Rixey Mansion), and a member of the Society spoke on "Presley Marion Rixey; Portrait of a Virginia Gentleman."

### Minutes of November 12, 1976

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum. The treasurer reported an operating balance of \$6,008.59, and a Ball-Sellers House Fund balance of \$6,566.32. The net income to date from Historic Arlington Day is \$1,243.85.

Following the business meeting, Prentiss Maybury of the Men's Club of Arlington directed its singing group, "Song Fellows", in a medley of old favorites.

The evening's speaker was Herbert R. Collins, Associate Curator for Political History, National Museum of History and Technology of the Smithsonian Institution, and a member of our Society, who spoke and presented slides on "A History of Political Conventions."

### Minutes of January 14, 1977

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum. The treasurer reported an operating fund balance of \$2,723.58 and a Ball-Sellers House Fund balance of \$5,831.12.

Donald Wise, historical research chairman, reported that Laszlo Ecker-Racz had donated to the Society numerous documents and maps which had belonged to the late Cornelia B. Rose, Jr.

Dr. Oscar Fitzgerald lectured on the "Golden Age of American Cabinetmaking - 1650-1830."

### Minutes of March 11, 1977

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum. Martha Orth, reporting for the treasurer, noted an operating balance of \$2,756.98, and a Ball-Sellers House Fund balance of \$6,018.65. Dean Allard reported that a matching grant has been received for the exterior work on the older log part of the Ball-Sellers house.

Lawrence Douglas, a native of Arlington and a trust officer of the Arlington Trust Company, was the speaker of the evening. He shared with the audience some of his reminiscences of the Arlington of fifty or sixty years ago.

### Minutes of May 13, 1977

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum. An operating fund balance of \$4,233.82 was reported; a net income from sales of the Arlington County history book of

\$4,035.06; and a Ball-Sellers House Fund balance of \$7,173.20.

The membership chairman reported 491 members at the end of the membership year.

The following slate of officers and directors was presented by the Nominating Committee: President, Martha B. Orth; First Vice President, Lee E. Metcalf; Second Vice President, Ruth P. Rose; Recording Secretary, Doris C. Bangs; Newsletter Secretary, Sara Collins; Treasurer, Jeanne Rose; Directors: Moreau Chambers, Ruth C. Cocklin, Herbert R. Collins, William Lightsey, Evelyn R. Syphax, and Willard Webb; Ex-Officio Director, Hyman J. Cohen; and Museum Director, Donald J. Orth. The slate, as submitted, was elected unanimously.

The program was a slide and tape presentation on genealogical research, given by O. Kenneth Baker, a docent at the National Archives.

## **Historic Arlington Day**

"By these we are sustained" was the theme of the annual Historic Arlington Day. Observance of the day began with a candlelight tour of Arlington House on the evening of Friday, October 15, 1976. On Saturday, October 16, the Ball-Sellers House, home of Mr. and Mrs. C. Ware Page, 5620 Third Street, South; home of Mr. and Mrs. F. Charles Benjamin, 3731 North Glebe Road; home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Seubert, 2634 South Lynn Street; home of Mr. and Mrs. James P. Londergan, Jr., 4861 Little Falls Road; the Mount Olive Baptist Church, 1601 Thirteenth Road South; and Walker Chapel United Methodist Church, 4102 North Glebe Road, were visited. Open House was held at the Museum, where the Aurora Hills Woman's Club provided and served refreshments, and the "Tea and Anarchy" singers entertained.

A recipe booklet entitled "Arlington Sweets - Past and Present" was available at the Museum.

## **Ball-Sellers House**

On December 12, 1976, the Washington-Lee Society of the Children of the American Revolution and the Thomas Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated a bronze plaque at the Ball-Sellers House. Following the dedication, refreshments were served at St. John's Episcopal Church, Lexington and Fifth Streets, South.

## **Christmas Reception**

As has become custom, the Christmas season was heralded by the Society with its Christmas reception on December 19, 1976, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. William T. Back.

## **Portrait Presentation**

On Sunday, December 26, 1976, a photographic portrait of the late Cornelia B. Rose, Jr., a founder of the Arlington Historical Society, and author of many publications, including the recent *Arlington County, Virginia: A History*, was presented to the Society. Dean Allard made the introductory remarks, and C. Harrison Mann summarized the numerous contributions made to Arlington and to the Historical Society by Miss Rose. The portrait, which was commissioned by the Bicentennial Commission, was accepted, on behalf of the Society, by Donald J. Orth, Museum Director.

## **Columbia Historical Society**

Approximately thirty members of the Arlington Historical Society attended the May 17, 1977, meeting of the Columbia Historical Society at its headquarters, the Christian Heurich mansion, 1307 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. This unique opportunity was hosted jointly by the societies. The speaker was Dean Allard of the Arlington Historical Society, who discussed the period 1801-47, when Arlington was part of the District of Columbia.

## **Gifts 1976-77**

Arlington Bicentennial Commission (who received it from the Hon. Joseph L. Fisher):  
American Flag flown over the U.S. Capitol on July 4, 1976.

Dorothy Beers: Confederate Bank Notes.

Henry Beers: Arlington Radio Tower pictures and slides.

L. Laszlo Ecker-Racz: Files of Cornelia B. Rose, Jr.

Edith Lohman: Railway switch from railroad that ran up Four Mile Run Valley.

Mr. and Mrs. Royal Murphy: Arlington Dairy milk bottle and brick from White House reconstruction during Truman's administration.

Ella R. Pfeiffer: Stoneware hot water bottle.

The Rev. Carl Rennick: Silver cup and chalice (1914) from Calloway Methodist Church, Arl.

Laura Smyth: 100-year-old evening gown.

Lynn Stuckey: Picture of Arlington House.

Henry and Pauline Wibert: 1934 airline map of Arlington and Alexandria.

Donald A. Wise: Two hundred copies of "George Washington's Four Mile Run Tract."

Text of Harrison Mann's Speech, December 26, 1976  
On the Presentation of a Photograph Portrait of Cornelia B. Rose, Jr.

Members of the Arlington Historical Society and the Friends of C. B. Rose, Jr.

Out of the great array of people one meets and works with over a long span of years, there stands out certain unforgettable characters who will always be engraved on one's memory, silhouetted in the mind like a statue against a bright sky. These are people whose presence you will always carry with you whether or not prompted by a likeness, a book, or a long line of Golden Deeds — people like Frank Ball, Cornelia B. Rose, Jr., or Bambi, as I've always called her. These are the kind of people whom you treasure forever, people who become a part of your own being.

I have been more fortunate than most of you because I was associated with Bambi in more than one capacity. Besides being social friends, whose children grew up together in the neighborhood, we worked closely on the Democratic Committee and as the committeemen in the same precinct. We disagreed as often as we agreed on both issues and candidates. We often spent the entire day from six in the morning 'til seven at night working for different candidates at the polls on election days, hurling good-natured insults at each other all day long. The next time we met we never spoke of who won or lost. Believe me, I do not know a better measure of a human being than to be pitted against each other politically and still remain fast friends.

There is another area that can raise the blood pressure almost equally with politics and that is the disagreement of historians — disagreements that are almost always over trivia. Fortunately, I never had occasion to disagree seriously with Bambi but once, and soon found out I was wrong. I had the good sense to know that whenever she came up with an opinion or a fact it was right and the smart thing to do was to rely upon her implicitly.

The very first thing that happened to me when I started to tally Bambi's contribution to the Arlington Historical Society was to miss my old friend who was the only one who knew first-hand how the idea of the Society was incubated at the home of Frank and Mrs. Ball. I know I was there because Bambi told me so. I know we included certain people in the organizing group because Bambi told me so. I recollect none of it. But I am sure of one thing — we all assembled at Frank Ball's to discuss the formation of a historical society because Bambi motivated the meeting. It was fitting that the first formal, organized meeting of the Society on September 14, 1956, should have been held at Bambi's and Laszlo's home at 1318 24th St., South.

Bambi was elected secretary because everybody felt that if anyone would do the necessary paperwork and follow-up to see that the Society got off the ground she would — and she did.

Beginning in 1957 she made the first of many historical contributions so important to the community and the Society. In the words of the Reverend George Schnabel, Arlington Chairman of the 350th Anniversary of the Founding of Virginia, "one of the finest accomplishments of the Celebration was the publication of a book entitled *Indians of Arlington*. Cornelia B. Rose, Jr., is the author. She brought her fine abilities as a researcher and historian together and the result is a fascinating story of our Indian heritage." This book has gone through many printings of thousands of copies.

Of course it was Bambi who directed and oversaw the work of Bob Nelson, Jr., in the creation of the scale model of an Indian village which was unveiled at the Arlington Court House that year and is now on display at the Hume Museum.

And it was fitting that the *first* article in the *first* issue of the *Arlington Historical Magazine*, "The Boundaries of Arlington," was by Cornelia B. Rose, Jr. Thereafter, year after year followed more articles. Her book on the boundaries of Arlington was the genesis of "Why Do We Call It." For years to come historians of the future will find a gold mine for research in some fifteen feet of files Bambi left to the Society which have just recently been turned over in care of Don Wise by Laszlo. Incidentally, these files contain the material for "Arlington, USA," a book which Bambi had wished to write.

Article after article for the magazine flowed from her typewriter: in 1958, "A Glimpse

of Arlington in the 18th Century;" in 1960, "Civil War Forts in Arlington;" in 1962, "The Map of Arlington in 1878 - Places, People;" in 1964, "Annexation of a Portion of Arlington County by the City of Alexandria in 1915;" in 1965, "Public Schools in the Arlington District of Alexandria - 1870-1905;" in 1968, "The Annexation From Arlington to Alexandria;" in 1969, "Arlington History From the Files;" in 1970, "Democratic Politics in the 8th District of Virginia," with Margaret Birge; in 1971, "History of the Park System in Arlington County;" in 1972, "Voting and Elections in Arlington;" and in 1976, "A Phantom Ferry."

And do you know why there wasn't an article every year by C. B. Rose, Jr.? She once told me she was afraid someone might think that she was taking up too much space. Actually, many articles that appeared in the magazine under other names were either written or researched by her.

And finally, she gave that most generous gift of all, the writing of *Arlington County, Virginia: A History* under the sponsorship of the Arlington Bicentennial Commission. It was the Society's greatest contribution to the Bicentennial. Only the members of the Society know that the substantial proceeds from the sale of this long awaited history will go into the Treasury of the Society's Endowment Trust Fund. To say that history was written with Bambi's life is no exaggeration. She literally lived to complete her book and the most prized possession in my library is a copy inscribed a few days before her death, "For Hank - Needler Par Excellence, Long-time Friend, Opponent and Colleague, With Affection - Bambi."

As if this were not enough contribution by one human being, Bambi served on the Board of Directors of the Society and as Committee Chairman for many years, and most important it was during her term as fifth president of the Society (1960-61) that the Hume School property was acquired largely through her persistent efforts. Few people know that when the School Board decided to sell the property as surplus it was Bambi who said to her husband, who was on the School Board, "I want that school for a historical museum." And it was she who followed through with the County Board to see that it was given to the Historical Society for that purpose. She worked with Margaret Birge to get the Hume relatives to release their claim on the adjacent property to the Hume Museum, which at that time was part of the school grounds and would have reverted to the Hume family when the property ceased to be used as a school. To top it off, she was instrumental in persuading one of the Hume relatives to donate \$10,000 for restoration of the old building. Such an effective campaign was mounted for its restoration that the Society was able to move into the building in 1963.

What more appropriate place for this fine photograph portrait of Bambi! But I will always see in this picture not the years of hard, dedicated work for the Society and the County, the many tasks so well performed, but that warm, outgoing human being for whom integrity in the exposition of history, and even every other endeavor, was always her guiding light.