

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1979-1980

## Minutes of September 14, 1979

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum, with President Herbert R. Collins presiding. The treasurer, James Walling, reported a balance of \$6468.89 in the Operating Fund, and \$8090.53 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. Membership as of this date is 332. Willard Webb reported that the House Tour will be held Saturday, October 13, and the President announced that the Hume School has been recorded on the National Register of Historic Places.

The guest speaker was Leonard Rapport, an archivist with the National Archives, who spoke on detecting the authenticity of historical documents.

## Minutes of November 9, 1979

The Society met at the Museum. The treasurer reported a balance in the Operating Fund of \$8584.77, and in the Ball-Sellers House Fund of \$8005.42.

The speaker at this meeting was the new museum curator, Kathy Holt. She spoke briefly on the history and development of stereoscopes and magic lantern slides, then demonstrated slides of various types. Member John Burns also showed slides he had made in the 1920's of historic Arlington homes, and member Henry O. Lanpe had on display stereopticon slides.

## Minutes of January 11, 1979

The Society met at the Museum. The treasurer reported \$6568.52 in the Operating Fund, and \$8027.94 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. Kathy Holt, curator, stated that the Museum would be painted during February, after which there will be new exhibits.

Ruth P. Rose, the speaker, discussed Mrs. Robert E. Lee versus the United States Congress. After the Civil War, Mrs. Lee tried to retrieve the Washington relics which had been placed in the Patent Office for safekeeping, but met with great difficulty. The relics were finally returned, to Lee's descendants, in 1901. Mrs. Rose presented slides showing some of the Washington relics.

## Minutes of March 21, 1980

The March meeting took the form of the Annual Banquet, which was held at the Fort Myer Officers Club on March 21, 1980. Herbert R. Collins, President, presided. The invocation was offered by member Rev. Gerald Riley, and among those present were the Honorable and Mrs. Joseph L. Fisher.

Entertainment was provided by the Musick of Turkey Run Farm, a volunteer orchestra in colonial costume and using reproduction instruments, under the direction of George P. Carroll. They sang and played popular music of the 18th century, then induced Society members to join them in country dances, concluding a festive evening.

## Minutes of May 9, 1980

The Society met at the Museum. The treasurer's report showed a balance in the Operating Fund of \$4,999.43, and in the Ball-Sellers House Fund \$7562.72. The Society noted with regret the death of John Palmer, former treasurer.

The program, "Eighteenth Century Medicine — Fantasy, Folklore, and Fact", was given by John J. Victor, a history student at George Mason University. He appeared in costume of the time, and showed some of the tools and drugs used. Among points he emphasized were the popularity then of bleeding patients; the fact that basically the causes of disease and malfunction were unknown; and yet the fact that there were some valid techniques practiced, such as smallpox vaccination and use of the tourniquet.

#### **Historic Arlington Day, October 13, 1979**

Preceding the October 13 tour, Arlington House opened its doors again to the Society on Friday evening, October 12, for a candlelight tour with entertainment and refreshments. On the Historic Arlington Day tour, the following houses were open: Broadview, know to many as the Lacy House, home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Gerstein, at 5151 14th Street; Cedar Lane, home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Day, 1912 N. Harvard Street; Eastlawn, adjacent to the Ball-Sellers House; Lomax A.M.E. Church on South 24th Road; and the law offices of Logan-Sissman Partnership, at 2305 Wilson Blvd. At the Museum, which was also open, refreshments were served; and at the Ball-Sellers House there was an exhibition of kitchen utensils and farm and hand-tools.

#### **Christmas Reception, December 16, 1979**

Continuing a pleasant tradition of several years, Dr. and Mrs. William T. Back opened their house, with its fascinating Christmas decorations, to the Society for a Christmas reception.

#### **Junior Members Day, April 13, 1980**

Junior members of the Society gathered at the Ball-Sellers House from 2-4 p.m. to gain better acquaintance with each other and to share in an entertaining afternoon of colonial food, games and dance. The Potomac Fife and Drum Corps, under the direction of Robert Wright, provided the music, and an especial hit was the metal detector and earphone demonstrated by Kathy Holt. Some junior members appeared dressed appropriately in colonial costume.

#### **Hume School Reunion, April 20, 1980**

This very successful event, which brought together teachers and students from the days before the Hume School became a museum, is described in detail elsewhere in the magazine by its chairman, Doris C. Bangs.

#### **Garden Party, May 18, 1980**

This party, held at the home of General and Mrs. George H. Olmsted, was originally scheduled for May 11, but had to be postponed to the rain date of May 18. Despite the complications this postponement involved, the dedicated committee produced refreshments which were beautiful the second time around. Ned Thomas is especially to be thanked for his loan of a tent, use of which the threatening weather made a necessity. But the sun came out, and the gardens and the views of the Potomac were lovely.

This event will clear \$11,000 for the Land Fund, thus bringing a busy and successful year to a fitting conclusion.

Prepared by Sue McPherson,  
James Huddleston, and Jeanne Rose

## BALL-SELLERS HOUSE

Major work on the Ball-Sellers House concentrated on the 18th century wing which is being restored as a museum. Here, the enclosed stairway to the loft, which was removed a number of years ago, was rebuilt to its original dimensions. Two reproduction board-and-batten doors were constructed and installed at the foot of the loft stairs and the entrance to the 19th century caretaker wing. In order to control moisture in the basement of the old wing, a sump pump was installed, a layer of gravel laid down, and an additional ventilation opening made in the foundation wall. Mrs. Francis C. Stetson donated old stones from the foundation of a former outbuilding of the Ball-Sellers House and these were used to construct a stairway into the basement. Structural stability was improved through strengthening roof rafters and by further work on the basement beams. As of the date of this report (mid-July 1980), the following additional work has been scheduled for early completion: replacement of the modern siding on the oldest part of the house with replicas of the original 18th century weatherboards; removal of obsolete electrical connections and the installation of new, concealed wiring throughout the museum wing; and the placement of a heavy layer of insulation under the 19th century wing. For part of this work, the Society will be reimbursed through a matching federal grant administered by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, for which we express appreciation.

As in previous years, the house was opened for Historic Arlington Day. It also was the subject of study by a number of visiting students from a course in vernacular architecture taught by Mr. Del Upton of The George Washington University. In April 1980, the Society held its Childrens Colonial Day on the grounds of the property.

The Reverend E. Russell Lynn moved to another location in June 1980 and was replaced as the house's caretaker by Mr. Gregg C. Jones. Mr. Jones is a native of the Glencarlyn neighborhood with a keen appreciation of the importance of the Ball-Sellers House to Arlington's heritage. We welcome Mr. Jones to his association with the Arlington Historical Society.

Ruth M. Ward  
Dean C. Allard  
(Co-chairmen)