

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1980-81

Minutes of September 12, 1980

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum with President Doris Bangs presiding. The treasurer, James Walling, reported a balance of \$7055.68 in the operating fund and of \$4019.63 in the Ball-Sellers account.

The President noted with regret the death of Sally Loving, a charter member of the Society, who died on August 7 and who had left the Society several things related to the history of Washington-Lee High School.

The President also announced that Eleanor Lee Templeman had given the museum the original photographs collected for her book *Arlington Heritage*.

Museum Curator/Director, Kathy Holt, called attention to painting which had been done and to donations in the meeting room. Mr. Dan Letts donated an 1892 Beckwith parlor, pump organ and Mrs. Martha Sachs donated a 1932 Frigidaire refrigerator.

Jack Foster requested volunteers for a clean up day September 27.

Annabelle Lane reported on the participation of the Society in the Arlington County Fair. The booth, featured on television, was a successful venture under the leadership of Janet and Jerry Riley. Special thanks were expressed to the Rileys and a host of others who helped, especially to Stan Schiffer who had constructed display stands.

A most interesting program introduced by Willard Webb, program chairman, featured as speaker Judith Waldrop Frank who spoke on the subject "Arlington in the Capital City." Mrs. Frank gave an interesting and informative talk on Arlington's contribution to the formation of the District of Columbia.

Minutes of November 14, 1980

The meeting presided over by the President, Doris Bangs, opened on a sad note with announcement of the death of long time member, Munson Lane, Sr.

A contribution of \$2000 for publication of the magazine was received from the George Olmsted Foundation.

Announcement was made that the Society would join the Northern Virginia Society of Historians.

An excellent program was presented by Jack Foster on the history of Alexander's Island.

Minutes of January 9, 1981

The program of the regular meeting of the Society on Friday, January 9, was a once-in-a-lifetime encounter. Planned jointly by program chairman, Willard Webb, and Museum Curator/Director, Kathy Holt, the program brought together an interesting group of people associated with the history of Arlington.

Mr. Webb, wearing a black frock coat, shirt, bow tie, and cuff links from the Museum collection, set the stage by introducing ladies also wearing costumes from the collection.

Kathy Holt was wearing a blue taffeta dress with bustle from the estate of Lucy Ames Blount who lived at Dunbarton Oaks in Washington. Kathy's hair was held up at the back with an 1865 celluloid comb decorated with diamond chips. The comb had belonged to her grandmother.

Jean Davis was dressed in an exquisite linen with lace inserts of about 1900 which had belonged to Virginia Fitzhugh Saegmuller. Over it she wore a Chinese silk shawl, with embroidery and fringe, which had belonged to a San Francisco dance hall girl in 1880.

Barbara Giles wore one of a pair of hand embroidered white graduation dresses made in 1888

for twin girls graduating that year from a Georgetown Seminary. Over this she wore a red shawl similar to the one worn by Jean.

Anne Webb was the hit of the evening in a brown calico bloomer dress of the 1870s. Amelia Bloomer (1818-1894), feminist and originator of the costume design, gave her name "Bloomer" to the loose trousers drawn close at the ankles and worn under a skirt.

The first participant on the program was J. E. Clements who exhibited a shotgun carried by Crandal Mackey in 1904. Elected Commonwealth Attorney in November of 1903, Mr. Mackey led a group of citizens in a clean-up campaign of the crime ridden areas at Rosslyn and Jackson Island. Mr. Clements described the action of the posse headed by Mackey which surprised and wrecked the establishments around Jackson City. The gun which had been dismantled and mounted on a board with a plaque bearing an inscription emphasizing the "power of the people" formerly hung in Sheriff Clements' office and presently hangs in the office of the Sheriff of Arlington County.

Recounting difficulty in finding descendants of Frank Hume still living in the area several years ago when he was writing an article for the Society's magazine, Mr. Webb introduced a recently discovered neighbor, Anne Liokow, who is a great-granddaughter of Frank Hume. Anne had brought her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. William Hume who live at Hume, Virginia, in Fauquier County. Also, he announced that his daughter was arranging for copies to be made for the Museum of several family photographs.

Mr. Jack Foster, one of the Trustees of the Society, asked for the floor so that he might express to the members of the Hume family present appreciation for the help given to the Society in the time when the Museum was being established. He especially wanted Mr. William Hume to know of the help given by Mrs. Lynn S. Hornor of Clarksville, West Virginia, who was quite elderly and who gave very generous contributions twice. Attention was also called to the plaque on the wall to Nannie Hume Hewett which has been placed there in recognition of her help and contributions.

Munson Lane reinforced information regarding Indian villages in Arlington with a display of artifacts collected from his grandfather's farm from the time of his childhood up to arrow points found in his own garden in 1968. His grandfather, George Reeves, owned a farm which is now a part of Bluemont Park and Boulevard Manor. Mr. Lane also showed about a hundred mini balls from Civil War guns all collected on the farm and about ten perfect unfired bullets, and the case from a large artillery shell found in his grandfather's garden. He then shared a letter from President Abraham Lincoln to the Secretary-Treasurer written in 1861 regarding employment for Miss Lucy Munson of Munson Hill.

Jack Burns brought a canteen with cups attached used by a member of the Federal army during the Civil War and an Italian type scythe with hand carved shaft and handles used on the Saegmuller farm. He also shared a delightful story concerning a cannon ball which he also brought and which came from the Gilbert Vandenberg farm. When Vandenberg was driving into the District one day during the Civil War the cannon ball struck in the trees beside the road and rolled beside his wagon. He picked it up and it has remained among family heirlooms ever since. Mr. Burns donated the scythe and canteen to the Museum but said he was not ready to part with the cannon ball.

Anne Noll brought thirteen sheets from the Wakefield High School paper, THE SIGNAL, for the school year 1954-55. These have been laminated and are available for viewing.

Louise Wyndham showed lace crocheted by her great-great aunt at the age of ten years — 1879.

Mrs. Jack Burns delighted the ladies present by showing exquisite opera glasses and two very lovely fans from the Fitzhugh-Saegmuller collection.

Jim Huddleston exhibited a carpenter's level made between 1894-96 and brought to Arlington County in 1939 by the father of his wife, Peg.

Art True introduced his former neighbor and long time resident of Arlington County, Paul E. Sullivan. Mr. True and Mr. Sullivan became acquainted during World War II when Mr. Sullivan was acting as Air Raid Warden on North Jackson Street. Mr. Sullivan whose father established a monument business in 1885 was three months old when the family moved to North Jackson Street.

This business is still in existence and has provided monuments for Arlington National Cemetery and many others throughout the area. He expressed special pride in that his father made the memorial marking the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War in Presbyterian Meeting House Churchyard in Alexandria. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. True donated the helmet to the museum along with a hand pump provided for wardens in fighting small fires. Mr. True further donated a cream skimmer used to skim cream from the top of glass milk bottles known as cream top bottles, a corkscrew, and an early ice cream ladle. Mrs. Gertrude True gave to the museum a puzze about 100 years old and used by her father in New Hampshire.

Dean Allard who is in charge of the restoration of the Ball-Sellers house showed a piece of clapboard which was one to survive from the first covering of the original log portion of the house. The board of hand-hewn red oak is to be added to the Museum collection.

Donald Orth, former curator, was asked to spotlight one outstanding item in the collection. He chose what has been termed the "ugly duckling," a pyramida on special exhibit during the Christmas season. Of German origin the pyramida is made of cast iron circles which pyramid to the top where windmill blades slowly turn from the heat of lighted candles placed on the circles along with toys all for the delight of children. Made in Pennsylvania in the 19th century this folk item came to Arlington in 1930 by way of Missouri.

Mary Taylor from the office of Mr. Bell, Clerk of the County Court, brought two framed copies of documents significant in Arlington history. The first was a copy of the 1846 petition to return to Virginia the area donated for the formation of the District of Columbia. The second was a copy of the document when the transfer actually took place.

Ruth Ward gave an interesting talk concerning the last piece of land to be granted in what is now Arlington County; the grantee was Ensign John Ball, son of Moses Ball, in 1796. It was a 12½ acre tract located near Clarendon, roughly bounded by Fairfax Drive, Kirkwood Road, and Jackson Street. Washington Boulevard crosses the land. Presumably, soon after receiving the land grant, Ensign Ball built a log house, near the site of the present St. Charles School. Other Ball relatives also built homes on the tract. An Edwin Ball, born in 1834, built a house, which was located just behind the present Enzor Travel Agency, at Washington Boulevard and Jackson Street. William Ball built a large white frame house, at about where the Arlington Y indoor tennis and squash courts are now. The house was still there in the late 40's or early 50's.

A few years ago, the late Mrs. Frank Ball, Sr., obtained a photograph of the rear of Ensign John Ball's log house, and we have it in our archives. Ruth Ward proudly presented to the museum a picture of the front of Ensign Ball's house, and a picture of the Edwin Ball house. Ensign Ball's log house had three rooms and an attic. Cooking was done in a lean-to at the rear, near the well house. There were two fireplaces in the house. A root cellar provided storage for potatoes and turnips. The house was torn down about 1950, when St. Charles Church and Virginia Square Shopping Center construction was underway.

Wade Ball, who was treasurer of Alexandria County (later Arlington County) from 1908 until he resigned in 1932, also built a house on the 12½ acre land grant. It still stands at 3435 N. 14th Street.

There is a small Ball Cemetery behind Warner's Plumbing Company on Washington Boulevard and Ensign Ball and other Ball relatives are buried there. Vandals had caused extensive destruction of gravestones, and a few years ago Mrs. Frank Ball, Sr. had a chain link fence put up around the cemetery, and a large center marker placed in the center of the plot, with the names of those known to be buried there inscribed on the marker.

Minutes of March 14, 1981

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Arlington Historical Society was celebrated on Saturday, March 14, 1981 at Gunston Hall, Colonial Home of George Mason. The meeting was preceded by a candlelight tour of Gunston Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. in the Ann Mason Building dining room by the President, Doris Bangs, with words of welcome to members and guests. This being the annual spring banquet meeting, grace was said by June Verzi. An excellent dinner was served by the

Gunston staff. The President announced the response to the meeting had been so great reservations were cut off at 194.

At 9 p.m., following dinner, Mrs. Bangs announced that because of the nature of the special event there would be no regular business. She thanked Second Vice President Willard Webb and his wife, Ann, for making arrangements for the special meeting. Appreciation was expressed to Jeanne Rose who took reservations, to Annabelle Lane who coordinated transportation, and to Cherie McCormick who arranged for wine and punch to be served during the social hour.

Charter members of the Society present were introduced and Judge Linus Verzi acting as official photographer took their picture. They were: Mrs. William Anderson (Mary Lou), Mrs. J. E. Clements (Elizabeth), J. Elwood Clements, and Mrs. Violet R. Critzer.

Names of the presidents of the Society for the past twenty-five years were read:

1956 C. Harrison Mann, Jr.	1968 J. Elwood Clements
1957 Frank Ball, Sr.	1969 Donald A. Wise
1958 Robert M. Anderson	1970 John L. Overholt
1959 Walter E. Bell, Jr.	1971 Margaret H. Gibson
1960 C. B. Rose, Jr.	1972 John R. Hebert
1961 Dow Nida	1973 Dean C. Allard, Jr.
1962 Jack Foster	1974 Donald J. Orth
1963 Percy C. Smith	1975 June B. Verzi
1964 Elizabeth Goebel	1976 Hyman J. Cohen
1965 John F. Burns	1977 Martha B. Orth
1966 Edward F. Sayle	1978 Ruth P. Rose
1967 Chester M. Brasse	1979 Herbert R. Collins

An excellent film from the Gunston Library entitled *George Mason — Conservative Revolutionary* was shown.

Minutes of May 8, 1981

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum with President Doris Bangs presiding. The Treasurer was absent and there was no financial report.

Kathy Holt, Museum Curator/Director announced that the Museum had received a Washington-Lee uniform, the Pilot Club had made a financial contribution and Mrs. Templeman had given the Society the engraving of Robert E. Lee which she had previously loaned to the Museum.

Don Wise, who organized and wrote a Trail Guide for Boy Scouts, presented patches to Kirk Wise and Kathy Holt.

President Bangs presented Don Wise, who is moving from the area, a Certificate of Appreciation for his many contributions to the Society since becoming a member in 1965. Mrs. Bangs cited his contributions as President of the Society, drawing of maps, establishing the twenty-mile driving trail, and his many excellent articles to the Magazine.

Officers for the coming year were elected.

Mr. Ivan Washburn spoke on the history of Ashton Heights and Clarendon; he is a lifelong resident of the area and illustrated his talk with many interesting old photographs.

Among the places he talked about:

- the various churches in the area, e.g. Mt. Olivet, Clarendon Methodist, St. Charles, St. George's Episcopal
- the Masonic Temple, (Boyer's Pharmacy once on first floor)
- Hurt Cleaners, once the old firehouse
- the Arlington towers, WWI communications towers with Europe, one taller than the Washington Monument (near Columbia Pike)
- Clarendon and Ballston schools

Anecdotes about life in Arlington, contributed to by members of the audience, involved riding the old streetcars and railroads, and memories of early fire engines.

Historic Arlington Day, October 11, 1980

The Society held its Sixteenth Annual House Tour on Saturday, October 11. Arlington House was not available for the Friday evening candlelight tour because of renovations. The following houses were open on Saturday: The Glebe House — former home of Sen. & Mrs. Frank Ball, Sr. at 4527 N. 17th Street; Reevesland — the home of Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Reeves at 400 N. Manchester Street; Grey-Crossman — the home of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Grey at 2501 N. Underwood Street; Cruit Farm — the home of Mr. & Mrs. William L. Page at 1614 N. Highland Street; a Tudor Farmhouse — the home of Tine and Graham Guthrie at 4953 Rock Spring Road; Mt Zion Baptist Church at South 19th Street and Lowell Street.

The Ball-Sellers House was again open as was the Museum where the Aurora Hills Woman's Club served refreshments.

Christmas Reception, December 14, 1980

Dr. and Mrs. William T. Back again opened their home to the Society for a Christmas reception. Mrs. Back's collections of Christmas decorations and dolls and Dr. Back's clocks, along with their lovely house, make this a highlight of the Society's year.

Tour of Linden, May 9, 1981

On Saturday, May 9, a bus holding thirty-nine members of the Society left the Museum at 7:30 a.m. for a tour of Linden, the restored home of Martha and Don Orth. A visit was also made to Wakefield, the birthplace of George Washington.

Garden Party, June 13, 1981

Under the direction of Libby Ross and Ginny Smith a garden party was held on the lawn of Doris Bangs, Society President, on Friday night, June 13. The time was from six until nine and the view of Washington from Mrs. Bangs' lawn, 1905 South Arlington Ridge Road, was an excellent setting for an old fashioned "Lawn Party" with Japanese lanterns, punch, and party food. Several activities had been planned such as croquet but a late afternoon shower forced most of the party goers to spend their time under the cover of the patio. Spirits were not dampened by the rain and again the garden party was a financial success.

BALL-SELLERS HOUSE

During the last year, basic restoration and preservation tasks were completed at the Ball-Sellers House. In the summer of 1980, the modern siding on the oldest part of the structure was replaced with replicas of the original 18th century weatherboards, insulation placed in the walls, and the interior of the house entirely re-plastered and whitewashed, except for areas covered by plastic plates that will allow original construction details to be studied. All of this work was undertaken by two dedicated Arlington craftsmen, Frank Bowen and Jim Bennett, whose contributions are greatly appreciated. Acknowledgement also is made to the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission which provided expert advice and matching funds. Yet another major project completed in 1980 was the complete re-wiring of the 18th century wing.

Work undertaken in 1981 through the date of this report (early August) includes repainting of the entire house. This was accomplished entirely by volunteers, resulting in a saving of at least \$1500. We thank the following for donating their painting skills: Sally Boss and children, Kathy Holt, Gregg and Alice Jones, Jean Martin, Martie Orth, Willard and Ann Webb, and Dean Allard. A generous discount on the paint used was offered by the Dyer Paint Company. In addition to this major task, the 18th century wing was re-roofed with heavy cedar shingles. This involved a major expenditure, but the result is a handsome and structurally sound roof typical of what would have been found in the mid-1700s.

With the completion of these projects, it was decided to schedule the formal opening and dedication of the house for October 18, 1981. The Ball-Sellers Committee looks forward to showing Society members, the more than 250 donors to the restoration fund, and our many friends the results of this five-year project. At that time, antique furnishings and other exhibits will depict the rich history of the Ball-Sellers House. These displays are being prepared by Kathy Holt and Willard and Ann Webb. They will include insofar as possible a recreation of the belongings of John Ball as listed in an inventory prepared after his death in 1766. Another feature of the museum wing will be a book listing the names of all donors to the house fund. The beautiful calligraphy in that volume was provided by Mrs. Ben Burdetsky.

As in previous years, the house was on display in 1980 for Historic Arlington Day and for the annual Glencarlyn Day. Mr. Doug Reed, who is writing a Ph.D. dissertation on log structures, is making a special study of the property. He is most impressed by this rare example of "first settlement" vernacular architecture. The house also was featured in a special TV production of the Arlington community prepared by a cable TV firm from Prince Georges County, Maryland.

We have been most fortunate to have Gregg and Alice Jones, and their six-year old daughter Lara, as our caretakers throughout the year. They have maintained the building and grounds with loving care, provided security to the property, and have been generous with their time in showing visitors through the structure.

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