

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1978-1979

Minutes of September 8, 1978

The Society met at the Arlington Historical Museum with President Ruth P. Rose presiding. The treasurer reported \$4,026.75 in the Operating Fund, and \$7,784.87 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. The membership was reported as of September 1, 1979 to be 213 regular members, 29 life members, and 7 junior members. Mrs. Rose announced that the society had a successful booth at the Arlington County Fair in August.

Mr. Warren Clardy presented a slide show, which was narrated by Martha Orth, entitled "This Is Your Arlington." He also described the early settlements of Alexandria and Georgetown which were rivals in commerce, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and the movement of slaves northward to Washington, D.C. in the years before the Civil War.

Minutes of November 10, 1978

The Society met at the museum. The treasurer reported \$3,975.12 in the Operating Fund, and \$7,688.58 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. There were 318 paid members.

Mrs. Martha Orth presented a portrait of C. Harrison Mann, Jr., first president of the Historical Society, as a gift from Mrs. Mann. Mr. Mann had died November 28, 1977. Mr. Jack Foster spoke of Mr. Mann's accomplishments in Arlington County civic affairs, and of his outstanding eight terms in the Virginia General Assembly, where he sponsored legislation on behalf of the creation of George Mason University.

Fred Tilp, author of a book *This Was Potomac River*, gave a very interesting talk on "Fun and Games on the River." He reviewed the economic and social history of the river from 1607 until 1940. The river was the center of much economic activity, including shipbuilding, operation of ferries, shipping of goods, general business and pleasure travel, and fishing.

Minutes of January 19, 1979

The meeting of the Society was convened one week late due to icy weather. The treasurer reported \$4,795.23 in the Operating Fund and \$8,009.58 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. Mrs. Rose announced that the Society had joined the Arlington Civic Federation.

Mark Savage gave a slide talk tracing the ownership of the land occupied by Colonial Village in Arlington from the original land grant from Charles II, Monarch of England, on September 18, 1649, down to the present. Colonial Village was Arlington's first garden apartment complex and the nation's first housing project, opening in 1936.

Minutes of March 9, 1979

In lieu of a regular March meeting, the Annual Spring Banquet was held on March 9, 1979 at the Officers Club Ballroom at Fort Myer, Arlington, Virginia. The U.S. Army Chorus, conducted by Sergeant First Class Barry S. Hemphill, entertained with a selection of songs.

Vice President Herbert Collins read a letter from the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission dated February 26, 1979, notifying the Society that the Commission had placed the Hume School on the Virginia Landmarks Register and had nominated it to the National Register of Historic Places.

Board Member Evelyn Syphax announced that the contents of the cornerstone of the 1924 Washington-Lee High School had been secured for the Society. W-L Assistant Principal Jay Ness presented a token of these items to Miss Sally Loving for the Society. (Miss Loving was a member of the original faculty of W-L.)

The speaker was Dr. B. Franklin Cooling, military historian of the U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. His topic was "Defenses of Washington During the Civil War", with emphasis on the forts in Arlington.

After Dr. Cooling's slide-talk, Mrs. Valerie Kitchens, representing a group, Friends of Arlington Parks, reported efforts to save three Arlington areas for county parks. One of these was the Hendry Tract (North 24th Street and the Potomac Palisades) on which Fort C.F. Smith was built in 1863. Mrs. Rose noted that the Executive Board of the Society had passed a resolution on February 9, 1979, requesting the County Board to purchase and preserve the Hendry Tract as a county park, or at least that part necessary to preserve the historic features of Fort C.F. Smith.

Minutes of May 11, 1979

The Society met at the museum. The treasurer reported \$4,766.69 in the Operating Fund, and \$8,264.26 in the Ball-Sellers House Fund. The membership chairman reported a total of 478 members.

President Ruth Rose announced that the Executive Board had passed resolutions in honor of the contributions to the Society of Donald Orth,

Museum Director, and Charles M. Brasse, Legal Adviser.

Mrs. Rose announced that the Society will seek advertising for the Arlington Historical Magazine.

The following officers were elected for 1979-1980: President — Herbert R. Collins; First Vice President — Doris C. Bangs; Second Vice President — James E. Huddleston; Recording Secretary — Jean S. Doptis; Newsletter Secretary — Ruth C. Cocklin; Treasurer — James Walling; Directors — Warren Clardy, J. Elwood Clements, Joseph R. McDonough, Libby S. Ross, Virginia Lillis Smith, and Evelyn Syphax; and Ex Officio Director — Mrs. Ruth P. Rose.

The speaker was Mrs. Evelyn Syphax who reported on "Highlights of Black History in Arlington." She listed early prominent black residents of Arlington, including Mr. William C. Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Syphax, and Dr. Charles R. Drew. She noted that public school integration in Virginia had started in February 1959 at Stratford Junior High School. She identified several areas where black residents had lived in Arlington in the early days.

Arlington Historical Weekend — October 13-15, 1978

There was a candlelight tour of Arlington House (Lee Mansion) on Friday, October 13, 1979. On Saturday, October 14 there were tours of the museum and the Ball-Sellers House, the Saegmuller house — Knights of Columbus, the Calloway United Methodist Church, and the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Nash at 4611 North Carlin Spring Road, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wyatt at 3575 Roberts Lane, and Mr. and Mrs. David R. Freeman at 5915 North 15th Street. On Sunday, October 15 there was a walking tour of the Arlington Historic Trail led by Donald Wise.

Christmas Reception

On December 17, 1978 the Society enjoyed a Christmas reception at the home of Dr. and Mrs. William T. Back. The Backs have an unusual collection of traditional Christmas decorations.

Prepared by James E. Huddleston

Secretary 1978-79

7-9-79

Ball-Sellers House

The Ball-Sellers House was opened for Historic Arlington Day and for nearby residents during Glen Carlyn Day. In addition, several groups made special tours of the property.

A new caretaker, the Reverend E. Russell Lynn, moved into the house in September 1978. As a result of his efforts, the grounds have been particularly well maintained. Longer-term landscaping of the area currently is being studied by the Green Manor Garden Club, which is working with the Society in preparing a master plan for the grounds.

Considerable work was undertaken in the basement under the 18th century wing, which was dug out and levelled. A vapor barrier was installed over the dirt surface to lessen the moisture in the house. In addition, two beams running across the entire width of the 18th century structure were installed. The Society is particularly grateful to Donald Orth, who led these efforts. Others who volunteered their labor included Richard Biby and Hunt M. Allard.

Ruth Ward and Dean Allard,
Co-chairmen of the Ball-Sellers House Committee