

Arlington Forest

By DONALD A. WISE

Arlington Forest is the name of a single-family housing development located in the west-central part of Arlington County, Virginia. This area is intersected by Arlington Boulevard (U.S. Highway 50) in an east-west direction, and Lubber Run, a tributary of Four Mile Run, in a north-south direction. The name Arlington Forest is also used by the County to designate a distinct area for planning purposes and as a name for the local voting precinct. Although this residential area has been in existence for less than three decades, it does have a few interesting facts which should be made a general part of the historical records of Arlington County.

Lubber Run Tract

The settlement of the Four Mile Run valley began soon after 1700. In 1725 Robert Bates of Stafford County got a grant for 525 acres on the north side of Four Mile Run west of Todd and Thomas and east of the tract subsequently patented by John Colville. The Lee Boulevard (now Arlington Boulevard) passes through it.¹ On February 4, 1731, John Colville took out a grant for 1,246 acres on the north side of Four Mile Run which included Lubber Run, the present subdivision of Bon Air Veitch, and extended to or beyond Hall's Hill. The surveyor was recited as being Henry Warner. In 1755 John Colville had another survey made of his tract and a copy of this result is shown on the next page.² The following statement appears below this plat: "Fairfax County, 17th May 1755. At request of Col. John Colvill surveyed four mile Run as follows: Beginning at A a Red Oak standing on a hillside then measured to the said Run S34W5 poles, 15 links, thence up the meanders to B a Gum on the south side thereof, Thence continued the several courses and meanders to C a White Oak near the said Run, Then Protracted the Several Courses as above According to the [?] given me by the aforesaid Colvill. G. West. S. Chain Carriers: Moses Ball, James Bowmaker."

The Fairfax County Order Book shows that in February 1754, John Colville was given permission to erect a water grist mill on Lubber Run a short distance above its confluence with Four Mile Run.³ Colville's mill and others along Four Mile Run were intended to grind corn and wheat. This was reminiscent of a change then taking place in the agriculture of Northern Virginia. By the middle of the eighteenth century, wheat was being substituted for tobacco as the chief export in this area.⁴ In 1772 William Carlin bought 165 acres on the north side of Four Mile Run across

¹ Charles W. Stetson, *Four Mile Run Land Grants*, p. 43.

² Fairfax County Record of Surveys (1742-1850), p. 51.

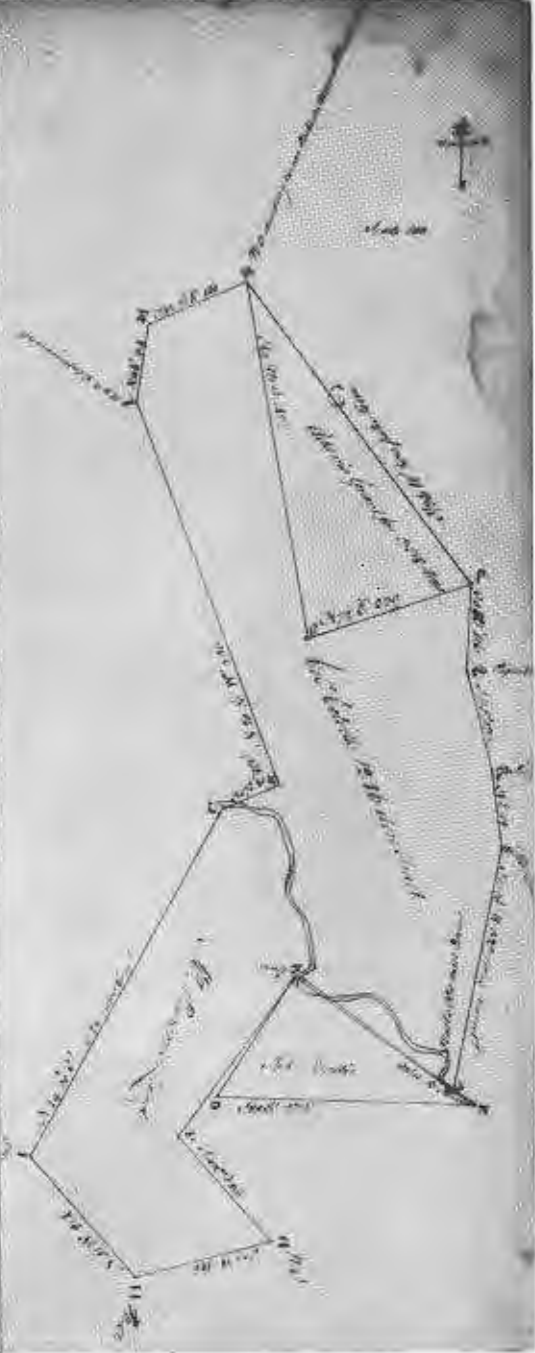
³ Stetson, p. 97.

⁴ Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, p. 401.

The map of the
Lubber Run Plat

Surveyed by John Colville
The Lubber Run Plat is a survey of a tract of land containing the following
boundaries as they have been found. It is situated in the State of North Carolina
and is bounded on the north by the State of Virginia on the east by the
State of South Carolina and on the west by the State of Georgia.

Colville



Copy of Colville's Lubber Run Plat

from his original tract. This was part of Colonel John Colville's Lubber Run tract. The deed to Carlin was made by the Honorable Charles Earl of Tankerville and the Honorable Henry A. Ashton, devisees of the late Earl of Tankerville who had acquired title by the will of John Colville. This 165 acres included the Mary A. Carlin land, the Paullin and Alexander parcels, and a considerable part of the Henderson estate.⁵ For the Lubber Run tract he paid the high price of \$15.00 an acre, giving a purchase money mortgage.⁶ Stetson reports that the Lubber Run tract remained as woodland up to the time of the publication of his book in 1935. The author has verified that the area remained basically in woodlands until the start of the Arlington Forest housing development in 1939.⁷ The 1878 Hopkins Map of Alexandria County, Virginia,⁸ shows the part of Lubber Run where the Arlington Forest community now extends as having only two families, Wm. Cipher and Chas. Mix, living in the area at that time. Mrs. Paden told the author that the name Cipher was shown incorrectly on the 1878 map and should have been spelled as Sypher.⁹

Forty-nine acres of the Lubber Run tract were taken by John A. Richards, a son-in-law of William Carlin. In 1845, 52 acres of the same tract were deeded to William H. Prentiss. Both of these parcels were later acquired by John B. Henderson, Jr. The remaining 38 acres of the Lubber Run tract, lying east of the Run and north of Four Mile Run was purchased by James Harvey Carlin, and remained in the family until sold to Curtis and Burdett.¹⁰ By deed of April 30th, 1887, the Carlin heirs, John E. E., Ann E. A., and William H. F., conveyed to William W. Curtis and Samuel S. Burdett . . . a 38 acre parcel lying east of Lubber Run and north of Four Mile Run. The purchase price was \$8,000.00. This last parcel of 38 acres was conveyed in 1891 by Curtis and Burdett to the Carlin Springs Company operative association, and by it to John B. Henderson, once a Senator from Missouri and one of the seven Republican Senators who followed their consciences but committed political suicide by voting for the acquittal of President Andrew Johnson.¹¹

The Henderson Tract

The John B. Henderson family once owned most of the land on which the Arlington Forest community is now situated. The author located

⁵ Stetson, pp. 108-109.

⁶ Stetson, p. 110.

⁷ Mrs. H. P. Paden, Interview in Arlington, Virginia, September 13, 1968, concerning the Arlington Forest area. Also Arlington County Office of Planning has an aerial¹ photo map of Arlington County (circa 1935) which confirms this statement.

⁸ *Atlas of 15 Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia*, G. M. Hopkins, C. E., Philadelphia, 1879, pp. 66-67. Also see article by C. B. Rose, Jr. "The Map of Arlington in 1878—Places and People," *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, Volume 2, No. 2, October, 1962, pp. 17-35.

⁹ Mrs. Paden Interview.

¹⁰ Stetson, pp. 117-118.

¹¹ Stetson, pp. 124-125.

three maps of the Henderson Tract in the Arlington County office of the Surveys Division: 1) a Plat of Henderson Tract by Lincoln Mackey, Surveyor, one inch equals 100 feet, February 10, 1941; 2) a Boundary Line Map of Henderson Park by James H. Starkey, Civil Engineer, no scale given, March 15, 1929; and 3) a multicolored map of Alexandria County dated 1900 showing the Henderson parcels of land. A copy of the latter map¹² is also in the historical collection of maps at the Hume School Historical Museum.

The Henderson family had a summer home, barn, caretaker's house, and a number of other miscellaneous buildings on the parcel of land where the Arlington County Recreation Center is now located at North Park Drive and North George Mason Drive. Today no traces remain of the buildings which were on this portion of the old Henderson tract of land.

Mr. Herbert H. Porter, a patent lawyer, bought some six acres of the old Henderson tract which included the Henderson House and other buildings in 1925. Mr. Porter is reported to have raised herbs as a hobby. There was a small dam across Lubber Run and the water was used to irrigate his exotic herbs.¹³ A portion of the concrete dam structure may still be seen on Lubber Run just below the footbridge near North Columbus Street and Third Street North in Arlington Forest. Mr. Porter sold his 6.76 acre tract to Arlington County on July 11, 1951.¹⁴

In the 1930's the old Henderson Tract was considered as a possible site for the location of the U.S. Naval Hospital, eventually built in Bethesda, Maryland.¹⁵ Apparently most of the Arlington Forest area remained in woods until its development into lots and streets for a residential subdivision in 1939. This was verified by the author with Mrs. Paden, Mr. Dieter, and Mr. Monroe Warren, builder of the Arlington Forest housing development.¹⁶ However, Mr. Culpepper told the author that the area lying around his five acre parcel of land which lies adjacent to the east side of the Arlington Forest community was originally an old tobacco farm. The fertility of the soil had long been depleted and the abandoned farmland was overgrown with weeds and pines in 1925.¹⁷

After Mrs. John B. Henderson's death, most of the Henderson Tract was sold in 1930 to Thomas H. Pickford. Mr. Pickford recorded the lands as

¹² Map of Alexandria County, Virginia, prepared by Howell and Taylor for the Virginia Title Company, 1900.

¹³ Frank Dieter, Interview in Arlington County, Virginia, September 11, 1968, concerning the Arlington Forest area.

¹⁴ Arlington County and Acquisition Division, Deeds to Lubber Run Park, Arlington D.B. 1139/598.

¹⁵ Mrs. Paden Interview.

¹⁶ Mr. Warren Monroe, Sr., Interview, September 12, 1968, concerning the Arlington Forest area.

¹⁷ Mr. C. W. Culpepper, Interview, September 16, 1968, concerning the Arlington Forest area.

"Pickwood, Incorporated" (formerly Henderson Park Corporation).¹⁸ In 1936 Thomas Pickford sold the land to the Robert E. Heater Association Incorporation for \$173,478.00.¹⁹ The land was then sold to William R. Parmelee of the Parmelee Incorporation and a section of land known as "Parmelee," Section One was platted in 1936.²⁰ No development occurred and in 1939 Monroe Warren, Sr. acquired title to Parmelee (Boulevard Corporation).²¹

Arlington Forest

After Mr. Warren, builder and president of the Meadowbrook Corporation, acquired the Parmelee tract, he selected the name "Arlington Forest" for his new housing development. Mr. Warren stated that he decided on the name Arlington Forest because of the wooded area and its location in Arlington County.²² The first homes were built on Section One on Lee Boulevard (now called Arlington Boulevard) and South Park Drive. The architect for the initial homes in the Arlington Forest community was Robert O. Scholz.²³ Some 850 homes were built in the Arlington Forest area between 1939 and 1944. The two-story brick homes in the Arlington Forest community were advertised for \$5,000.00 each in 1939. The houses had three bedrooms and a bath upstairs; a living room, dining room, and kitchen on the first level; and a complete basement. All houses had a side porch and if a fireplace or detached garage was desired, there was an additional cost of \$500.00 each. The basic floor plans were alternated only to the extent that the main entrance to the houses was either through the front of the house or through the side porch and the living room could be either to the right or left of the house. All homes were originally heated by an oil furnace with a forced air circulation system.

Today there are a number of the homes still occupied by the original owners. Many home owners have added additions to the rear of the homes or to the side porch area. Several homes have been converted to gas heating and central air conditioning. The value of the homes has increased with real estate in Arlington County and today most homes in the Arlington Forest area would sell between the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range.

Prior to the construction of the Arlington Forest community, Arlington County had developed without adequate controls or a comprehensive plan to prevent the indiscriminate mixture of incompatible land uses throughout

¹⁸ Arlington County Deed Book 316/511.

¹⁹ Arlington County Deed Book 393/254.

²⁰ Arlington County Deed Book, 398/203.

²¹ Arlington County Deed Books 464/282, 474/98, 488/153, 496/574, 496/184, 477/500, 500/384, 504/572, 508/325, 513/113, 517/376, 520/386, 521/299, 525/298, 528/375, 533/298, 535/313, 542/360, 556/192, 574/428, 803/510.

²² Mr. Monroe, Interview.

²³ Mrs. John Rosado et al. "History of Arlington Forest Citizens Association," May, 1968, p. 1.

its area.²⁴ This is one reason why a covenant was registered at the Court House for the original Parmelee plat. The covenant had certain restrictions which prohibited "such nuisances as stables, pig pens, chickens, hogs, cows, horses, goats, or other livestock" within the subdivision. A copy of this covenant is included as an appendix to this article.²⁵ Many new innovations in design and planning were used in the Arlington Forest development. Lee Boulevard (U.S. 50) had just been built through Arlington Forest and parallel service roads and a buffer park strip were incorporated on either side of the highway. This was the first project in Virginia to use this unique approach, now fairly common.²⁶

Another innovation in Arlington Forest was to include a small shopping center in a housing development. The Arlington Forest Shopping Center was developed in 1941 and it provided off-street parking. To keep a commercial operation off of Lee Boulevard, the Arlington Forest Shopping Center was set back 150 feet from the right-of-way.²⁷ The Arlington Forest Shopping Center consisted of 10 stores; a filling station was added later.²⁸ The first business opened was the Forest Delicatessen, Jack and Pauline Cohen, Proprietors.²⁹

There was a deep ravine where the present parking lot for Lubber Run Park is located near the intersection of North Columbus Street and Second Street North. Material taken from the excavations of the Arlington Forest basements was used to fill the parking lot area.³⁰ Mr. Warren donated a number of tracts of land for incorporation into Lubber Run Park³¹ and a number of walkways to give access to the Park and to the local schools. Arlington Forest was the first subdivision in Arlington County to lay the power and telephone lines in the back yards instead of along the streets in front of the homes.

Lubber Run Park is forested with many fine hardwood trees. There were many chestnut trees in the Park area in 1940 which had died from the blight. These trees were cut into two foot log sections and used for seats in Lubber Run Park. The first fireplaces were built from boulders taken from Lubber Run.³²

The early residents of the Arlington Forest community organized "The Citizens Association" in 1940. The main purposes of the organization were

²⁴ Frank Dieter, "Early Planning Progress in Arlington County, Virginia to 1945," *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 3, October, 1967, pp. 29-35.

²⁵ Arlington County Deed Book 525/294.

²⁶ Mr. Dieter, Interview.

²⁷ Mr. Dieter, Interview.

²⁸ Arlington Forest Shopping Center prepared by Office of Planning, Arlington County, Virginia, February, 1959.

²⁹ Rosado, p. 1.

³⁰ Mr. Dieter, Interview.

³¹ Dieter, p. 35, *op. cit.*

³² Mr. Dieter, Interview.

to become better acquainted with each other, to influence the County School Board to make improvements in the local schools, and to work as a group for the general improvement of the County. The early residents of Arlington Forest were a closer-knit group than are its present occupants. The Association sponsored a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Arlington Forest Shopping Center, held children's Christmas parties in the Buckingham Theater, family picnics in Lubber Run Park, and an annual dinner. The Arlington Forest Citizens Association is still active and a member of the Arlington County Civic Federation. The Arlington Forest Citizens Association has the distinction of having published a newspaper for a longer period than any other civic association in Arlington County. *The Arlington Forester* is delivered monthly to all residents in the Arlington Forest area.³³ An Arlington Forest Recreation Club, sponsored by the Association, opened on March 15, 1945, in the rear of the Shopping Center Barber Shop.³⁴ The Arlington Forest Club, Incorporated was organized in 1954 to build a swimming pool for the residents of Arlington Forest.³⁵ This is the facility which was established on North Carlyn Springs Road and has since expanded its membership to other residents in Arlington County.

Today Arlington Forest remains a residential area which has benefited from its earlier experiments in good planning practices. The design of the Arlington Forest subdivision was a model for its time and the front cover of a U.S. Government publication "Suggested Land Subdivision Regulations" by the Housing and Home Finance Agency, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., July 1960, features an aerial photo of Arlington Forest.

³³ Rosado, p. 3.

³⁴ Rosado, p. 7.

³⁵ Rosado, p. 14.

Appendix

RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

Deed Book 525, Page 294

Arlington Forest, Sec. 6

Arlington County, Virginia

(A) All lots in the tract shall be known and described as residential lots. No structures shall be erected, altered, placed or permitted to remain on any residential building plot other than one detached single-family dwelling not to exceed two and one-half stories in height and a private garage for not more than two cars.

(B) No building shall be erected, placed or altered on any building plot in this subdivision until the external design and location thereof have been approved in writing by the Neighborhood Committee which shall be appointed or elected by the owner or owners of a majority of the lots which are subject to the covenants herein set forth; provided, however, that if such committee fails to approve or disapprove such design and location within thirty days after such plans have been submitted to it or if no suit to enjoin the erection of such building or the making of such alterations has been commenced prior to the completion thereof, such approval shall not be required.

(C) No building shall be located on any residential building plot nearer than twenty-five feet to the front lot line, nor nearer than twenty feet to any side street line. No building, except a garage or other outbuilding located sixty feet or more from the front lot line, shall be located nearer than seven feet to any side lot line.

(D) No residential structure shall be erected or placed on any building plot, which plot has an area of less than 5,500 square feet or a width of less than fifty-five feet at the front building setback line, except that a residence may be erected or placed on Lots 1 to 8, inclusive, Block 9; Lot 1 and Lot 19, Block 11; Lots 1, 7, 8, 13, 14 and 18, in Block 12; Lots 5, 10, 26, 27, 28 and 34 in Block 13; Lot 13, Block 15; and Lot 1, Block 16, Section 6, Arlington Forest, in accordance with building restrictions imposed by the County of Arlington, Virginia.

(E) No business or trade or noxious or offensive activity shall be carried on upon any residential lot nor shall anything be done thereon which may be or become an annoyance or nuisance to the neighborhood.

(F) No persons of any race other than the Caucasian Race shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant.

(G) No trailer, basement, tent, shack, garage, barn or other outbuilding erected in the tract shall at any time be used as a residence temporarily or permanently, nor shall any structure of a temporary character be used as a residence.

(H) No dwelling costing less than \$3,000.00 shall be permitted on any lot in the tract. The ground floor area of the main structure, exclusive of one-story open porches and garages, shall be not less than 650 square feet in the case of a one-story structure nor less than 450 square feet in the case of a one and one-half, two or two and one-half story structure.

(I) An easement is reserved over the rear 5 feet of each lot for utility installation and maintenance.

(J) No building shall be located nor shall any material or refuse be placed or stored on any lot within 20 feet of the property line of any park or parkway or edge of any open water course, except that clean fill may be placed nearer to the lot line provided the natural water course is not altered or blocked by such fill.

(K) These covenants are to run with the land and shall be binding on all the parties and all persons claiming under them until January 1, 1970, at which time said

covenants shall be automatically extended for successive periods of 10 yrs. unless by a vote of the majority of the then owners of the lots it is agreed to change said covenants in whole or in part.

(L) If the parties hereto, or any of them, or their heirs or assigns, shall violate or attempt to violate any of the covenants herein, it shall be lawful for any other person or persons owning any real property situated in said development or subdivision to prosecute any proceedings at law or in equity against the person or persons violating or attempting to violate any such covenant and either to prevent him or them from so doing or to recover damages or other dues for such violation.

(M) Invalidation of any one of these covenants by judgment or court order shall in no wise affect any of the other provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Alexander Title Agency

