

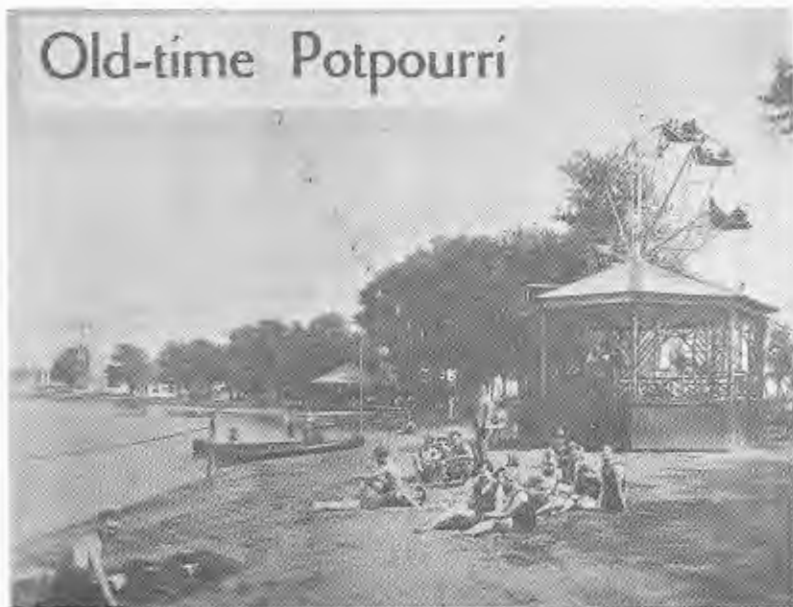
AMONG OUR ARCHIVES

BY

RUTH M. WARD

Arlington Beach and Amusement Park opened May 30, 1923. Just north of Highway Bridge, it boasted a large sandy beach, bath houses, dance pavilion, merry go round, and other amusement park features.

A 1923 brochure advertising Arlington Beach lists this additional attraction: "Parking facilities such as are seldom found are now being provided. More than thirty acres are available for parking, while nearly opposite the main entrance there is another large tract for cars. Both will be properly lighted to insure the safety of life and property. If you are an auto owner you will appreciate the parking arrangements, after the trouble you have had at other places to find a parking space for your car." (Picture copied from the Columbia Historical Society Archives)



In 1924, Washingtonians didn't have to drive so far as they do now to get to a beach. They had their choice of the Tidal Basin and Arlington beaches, the latter (above) near the Virginia end of the Highway Bridge.

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In earlier days, a poetic eulogy was a popular form of showing respect for the deceased, and sympathy to a grieving family.

In our collection of Ball Family papers (40 documents, 1760-1886) is a poignant memorial of the burial of a Revolutionary soldier. It is dated "Jany 12th 1837". The poet and the dead warrior are not identified, and the cover of the document is inscribed simply "Mr. Ball Sen."

BURIAL OF A REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER

What note is that so Sad and clear
The mournful fife's repeating
It is the Brave's last march I hear
The martial drum a beating
I see the white plumes of the Brave
and arms revers'd reclining
They're marching onwards to the Grave
a warriors dust consigning
Sweet be thy sleep and dear thy fame
Tired friend to Freedoms glory
And ever cherish'd be thy name
In its undying Story
On Victory's field a Soldiers grave
with thy brave comrades Sleeping
Was not thy fate but virtued braves
around thy bier were weeping
Twas Soldiers bore thee to the spot
and smooth'd thy last lone pillow
And where was fir'd the farewell Shot
They'll plant the weeping willow
Thus ever honor'd be the bed
And Cherish'd be the Story
of him who suffer'd and who bled
For his dear countrys glory

I.F.T.

How beautiful in Death
The warriors corse appears
Embalm'd with fond affections
Jany 12th 1837 And bath'd in womans tears
Immortal may their memory be
Who fought and bled for Liberty

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Abingdon, birthplace of George Washington's adopted daughter, Nelly Custis, may have been built as early as 1741, making it Arlington's oldest house. George Washington frequently visited Abingdon.

The house appeared to be in good condition in a 1912 picture (copied from the Columbia Historical Society Archives). It later stood abandoned, and on March 5, 1930, burned to the ground. On the grounds of Washington National Airport, remnants of brick chimneys and walls are all that remain of the historic colonial house.



Abingdon, ca. 1912



Ruins of Abingdon, 1976

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