

LAYING OF CORNERSTONE OF
ARLINGTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE
DEDICATION ADDRESS

By

Eleanor Lee Templeman
January 14, 1961

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, Senator Frank L. Ball, Chairman of the Cornerstone Committee, is unable to be with us to-day, so I have been asked to tell you of the contents of the box which is being placed behind the cornerstone. The Committee chose items which it considered would be most informative to those of a future generation who will open it and find therein, a cross-section of data depicting every phase of County activity as of 1961.

Please refer to the list which is in the programs which you have been given.

The heritage of Arlington County is unique in American history. It has probably undergone more jurisdictional changes than any other county in the nation. It was included in the original charter of 1606 which led to the "James Cittie" settlement the following year. The second charter of the "Virginia Company" granted jurisdiction over "all those lands from . . . Point Comfort northward 200 miles . . . southward 200 miles . . . throughout from sea to sea, west and northwest." The third charter of 1612 included Bermuda which had been discovered in the meantime.

The land which is now Arlington County was originally a part of Northumberland County. It subsequently became parts of other counties which were created as settlement pushed inland up the Potomac; Westmoreland in 1653, Stafford in 1664, Prince William in 1731, and Fairfax in 1742. Its approximate present boundaries were set in 1791 under the direction of George Washington to form the Virginia portion of the ten-mile square of the District of Columbia. It was retroceded to Virginia in 1846 as Alexandria County; the name changed to ARLINGTON COUNTY in 1920.

Within its boundaries are symbols of every important event in American history, beginning with Captain John Smith's visit in 1608. Our forest trails were transversed by the Potomac Rangers, and by Braddock's men enroute to the French and Indian Wars. In local family graveyards lie those who fought in the Revolution. The War of 1812 was symbolized by George Washington Parke Custis who fired the last cannon at the Battle of Bladensburg while his wife and seven-year-old daughter watched the flames of the burning Capital from the portico of Arlington House. The daughter later became the bride of Robert E. Lee. She and their children awaited his return from the Mexican War, in which he distinguished himself for meritorious service.

The twenty-two Civil War fortifications within Arlington County's borders protected Washington from direct attack and probable destruction. From Fort Myer went forth troops during the Spanish-American War, and every subsequent conflict in which Americans have been involved. To-day, world famous memorials to the heroes of all these conflicts are within Arlington

County's borders which include the Arlington National Cemetery.

Arlington County has always been a predominantly residential community. From the establishment of the Federal City across the Potomac, it has had an exceptionally cosmopolitan population. Early statesmen, diplomats, and "top brass" established summer homes and hunting lodges in our forests and meadowlands. In the 20th century, it is the permanent home of cultured residents. Although it is the third smallest county in the nation (and *the* smallest if one excludes the Federal land therein), it has in recent years made outstanding national records in civic, safety, and educational fields. From 1930 to 1950, it maintained the national population growth record. If Senator Ball could be here today, he would tell you of the dedication of the old court house in 1898, which he had witnessed as a boy. I am therefore going to quote from his written recollections;-

"For fifty-two years after becoming a Virginia county, the County of Alexandria, now Arlington, had no building within its own limits to house any of its offices. The Court House was located at Columbus and Queen Streets in the City of Alexandria . . . The records were not voluminous and consisted mainly of those of the County Clerk . . . The Sheriff and Commonwealth's Attorney had no fixed offices and the official locus followed the person of the incumbent. This was also largely true of the Treasurer, who kept most of his official papers in his home . . . The Superintendent of Schools carried his office in his pocket.

"Both County and Circuit courts were held in Alexandria City. County Court met every month. The Circuit Judge literally rode the circuit -- holding court for two weeks at a time in each jurisdiction -- Alexandria City, Fairfax and Prince William Counties.

"The demand for the removal of the County offices into the County itself reached its climax in 1896, . . . and the Board of Supervisors was authorized to set up a commission to make a selection . . . and to accept the lowest bid for the construction of the Court House, not to exceed twenty thousand dollars. . .

"The Commissioners unanimously decided to accept the offer of the Fort Myer Heights Land Company to contribute Block 8 of their subdivision . . . The deed specified . . . 'That no blacksmith, . . . livery stable, pig pen or bone boiling or similar establishment shall be erected or permitted on said lots, that no nuisance or offensive, noisy, or illegal trade, calling or transaction shall be . . . permitted thereon.' Whether the practice of the legal profession, especially in hotly contested cases, constitutes a noisy calling or transaction has never been decided..

"The Court House was built on the site of Civil War Fort Woodbury. In the downstairs hall is a tile mosaic which reads: "Erected by the Citizens of Alexandria Co., Va., A. D. 1898. Pursuant of an Act of the Legislature Passed February 1896. Board of Supervisors, Geo. N. Saegmuller, Chairman; Fred S. Corbett, W. Duncan. Arch., A. Goenner. Site Donated by Geo. P. Robinson, D. K. Trimmer.

"The writer [Senator Ball] has a very clear recollection of the dedication . . . There were five principal addresses by prominent men including J. Hoge Tyler,

Governor of Virginia ... There was a banquet, the part that I remember best was served at the southwest corner of Court House Square, where a whole steer was roasted over a charcoal fire and large pieces of beef were cut off and handed out with bread to all of us youngsters as well as to the grown ups ... They had the steer turning on a spit for two days in order to get him cooked down to the point where the crowd could go into raptures over the well-roasted beef ... By nightfall, there was nothing left but a few bones ...

"The other things most remembered ... were the race for a greasy pig and the climbing of the greasy pole ... at the top of which were a number of watches ... and other items of some value. The climbing started early in the day, at which time a host of young boys could only get a few feet off the ground before they slipped back. There was a young chap by the name of Copperthite, who had come over from Georgetown who was a little too smart for all of us country boys. After making one or two attempts at the pole, he conceived the bright idea that with the aid of a little sand he could make it ... he was able to reach the top, and take the choicest watch ... By that time he was down, all of the rest of the boys had their pockets full of sand and it was a battle royal as to who should have the next chance ...

"The day was a beautiful one. Everybody in the County came early and stayed late. Everybody knew everybody else, and all the current gossip was hashed and rehashed and a glorious time was had by all ... When Alexandria County laid down its sleepy head that night, it was complete for the first time in its history with its Courts and offices all housed within its borders."*

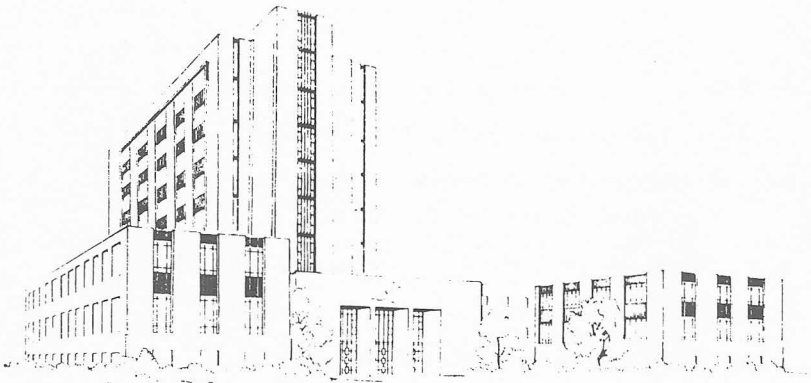
When George Washington Parke Custis built his home in 1802 in our County, he named it Mount Washington but his bride persuaded him to call it ARLINGTON in honor of his own ancestral home. How suitable it is that our County should bear the name of ARLINGTON. It is through the mansion of that name and the National Cemetery created upon the plantation, that the proud name of ARLINGTON is known and respected throughout the world.

* Adapted from: Frank L. Ball, "Arlington Comes of Age: The Building and Dedication of the Court House," *The Arlington Historical Magazine* (1958), p. 5-14.

PROGRAM
CORNERSTONE LAYING

Arlington County Court House
Arlington, Virginia

Saturday Morning, January 14, 1961
Half-past Eleven o'clock



COUNTY BOARD

Leo Urbanske, Jr., Chairman

Herbert L. Brown, Jr.

Ralph Kaul

Thomas W. Richards

Ernest D. Wilt

PROGRAM CORNERSTONE LAYING

ORDER OF EVENTS

INVOCATION

Reverend David Ray Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church

INTRODUCTIONS

A. T. Lundberg, County Manager

ADDRESS

Leo Urbanske, Jr., Chairman of the County Board

REMARKS

Walter T. McCarthy, Senior Judge, 35th Judicial Circuit

John M. Walton, John M. Walton Associates, and
Albert D. Lueders, Architects

L. A. Hauser, Hauser Construction Company, Contractor

R. M. Wirt, Director, Department of Public Service

Eleanor Lee Templeman, Cornerstone Box Committee

BENEDICTION

Reverend J. Roy Smith Mount Olivet Methodist Church

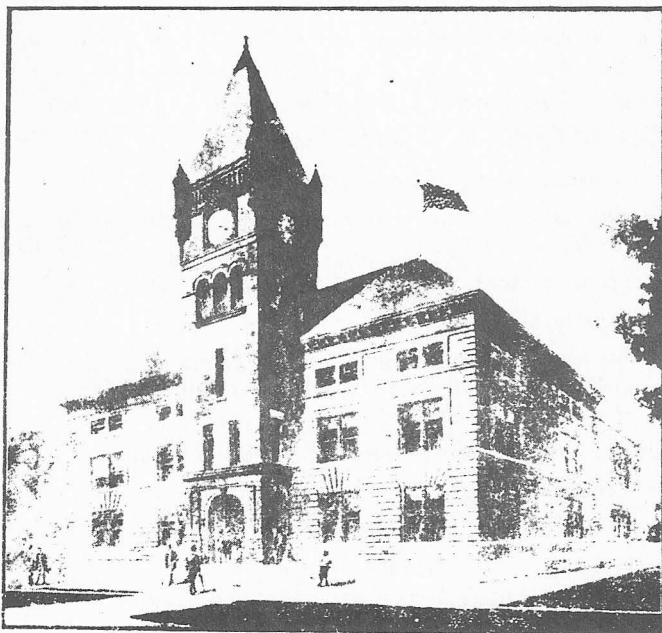
CONTENTS OF CORNERSTONE BOX

Copy of County Board Minutes authorizing erection of the Court House
Brochure describing the bond issue to finance construction
Copy of address delivered at cornerstone laying
Current map of Arlington County
Master Plan studies which have been presented to County Board
"History of the Boundaries of Arlington County", Office of County
Manager
Annual Report of Arlington County, Year Ended June 30, 1960
Annual financial leaflet of Arlington County
Teacher's Handbook with 1960-61 supplement
Parent Handbooks for primary and intermediate grades and for junior and
senior high schools
Operating School Budget, 1960-61
Operating County Budget, 1960-61
Administrative and teacher personnel of the Arlington Public Schools for
1960 with program of Professional Staff Meeting of
August 29, 1960
Number of photographs of area adjacent to Court House
"Northern Virginia Sun," January 14, 1961
"Arlington Historical Magazine," Volume 1, Number 2 (1958)
"Arlington Heritage," Mrs. Eleanor Lee Templeman
Blue Book for 1960, Arlington Chamber of Commerce
Dedication program
Letter of Cornerstone Box Committee
"Handbook on County Government Organization," Fourth Edition (1960)
Telephone Directory, Washington Metropolitan Area, 1960
Coins
Miniature gavel made of wood from the old Court House

Cornerstone Committee
Frank L. Ball, Chairman
Howard Gammon
Argyle R. Mackey
T. R. Schellenberg
Eleanor Lee Templeman
James Tyler

Souvenir Program.

DEDICATION
OF
THE ALEXANDRIA COUNTY COURT HOUSE.
Fort Myer Heights, Va. November 16, 1898.



Above is a reproduction of the cover of the Souvenir Program issued at the time the first Court House located in the County proper was dedicated on November 16, 1898. Previously, the County Court House was located in Alexandria City. The name of the County was changed to Arlington by Act of the General Assembly in 1920.