

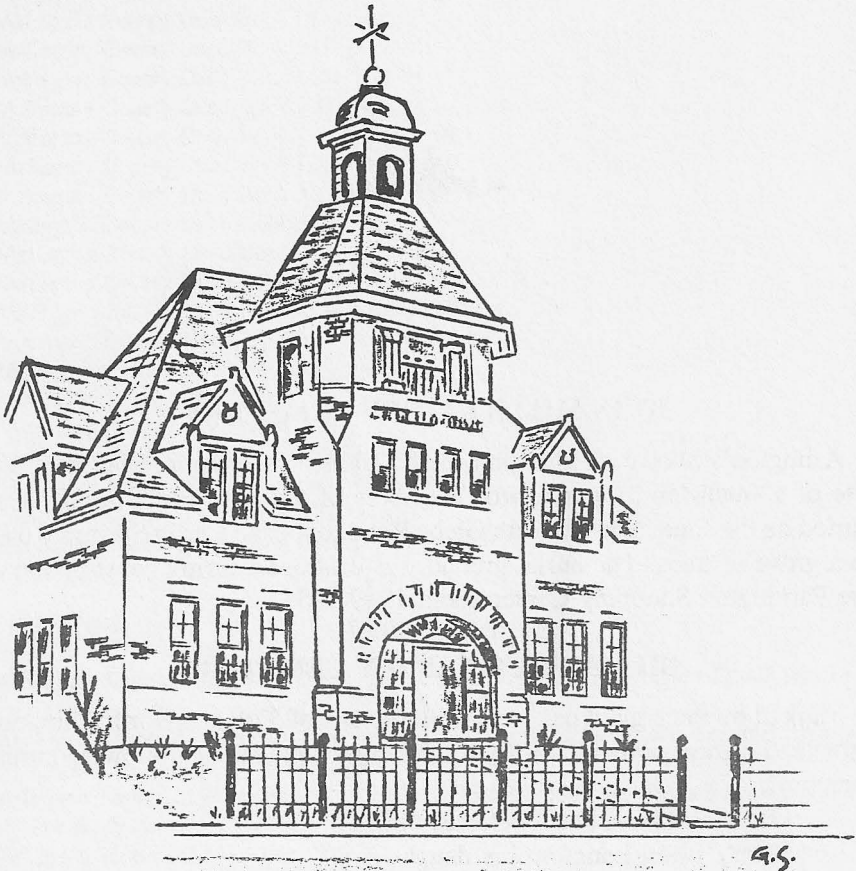
## THE HUME SCHOOL and ITS BRONZE DISK

By

Dorothea E. Abbott\*

The former Hume School, now the Arlington Historical Museum, at 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road, sparkles after its recent renovation. Not only was the interior upgraded but improvements were made to the building's exterior and the grounds as well.

In place of the macadam parking area in front of the building there are now shrubs, and a lawn on each side of the new entrance sidewalk. Shrubs also have been planted along the west side of the building where there is a new macadam parking area. The glistening black wrought iron fence extending across the front of the property sets off and caps the new look.

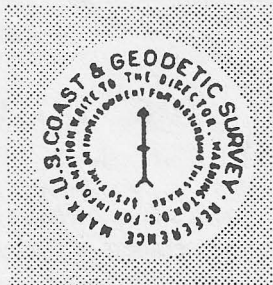


THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

When the old sidewalk to the entrance of the building was removed, a three and one-half inch bronze disk embedded in the concrete was saved. The disk proved to be a survey marker which had been placed in the sidewalk by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. A contact was made to the office of National Geodetic Survey, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Department of Commerce, to obtain information about the marker. Confirmation of the marker established it to be Hume Station, Reference Mark 2, one mile southeast of Arlington Radio Station. The first entry on the National Geodetic Survey Horizontal Control Data sheet listed Reference Mark 2 as being set in concrete in a depression of a boulder on the property in 1927.

The purpose of a geodetic survey is to establish exact positions on the earth's surface, taking into account the size and shape of the world. Agencies of the United States Government have been determining with great precision the latitude, longitude, gravity, and height of thousands of locations throughout the United States and its possessions. Collectively this network is called the National Geodetic Reference System. National Geodetic Survey has established approximately one million permanent survey markers at these precisely measured points.

These markers are bronze disks, about three and one-half inches in diameter. They are used by surveyors, engineers, and planning officials as the basis for maps, construction and property surveys, natural resource protection and development, and a variety of engineering projects.<sup>1</sup>



**REFERENCE**  
(OLD)

HUME HORIZONTAL STATION  
Reference Mark 2

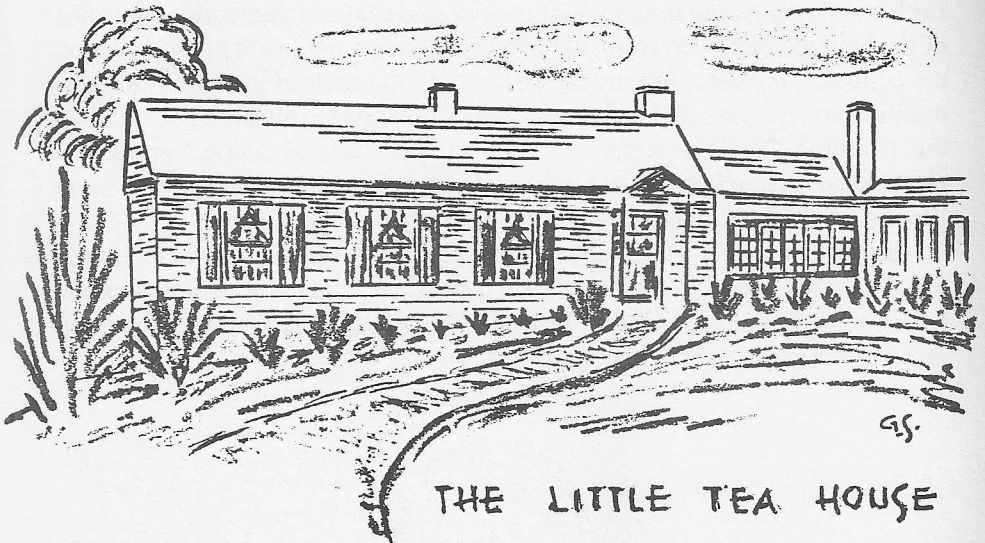
On the outer ring of the disk are the words, "U.S. COAST & GEODETIC SURVEY Reference Mark." The second ring contains the following: "For Information Write to THE DIRECTOR, Washington, D.C." The inner or

<sup>1</sup>National Geodetic Survey, Information Flyer 85-7. Reprinted January 1987-17.

third ring, "250.00 Fine or Imprisonment For Disturbing This Mark." In the center of the disk there is an arrow. When set in place it pointed in a northeasterly direction toward the Washington Monument. The Washington Monument was the Standard Station for this Reference Point. Reference Mark 2 was placed in the entrance sidewalk in 1938 and remained there until June 1987.

The National Geodetic Survey gave its permission to keep the bronze disk on display in the museum.

To complete the measurement it was necessary to determine another point of reference. The point selected through the method of triangulation was the tea garden roof, at the Little Tea House Restaurant, 1301 South Arlington Ridge Road, which was designated Reference Mark 1.



Mr. John Ford, a long time resident of Arlington, who worked with his uncle, a building contractor, remembers when the first open brick patio was enclosed at the tea house. He said this became an enclosed sun room where diners enjoyed good food and a beautiful view of Washington.

Over the years a number of additions were made to the Little Tea House. According to inspections made by National Geodetic Survey in 1938, 1946 and 1957, Reference Mark 1 was inadvertently covered up. The Little Tea House was razed in 1963 to make way for the Ridge House Condominiums.

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A word of thanks to Gene Stewart for drawing the Arlington Historical Museum and the Little Tea House.