

## ALEXANDRIA COUNTY

By Crandal Mackey

In 1688 King James II of England, by his Royal Patent, granted to Thomas, Lord Culpeper, what was called the Northern Neck of Virginia. The land comprising the present County of Alexandria was included in that grant.

On December 3, 1789, the State of Virginia, by an act of the Legislature, ceded to the United States that part of her territory now known as the County of Alexandria and until 1846 the County was known as Alexandria County of the District of Columbia, the present District of Columbia being known as Washington County in said District.

A United States court was established by Congress for the County of Washington and another for the County of Alexandria, and the United States judge for Alexandria County was required to reside therein. Back in the forties the question of ceding the County of Alexandria back to Virginia became a political issue. The Senators and Representatives from Virginia urged a retrocession of the County of Alexandria to the State of Virginia, and on July 9, 1846, the Congress of the United States passed an act authorizing a vote to be taken by the people of Alexandria County of the District of Columbia to determine whether the county should be ceded back to the State of Virginia, and the act of Congress declared that in case a majority of the votes should be cast in favor of retrocession, the County should be retroceded and the right and the jurisdiction of the United States "forever relinquished in full and absolute". At the election a majority of the votes were cast for retrocession, and, without any further action by Congress, the State of Virginia passed an act declaring that the County of Alexandria was again part of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The County was sparsely settled and almost a wilderness, and the excessive tolls charged on the bridges connecting her with the District of Columbia almost prohibited travel by vehicles and served to isolate the County and retard its growth. The enforcement of law and order in the District of Columbia following the war of 1861-65 caused the lawless characters of the District of Columbia to use the County of Alexandria as an asylum, and up to the year 1904 the County of Alexandria was covered with gambling houses and her political control in the hands of the lawless element, whose presence was a menace to life and property and served to strangle the prosperity of the County.

An uprising of the citizens in 1903 against the shameful conditions that were ruining the County resulted in the election of a new set of officials and the overthrow of the gambling and lawless element in the County. Since that time the growth of the County has been marvelous. Her population increased between 1900 and 1910 sixty-one percent. This remarkable in-

crease in population has no parallel in the history of Virginia. In fact, the County of Alexandria increased in population more than eight counties put together in the Eighth Congressional District. With a population less in 1900 than the City of Alexandria, she gained in the ten years 3,800 in population, while the City of Alexandria gained but 801.

There are now sixteen post offices in the County and four rural free delivery routes.

The County is traversed in every direction by electric railways.

She has the finest school houses of any County in the State of Virginia and the majority of her school teachers are graduates of Normal Schools.

She has about eighty miles of public roads, and many of them have been macadamized, and she has better roads than any other County in Virginia.

The County is free from debt, and pauperism is almost unknown, there being no poorhouse in the County.

There are no saloons in the County, and the sale of intoxicating liquors being prohibited by an act of the Legislature makes it no-license territory.

The number of prisoners in jail is small, and their board is paid for by the State.

The County is governed by three Supervisors, who have recently been given the legislative powers of a city council, and the County of Alexandria is therefore the only county in the State which has practically a commission form of government.

- There is little crime in the County, and violators of the law are meted out swift punishment, as the Circuit Court meets every other month.

The County is known throughout the world as the home of the Arlington National Cemetery, the Fort Myer Military Reservation, the Government Experimental Farm, and the Navy Department has recently erected in the County the largest and finest wireless telegraph station in the world.

Nowhere in the State of Virginia are there such valuable manufacturing sites and such numerous freight facilities as in this County, six great railways having united in the building of Potomac Yards, probably the most extensive freight yards to be found anywhere in the country outside of the city of Chicago. The County contains numerous factories and excellent stores.

The Arlington National Bank, located at the south end of the Aqueduct Bridge, offers every banking facility.

There is not a trade, calling or profession that is not creditably represented by citizens of the County, and it is the home of many physicians of national reputation. Its electric railway facilities have made it the home of many merchants and professional men doing business in the City of Washington.

The assessment of property is so low that taxation is scarcely felt.

There are no smoke laws to annoy and oppress the manufacturer.

Insurance rates are low and the County has an up-to-date telephone system,

which gives an unlimited service for \$24.00 a year. Two electric lighting companies and a gas company supply the homes with light.

In no community in Virginia or anywhere in the country is real estate rising more rapidly in value.

The border of the County opposite Washington, because of perfect railroad and water transportation, offers ideal sites for manufacturing purposes, and in no community are there greater opportunities for profitable investment.

The people are highly intelligent and law-abiding, and nowhere is government more economically or impartially administered.

This article appeared in the *Alexandria County Directory* published in 1912. The author, Crandal Mackey, was Commonwealth Attorney at that time.



#### WHY DO WE CALL IT?

#### ROSSLYN

In 1860, William Henry Ross, husband of Caroline Lambden, received a large farm on the Virginia waterfront opposite Georgetown from his father-in-law, Joseph Lambden, to which he gave the name "Rosslyn." "Lyn" or "lynn" is a now obsolete spelling of "linn" meaning, variously, a torrent running over rocks, a pool of water, or a ravine with precipitous sides. It is probably the first of these meanings which the Rosses had in mind since the property is traversed by a rocky stream.

The occupation of Arlington by federal troops during the Civil War drove the Rosses from their home, and they were in France in 1869 when they sold the farm to a group of people who subsequently formed the Rosslyn Development Company. This company acquired additional acreage which also was sold off in lots in the "Town of Rosslyn."