

## “WHERE GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN”

So says the delightful and informative brochure published by the Arlington County Department of Public Works in referring to Arlington. “You *can* get there from here” it goes on to say “when you understand the official Arlington County street-naming system.”

But it’s much better than it used to be. Before 1934, when the County Board implemented a system that eliminated the many duplicated street names (there were ten Arlington Streets and eleven Washington Streets) the streets of Arlington were a hodge-podge created by the topsy-turvy development of many unincorporated communities. A few guidelines help to understand the present system, but note the “generally” and “usually.” There still are few hard and fast rules.

The first guideline is one that many people, old and new residents alike, seem to be totally unaware of, and yet it is something each of us should be doing something about by adhering to it. The county brochure states that “North and South designations precede named streets and follow numbered streets. Example: North Lincoln Street; 31st Street South.” Although this is a system adopted by the County Board, it is flagrantly ignored by all but a few who have taken the trouble to understand it. Your editor hopes that this Society and its members in all mailings and references, will adhere to the proper use of the north-south designations on named and numbered streets.

Other guidelines for understanding the Arlington system of street naming include the following:

- Named streets generally run north-south and are alphabetized beginning at the Potomac River.
- Arlington Boulevard divides the North and South sections of the county.
- Numbered streets generally run east-west, parallel to Arlington Boulevard, with numbers starting at Arlington Boulevard.
- Boulevards, Drives and Roads generally are diagonal, and are major thoroughfares with historic names.
- Named roads typically follow early winding routes and are excluded from the alphabetized pattern. Examples: Military Road and Old Dominion Drive.

### References

- The Arlington County Street System Guide*. (Arlington County: Department of Public Works, 1984). Available from Traffic Engineering Division, Arlington, VA. 22201 and at Arlington County Central Library.
- C. L. Kinnier, “The Renaming of Arlington Streets,” *Arlington Historical Magazine*, 1959, pp. 41-51.