

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF ALEXANDRIA
COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

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A Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia by G. G. Boteler & Crandal Mackey & M. E. Church

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G. G. BOTELER & CRANDAL MACKEY & M. E. CHURCH

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COUNTY, VIRGINIA**



Arlington, the Home of General Robert E. Lee

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
ALEXANDRIA COUNTY
VIRGINIA

ITS WEALTH AND RESOURCES, GREAT AND GROWING INDUSTRIES
EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ADVANTAGES
FUTURE OUTLOOK PROMISING



Alexandria Co. Va.

Published under authority of the
COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
by
G. C. BOTELER
CRANDAL MACKAY, M. E. CHURCH
W. S. HOGE, Jr., C. B. HALLER
Committee.

THE NEWELL PRINTING CO.
FALLS CHURCH, VA.

Alexandria County Officials

+ +

Judge

HON. LOUIS C. BARLEY

Commonwealth's Attorney

CRANDAL MACKAY

Clerk of the Court

GEORGE H. RUCKER

Sheriff

WM. H. PALMER

Treasurer

WM. C. WIRET

Superintendent of Schools

JAMES E. CLEMENTS

Commissioner of the Revenue

C. B. GRAHAM

Board of Supervisors

DR. D. N. RUST, Alexandria City

W. W. DOUGLAS, Ballston

W. N. FEBREY, East Falls Church



ALEXANDRIA COUNTY

[BY CRANDAL MACKEY]

Historical

Ceded to the United States



ALEXANDRIA COUNTY, the smallest and most densely populated county in Virginia, was once a part of the county of Fairfax. On December 3, 1789, the State of Virginia, by an act of the legislature and in pursuance of the United States Constitution, ceded to the United States that part of the territory subsequently known as the county of Alexandria. Congress passed an act accepting the cession. Maryland ceded to the United States part of her territory known as the county of Washington, and the two counties constituted a territory, ten miles square, which Congress set apart for the seat of government, and organized it under the name of the District of Columbia. The county of Washington comprised all the land in the District of Columbia north of the Potomac River and the county of Alexandria all the land in said District south of the Potomac.

A circuit court was established by Congress for the county of Washington and another for the county of Alexandria, and the circuit judge for Alexandria County was required by law to reside therein.

The county of Alexandria, by reason of its accessibility, soon became an asylum for fugitive slaves, where they could seek the protection of United States courts and the sympathy and aid of



Residence of Mr. A. M. Lothrop

the early abolitionists residing in the District of Columbia. The slavery question becoming each year more acute the question of ceding back the county of Alexandria to Virginia became a political issue of that day, the representatives in Congress from Virginia and other pro-slavery states urging the retrocession of that part of the District of Columbia known as Alexandria County to the State of Virginia.

Retrocession to Virginia

On the 9th day of July, 1846, the Congress of the United States passed an act authorizing a vote to be taken by the people of Alexandria County to determine whether the county should be retroceded to the State of Virginia, and declaring that in case a majority of the votes should be cast in favor of retrocession the county should be retroceded, and right and jurisdiction forever relin-

quished in full and absolute. An election was held and a majority of the votes cast were for retrocession. Without any further action by Congress the State of Virginia passed an act declaring that the county of Alexandria was re-annexed. Since 1846 the State of Virginia has exercised full jurisdiction and control over said county.

Legality of Retrocession

At the time of the passage of the act of Congress, ceding the county of Alexandria to Virginia, some of the ablest lawyers in Congress condemned the act and declared it to be in violation of the Constitution of the United States.

Among those who declared that the act of retrocession was unconstitutional was John Quincy Adams, who was one of the ablest constitutional lawyers of his day. He had been President of the United States and was a member of Congress from Massachusetts at the time the act was passed. To the wayfaring man



The Home of Hon. John B. Henderson, Jr.

it would seem that if the county of Alexandria could be ceded back to Virginia, then the county of Washington could be ceded back to Maryland and the District of Columbia and the Capital and seat of government abolished by an act of Congress.

In 1875 Mr. Robert A. Phillips, a large property owner in the county of Alexandria, brought suit to determine the validity of the act of retrocession. He alleged in his suit that an assessment had been made upon his property by officers of the State of Virginia, that he had paid his taxes under protest to prevent the sale of his property by the State, and that the county of Alexandria was not within the State of Virginia but within the District of Columbia. He alleged that the act of Congress ceding back the county of Alexandria was illegal and void because in violation of the Con-



The Old Glebe Estate, Formerly the Residence of Secretary Caleb Cushing