



BARCROFT IN ARLINGTON

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During the almost 50 years (1791-1846) when Arlington (then known as Alexandria County), was a part of the National Capital City, the Federal District of Columbia, this area was undisturbed woodland. The construction of the Columbian Turnpike in 1801 did little to change its character. But beginning right after this area was retroceded back to the State of Virginia in 1846, many "Northerners" -- attracted to the area because of its easy market access, its climate, and the low land prices which made speculation profitable -- began to buy up large tracts of land in our County.

The Corbett family of Corbett, New York, acquired several hundred acres during the 1850s. One of the "clan", Frank Corbett owned 162 acres on the East side of Four Mile Run, north of the Columbian Turnpike. In 1892, he subdivided part of this farm, and changed the railroad stops name to "Corbett". The original plat for the Town of Corbett shows 5 streets - 4 running North-South and 1 East-West. Only a few homes were erected. In 1903, the Corbett farm was sold to Mrs. Abbie Fox, whose son-in-law, Stephan Wright, changed the name of the fledgling community to "Barcroft".

Doctor John Woolverton Barcroft came to this area in 1849. He also owned land in Fairfax County. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Dr. Barcroft returned to his home in New Jersey, and remained there until the 1880s. When he returned to Arlington, he purchased the remains of the old Arlington Mills, which were destroyed by the Union troops during the War. The Arlington Mills had been erected in the 1830s by George Washington Parke Custis to grind flour for his Arlington estate. In 1924 Dr. Barcroft sold the Mill to Robert Taylor. And in 1926, the old landmark was again destroyed in a terrible fire. During the 1890s Dr. Barcroft had moved to his Fairfax property and erected another mill on Holmes Run. In the 1950s, the Lake side community of Lake Barcroft was named in his honor.

The Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad which ran up the Four Mile Run valley from 1853 to 1968, really helped place Barcroft on the map. By the turn of this century, a little village -- complete with stone quarry, blacksmith shop, general store, cattle pens, and the old mill -- had sprung up around the railroad stop. The station, which was on the west side of the tracks, south of Columbia Pike, was a focal point for the community.

By 1898, the village had its own post office; in 1903 a local newspaper was started here; in 1908 the first school opened; in 1907 the Citizens' Association was formed; in 1910 the School and Civic League was organized; and the Countys' first public transportation system -- the AB&W Bus Line (now part of the METRO system) was begun here in 1919 by Robert Mays.

When Stephan Wright resubdivided the Corbett farm, he brought in B.F. Perron as a builder. Mr. Perron erected over 30 homes by 1908. In 1914 Walter O'Hara began construction of the subdivision "North Barcroft", eventually adding 143 homes to the rapidly growing community. There were several other additions to the community during the 1920s and 1930s, and in the 1980s, the Kolb-Payne farm on Pershing Drive was divided and new homes built.

Only 7 of the pre-1910 homes survive; But many fine examples of homes from the 1910 to 1930 eras remain. The community is a strong active area, very proud of its heritage, and determined to preserve the best of its past for the future.

