

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
of the Board of Visitors Appointed to Recommend
a Site for the Northern Virginia branch
of the University of Virginia

To the Rector and Board of Visitors
of the University of Virginia:

Pursuant to their appointment by this Board in June, 1956, as its committee to study the question of where the Northern Virginia branch of the University should be located, the undersigned, as a first step in their inquiry, held a public hearing in Alexandria on July 21, after issuing special invitations to the members of the General Assembly in the area and the authorities of the several political subdivisions, as well as general invitations through the press to the interested public, to attend and assist the committee by giving it their views and such information as they thought might be helpful. Thereafter the committee personally investigated the sites suggested, interviewed those persons having particular knowledge of the different tracts, made measurements of the time and distance of the several locations from the populous areas and from the rural sections to be served, and considered the availability thereto of public transportation, sewerage facilities, and water supplies as well as the accessibility of the property by highway, and their situation with respect to the high schools in Northern Virginia.

The committee believes that its foremost and controlling aim should be to place the branch at a point where it would furnish the utmost service to the graduates of the Virginia high schools in Northern Virginia, and to the adult citizens of the State, desiring to continue their education.

The undertaking of the committee was tremendously aided by the earlier thorough study and report of the Advisory Council to the Northern Virginia Center of the University. This is a voluntary group of alumni and others living in Northern Virginia who sensed the demand, and recognized the need, for facilities for higher education in this section, and who brought forth and successfully nurtured the present center now working so responsively and efficiently. They have given unstintingly of their energy and hours in the selection of a site which they could endorse for the permanent location of the branch. Likewise other groups, too, in this part of the State have unselfishly examined into the advisability and feasibility of one location after another for the University's northern branch.

The committee has not treated the question as a controversy between any of the groups, and the groups themselves have been assured that this has not been the attitude of the committee. Its sole concern has been those citizens of Virginia who are to be

served by this extension of the University. The members of the several groups have acted wholeheartedly with the committee for this object. They have subordinated all their individual preferences, evincing not the slightest pride of opinion, but offering the committee every assistance within their control. To them the committee is deeply indebted.

After considering all of those that have been suggested, the committee feels that the judgment of the Board may be confined to the Ravensworth tract, the Bowman or Herndon tract, and one of the several offered by Prince William County.

Ravensworth

A liberal offer has been made by the owners of Ravensworth, an old Lee place in Fairfax County, to give to the University the front 50 acres of the estate, now improved by a main dwelling, a smaller dwelling, and a large brick and stone barn. It has a frontage of almost a mile on Braddock Road and is located a few miles east of Little River Turnpike (State Highway 236 becoming Route 50 west of Fairfax Courthouse) between Annandale and Springfield. The grounds are in lawn and meadow and are shaded by numerous sturdy and spreading trees. From the centre of Alexandria the tract is about 10 miles, a drive of slightly more than 20 minutes.

In addition, an option will be given for 18 months to buy an adjoining parcel of 115 acres, at a price to be determined by independent appraisers, a recent appraisal having put a value of \$2600 per acre on the land. A like option will be given on a 59.6 acre adjacent tract, and an outright gift is tendered of another abutting 23.9 acres. Thus 238.5 acres are here available; their attractiveness is enhanced by the proximity of the Fort Belvoir reservoir of water.

Besides the land, gifts of money totalling \$77,500 will be made by the owners of Ravensworth and other developers and private citizens in the community.

Springfield residents have shown a most earnest interest in the University and have in many ways proven their desire to have the branch near them.

Fairfax County has offered to expend \$125,000 for sewerage this land through the county system.

Bowman or Herndon Tract

Owning 7000 acres of farm land, known as Sunset Hills, near Herndon, in the northern part of Fairfax County, E. DeLong Bowman, Esquire, and A. Smith Bowman, jr., Esquire, his brother, have generously offered the University its choice of two gifts, including the selection of such location as the University prefers, outlined as follows:

1. A cash gift of \$25,000 and 250 acres; or

2. A cash gift of \$100,000 and 150 acres; plus, in each instance, an option to buy at any time during a 2-year period for \$1000 per acre such additional adjacent acreage, not exceeding 250 acres, as the University desires.

On the farm the Bowman brothers operate a distillery but the most desirable land, as the committee views it, is situated more than a mile from, and out of sight of, this commercial operation. The tract is about 2 miles south of Route 7 (the Alexandria-Leesburg pike) approximately 20 miles and 35 minutes from the centre of Alexandria. It touches the corporate limits of the Town of Herndon and the mains of the Town's water supply system extend to it. Natural gas lines are at hand and Herndon has offered to cooperate in any sewerage problem, having in mind either an independent system or some arrangement in conjunction with its own disposal plant.

The land has no buildings on it but lies well; it is accessible by secondary roads on each side. Numerous Loudoun County residents have recommended the selection of this site.

Prince William County Sites

At the committee's public hearing, Prince William County very liberally offered the committee, as a gift to the University, a 110-acre tract adjoining the Manassas Battlefield Park. Since then the County representatives have given the committee a choice of seven locations, each of them of a large and valuable area. Some are situate to the east of No. 1 highway with frontage on the Potomac River; others are in the vicinity of Manassas or the Battlefield Park. Any one of them would be a desirable site and could be developed into beautiful college grounds.

The delegation appearing for Prince William expressed and proved their sincerity of interest in the University. They explained the sharp need of collegiate educational facilities in the rural sections of Northern Virginia for the high school graduates and the hardship these young men and women are suffering through the absence of any such facilities near their homes. A separate map of Prince William County, with the several offered sites marked thereon, accompanies this report.

Recommendation

After giving due weight to the many advantages of all of these sites, and being guided by the factors already mentioned, the committee recommends the acceptance of the Bowman offer No. 1 - the sum of \$25,000 and 250 acres with the option to purchase additional land up to another 250 acres.

It recommends, too, that the land be taken from that part of the farm bounded by Brown's Chapel Road (Rt. 606), Ridge Road (Rt. 602) and R. 680, which is the line of the Town of Herndon. This tract has a relatively high elevation, with a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is easily reached by highway, and has public utilities at hand.

In its selection of a site the committee believes that it should consider the reasonably expected growth of this part of Virginia, and that it should reasonably anticipate the future extension westwardly and northwardly of the present populous areas, having in mind also the needs of the adjacent rural communities of Virginia. The branch is to be a Virginia institution to serve Virginia and it should be located where its accessibility will accomplish that purpose. Another dominant feature of the Bowman tract is that it now permits, and will for some years allow, acquisition of additional land for expansion of the University centre, thus avoiding the problem of constriction so frequently faced in after-years by institutions serving a rapidly developing territory.

It is this latter consideration which heavily contributed to incline the committee to choose the Herndon vicinity instead of Ravensworth. Another persuasive consideration was the probability of the construction of another national airport near Ravensworth, at Burke. The operation of such an installation, despite all scientific effort to minimize it, would not allow the quiet that is sought for classroom and campus. The Advisory Council was without knowledge of this prospect when it made its study and report.

A map is returned herewith showing Fairfax County, Arlington County, Alexandria, and Falls Church together with the present and proposed highways in this section of the State.

Respectfully submitted

/s/ Dowell J. Howard

/s/ Henry E. McWane

/s/ Albert V. Bryan

University of Virginia

September 15, 1956