Women’s History Month Moment
from the Clerk’s Historic Records Team

We hope you enjoyed our virtual Black History programs last month and we are grateful to the Virginia Humanities and the Loudoun County Public Library system for their partnership as we offered our first virtual Black History program. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors issued a resolution to celebrate the month of March as Women’s History Month. In light of this resolution, my historic records team is offering a special online posting of various narratives of special women in Loudoun’s history. This first posting shares information about the first known documented female deputy clerk in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. I have several deputy clerks who are women working with me today so it’s hard to imagine a clerk’s office without women. I hope you enjoy these postings assembled by Eric Larson, my historic records manager, and our dedicated historic records team.

Nellie Blanche Hammerly: The First Female Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court
By Lori Kimball

There are 38 female Deputy Clerks of the Circuit Court today, and Nellie B. Hammerly paved the way in the early 1900s. She had been named to this position by 1920 when she registered to vote and listed her occupation as “deputy clerk of court.”

Nellie was born in 1886, the third of 7 daughters in the family of Charles Decatur and Mary Hammerly. She did not have far to walk to work as the family lived two blocks north of the courthouse on the southwest side of King and North Streets. The large stucco house at 107 King Street now serves as office space for McEnearny Real Estate. Charles Hammerly was an undertaker and cabinet maker. It was not unusual back then for an undertaker to also be in the furniture or cabinetry business because both required woodworking skills. He operated his business in the frame building next door at the corner of King and North Streets. It presently houses RGS Title Company.

Nellie’s commitment to civic duty is evidenced by her immediate registration to vote after the 19th Amendment was passed in August 1920. Nellie and three of her sisters registered a month later in Leesburg (See image below). She was active in the Leesburg United Methodist Church, local service organizations, and the Loudoun Business and Professional Women’s Club. The Loudoun Bar Association honored her several times for being an efficient and dedicated employee at the courthouse.

The County Clerk’s office was renovated in late 1955 or early 1956, and Nellie is shown in this picture that was published in the Blue Ridge Herald newspaper. (See image below).
After working at the courthouse for 56 years, Nellie retired in 1963. She lived with her sisters at the family home until she died in March 1979. She is buried in Union Cemetery in Leesburg.

As we celebrate Women’s History Month, we honor Nellie B. Hammerly, the first female Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court in Loudoun County and an active, civic-minded woman in Loudoun County.

[Image of a page from the Loudoun County Voter Registration Book, showing a page with voter registration entries.]

**Loudoun County Voter Registration Book**

Historic Records and Deed Research Division

[Image of a photo of the County Clerk’s office, renovated in late 1955 or early 1956. Nellie is shown in this picture that was published in the Blue Ridge Herald newspaper.]

Courtesy of Thomas Balch Library
Proof of Service

Return with Nellie Blanche Hammerly signature, February 24, 1959
Chancery Case# 1994, Clerk of the Circuit Court