



Arlington Historical Society

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Arlington Historical Society
June 2020

Inside This Issue

	<i>Page</i>
President's Dispatch	1
Upcoming Events	2
Wedding at the Museum	2
Volunteers Needed	2
Three Sisters	3
McAtee Bequest to AHS	4
Essay Contest Winners	5
Arlington Business Tribute	5
Spotlight on Website	6
Stewardship of Your Money	6
AHS in the Community	7
AHS Membership	7

President's Dispatch

These last few months have been challenging for residents of Arlington and throughout the world. Normal activities which we take for granted have been replaced by stay at home orders. Trips out of our homes are fraught with fear of catching the coronavirus. Despite the social isolation, all evidence points to the fact that Arlington as a community has come closer together. Coretta Scott King noted that "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." That quote has resonated as I have observed Arlington's response to the virus.

The people of Arlington have been mighty in their actions and there are so many examples. The struggling restaurant businesses who are offering free meals to hungry families. The families who are feeding not only their families but families in need in the county. The famous photographer who took senior pictures for Yorktown students who have missed the rites of passage of their senior year. The families delivering groceries to their elderly neighbors to keep them safe and at home. The honoring of our first responders and health care workers through donations of protective gear and food to sustain them. The streaming of religious services to provide spiritual support to those in need. The phone calls to check on each other. The social media reach outs to those in need. This is the true spirit of a community.

Throughout Arlington history, this community support has been evident. In the early 1900s, the area that is now Rosslyn was overrun with saloons, brothels, and gambling parlors. The citizens of Arlington rallied to form good government leagues to clean up the area. In the 1940s concerns for the educational quality of Arlington schools led to groups such as Arlingtonians for a Better County to advocate for better educational opportunities for all students. As environmental issues have become a concern, Eco-Action Arlington has worked to advocate for environmental reform and "green" actions. Groups such as these along with the numerous civic organizations in the county show the pride Arlington residents have in their community as well as their compassion and willingness to work to make it even better.

Cathy Bonawille Hix

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road

Closed until August due to the coronavirus threat

Ball-Sellers House

5620 3rd Street, South

Open by appointment only
Starting in July due to the coronavirus threat.

AHS Board Meeting

Board meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of every month and are being conducted virtually until further notice due to the coronavirus threat.

Upcoming Arlington Historical Society Events

The coronavirus emergency continues to shutter venues for big gatherings, so AHS is presenting our monthly public events online via Zoom. We will advertise the specifics of each event by email to our members and to the public via social media. Visit our events page at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/eventsfor> details on how to attend.



July 9, 2020: The Ground Observation Corps in Arlington

During the Cold War, Arlington knew it was “ground zero” and no one prepared for it better than those who watched the skies to provide early warning for our community and the nation. Learn about a little known aspect of the Cold War that had big consequences for Arlington.

August 13, 2020: Prohibition in Arlington

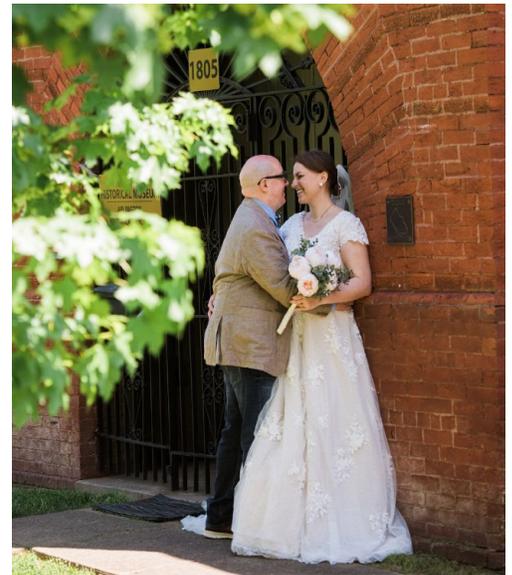
Historian Mark Benbow will discuss how our county dealt with Prohibition. Being at the doorstep of the nation’s capital with no legal alcohol had its challenges. Find out how Arlingtonians evaded or enforced the law from rum runners to backyard stills.



A Wedding at the Arlington Historical Museum

On Saturday, May 2nd, the Arlington Historical Museum at Hume School was the site of the wedding of local Arlington residents Andrea Mower and Chris Braniff. The couple reached out to the AHS Board for permission to marry in the yard. Andrea and Chris had originally planned to marry in a religious building and celebrate at an historic mansion in Memphis, Tennessee with guests flying in from around the country. Unfortunately, the pandemic put those plans in jeopardy. Since the Hume School backyard was where the couple proposed to each other, they decided it was the perfect site for a small wedding. Using their tech skills, they allowed family and friends to join the ceremony virtually, including a 360-degree camera recording so that the ceremony could be viewed in a virtual reality headset and a Zoom reception at home after the event.

The Aurora Hills neighbors helped make the day special. Jay Liddle helped set up cameras and cue the musicians, officiant, and wedding party. Lincoln Essig, a bishop at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints served as the minister. Rich Kelly and some volunteers helped prepare the grounds and preserve the buttercup flowers. Neighbors near the museum cheered the couple and allowed for follow-up photographs in their gardens.



The neighborhood really pulled together to make the day special and to help the couple feel surrounded by love and support. In this time of challenge in the country, we are happy that AHS, along with our neighbors near the museum, could help make this a special day for Andrea and Chris. We wish them much happiness and joy.

Volunteers needed

AHS runs on volunteer power and we need volunteers to help us in two important ways. Both can be done largely from the comfort of your own home and couch. Email info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

Web Administrator: Do you have or know someone else who has working knowledge of WordPress and would like to help AHS run its website? The website uses a recent version of WordPress. We have the content but need help uploading some collections and we could use advice when we get stumped on other types of posts or pages.



Book Buyer: Do you like shopping for books? Then this is the perfect volunteer activity for you. AHS needs someone who can keep our museum gift shop well-stocked with books on local history. We will show you what to do so you can keep AHS stocked with the best collection of local Arlington history books for sale!

Three Sisters

The coronavirus emergency has highlighted the work of today's medical professionals and showed us how a community can help each other. In this newsletter, we are highlighting some people in our history who have done just that. Our three sisters are a person, a place, and an artifact from our museum collection.

Person: Dr. Charles R. Drew

Dr. Charles R. Drew was an American physician, surgeon, and medical researcher in the field of blood transfusions. He developed new techniques for blood storage and applied his expertise to develop large-scale blood banks early in World War II. His work enabled medics to save thousands of lives on the battlefield. As the most prominent African-American in the field, Dr. Drew protested against the practice of racial segregation in the donation of blood, as it lacked scientific foundation.

Dr. Drew was born in Washington, D.C. in 1904 and graduated from Dunbar High School. His sister, Elsie, died from the "Spanish flu" in the pandemic of 1918-1920. He became a surgeon and scientist, and conducted research in blood and transfusions, blood chemistry, and the storage of blood. His ground-breaking findings, procedures, and standards for collecting, processing, and storing blood led to his appointment in 1940 as the head of the Blood for Britain Project to transport desperately needed blood and plasma from the US to Great Britain in World War II.



Dr. Drew was appointed Director of the first American Red Cross Blood Bank in February 1941. Among his innovations was the "bloodmobile," mobile blood donation trucks with refrigerators. The work sealed his reputation as a pioneer and earned him the title, "Father of the Blood Bank." At the time, African-American blood was separated in supply networks however, Dr. Drew resigned from his post in protest after the armed forces ruled that African-American blood would be stored separately from that of whites. Dr. Drew continued his research and taught at the Freedman's Hospital and Howard University as a surgeon and professor of medicine. He received multiple awards and acknowledgements from his contributions to medicine.

Charles Drew married Minnie Robbins, and they and their three daughters and one son lived at 2505 1st Street, South, in Arlington. He died in 1950 in a car accident on the way back from a medical conference in Alabama. His house in Arlington is a National Historic Landmark and many parks and public buildings have been named for him in the US and abroad, including in Arlington, the Charles R. Drew Elementary School, the Charles R. Drew Community Center, and Drew Park.

Place: Green Valley Pharmacy

The Green Valley Pharmacy is a local landmark and an important part of Arlington's history. For more than 60 years, Leonard Muse, or "Doc Muse" as customers fondly referred to him, served his community as a pharmacist and much more. In 1952, after graduating from Howard University as a pharmacist, Muse (pictured on the right in photo below) opened the Green Valley Pharmacy. This was a time when few pharmacies in Arlington welcomed black patrons. Typically, black customers were not allowed into the store and they had to use rear entrances to get their prescriptions.



Green Valley Pharmacy served both black and white customers. It was popular for its dine-in food counter in a time when few restaurants served African-Americans. Green Valley Pharmacy was the longest-operating African American pharmacy in Arlington and the first African American-owned pharmacy in the county. At the pharmacy, Doc Muse not only dispensed medicine, but he also provided first jobs to many young people, free lunches for the hungry, and free medicine for those who could not afford them.

In 2013, Arlington County named Green Valley Pharmacy as an Historic District. Doc Muse was honored by the Arlington NAACP with the Community Appreciation Award for his positive influence on the residents of his community. He passed away in 2017.

Artifact: Dr. W.C. Welburn's Medical Bag

AHS is proud to have in its collection, the well-worn medical bag of Dr. Williamson Crothers Welburn. His practice began in 1905 in Ballston and he built a house with his office, a pharmacy, and a post office downstairs and with the living space above. Dr. Welburn was the County Medical Examiner for 30 years and helped establish Arlington Hospital.

Mrs. Welburn Mann donated this medical bag to AHS in 1980 and it is a testament to the medical profession in Arlington. The bag contained more than two dozen medical instruments—also in the collection—many of which would have been used to deliver babies. You can read “Recollections of a Doctor’s Wife” by his wife, Mary King Welburn which was published in the 2017 edition of the *Arlington Historical Magazine* and is now available on the AHS website at:

<http://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/1965-6-Doctor.pdf>



Arlington Historical Society Receives McAtee Bequest



In April, the Arlington Historical Society received a bequest of \$36,500 from the estate of longtime Arlington resident Robert Bruce McAtee. Mr. McAtee passed away at age 100 in 2014. At the time of his death, he was the oldest resident of the Maywood neighborhood, having lived in the same house in that community for 98 years. AHS published an obituary for Mr. McAtee in 2014.

For those who knew “Mac,” as Mr. McAtee was called, his remembrance of the Arlington Historical Society in his will comes as no surprise. Tom Dickinson, current AHS board member and former AHS president relates, “He was a strong believer in historic preservation. His house in Maywood was a vast museum of historic artifacts, many rare and unique and unusual items, like neon signs, an old wooden phone booth with coin phone, many old radios, TV sets,

and photographs, with tons of historic collectibles, and ephemera.” He was a living encyclopedia of Arlington history, and would gladly regale anyone about people, places, events he had experienced in his long life as an Arlington resident. He frequently attended AHS lectures and other events into his 90s.

Mr. McAtee attended the long demolished Cherrydale Elementary School and Washington-Lee High School, where he was a proud member of the Cadet Corps. After graduation in 1932, he worked at the Government Printing Office until being drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941. He was selected to attend Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, then served for three years and was honorably discharged as a Captain. After the war, he returned to Maywood. He eventually began managing a trailer rental lot on Lee Highway. In 1955, he purchased a trailer rental business at Seven Corners, which he operated for over 45 years. He had a prodigious memory and loved sharing stories of life in Arlington in the last century. When he died, much of his historically significant collection of documents and artifacts went to the Center for Local History at the Arlington Public Library.

Mr. McAtee was a longtime member and exceptionally good friend of the Arlington Historical Society. He donated many artifacts to the Arlington Historical Museum over the years. Most recently, through his estate, he donated household items he and his family purchased over the years and saved such as name-brand food containers, giveaways from Arlington businesses, toys he played with as a child, including a home-made slingshot, a lantern, tools, kitchen implements, and household items. Some of these items have been featured in several exhibits at the museum in recent years, including “Gimmes, Giveaways & Premiums” in 2019, “Holiday Kitchens” in 2018, and “What’s For Dinner: Buying Groceries in a Century of Change” in 2016. AHS has been honored to receive his generous donations and the financial bequest from his estate. We work to honor his legacy in our continued work telling Arlington’s story. *(Biographic details provided courtesy of ArlNow)*

Arlington Historical Society Essay Contest Winners

Each year, AHS, in partnership with the Cherrydale-Columbia Masonic Lodge, offers an essay contest to Arlington County students. This year, despite the pandemic, the contest was held. In honor of the 100th anniversary of the naming of Arlington, the essay topic required students to write about an individual or group who made a significant contribution to Arlington in the last 100 years. We were delighted to have exceptional entries from students in three different high schools, all focused on different people throughout Arlington's history. A panel of four judges selected the winning essays. Award winners and prizes include the following:

- ❖ First Place: \$1000 and publication in the Arlington Historical Magazine: Julia Brodsky, 9th grade, HB Woodlawn, Essay about Ellen Bozeman
- ❖ Second Place-\$500: Noah Silva, 11th grade, Yorktown, Essay about Edmund Campbell
- ❖ Third Place- \$250: Ana Concha, 11th grade, Yorktown, Essay about Salvadoran Migrants
- ❖ Fourth Place Three Way Tie with \$75 for each:
 - Claire Terry, 11th Grade, Yorktown, Essay about Dr. Peyton Chichester
 - Fiona Slattery, 11th Grade, Yorktown, Essay about Elizabeth Campbell
 - Josie Hughes, 9th Grade, Yorktown, Essay about Dorothy Hamm

The essays are available on the AHS website at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/featured-articles>. We are thankful to the students who worked to write these essays and to the Cherrydale-Columbia Lodge for their financial support for this contest.

Arlington Historical Society Tribute to Arlington Businesses: American Service Center:

An integral part of Arlington's history are the businesses that provide services within our community. Many of these businesses have been part of our community for decades. With this first article on the American Service Center, AHS is launching a series to highlight the business community of Arlington. Stories of these businesses can also be read at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

One of oldest continuously operating businesses in Arlington is the American Service Center, on the corner of Glebe Road and Randolph Street. Established in 1937 by Saul Brooks and his brother-in-law Saul Gordon, both of Washington, D.C., the Center provided Amoco gasoline at 37 cents a gallon and serviced cars. The two businessmen knew little about cars, but hired experienced and loyal employees, like their first general manager LG Hook. To grow the business, Brooks and Gordon added a Studebaker dealership to the mix.

World War II proved to be a challenging time for the ASC as auto plants produced armaments instead of cars. Needing to adapt, the pair started selling home appliances to compensate. The post-war population and economic boom brought increased stability to ASC. By 1957, when Studebaker became a distributor for Mercedes-Benz, Brooks and Gordon embraced the opportunity and opened a Mercedes dealership, one of the original in the US and the first in the Washington, DC area. During this time, Alvin Brooks and Morton Zetlin, a second generation of family members, were brought in to help with the expansion of the operation. Always open to change, in the 1970s and 1980s, ASC experimented with selling other European and Japanese automobiles including Fiat, Isuzu, Ferrari, and more from their showroom. The foray lasted

decades, but the company currently only merchandizes and services Mercedes-Benzenes.

Morton Zetlin attributed the success and longevity of ASC to the family nature of the business and its dependable employees. "It's not uncommon for many to have worked for the company for 20 or 40 years," he explained. Ownership "looked out" for its employees and they responded with great loyalty.

Today, Mark Zetlin, the grandson of Saul Brooks, helps operate ASC, now called Mercedes-Benz of Arlington. Mark joined the operation in 1972. He was only 12 years old and washed cars during the summer. The business "captured" him then and continues to do so today.



Spotlight on the Arlington Historical Society Website

The coronavirus shutdown has highlighted how much AHS and those who love Arlington history now rely on our website. We thought we would shine a spotlight on some of the great content you will find there. Find out more at <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/>

- ❖ In time to honor the anniversary of D-Day on June 4 and in appreciation of teachers everywhere, we posted “Student Letters to Sally Loving.” Miss Loving was one of the original teachers at Washington-Lee High School. Her niece donated many of her personal items to the Arlington Historical Society and among them was a box of letters from her students. Many letters were from students who, after graduating from high school immediately went into the military to serve in World War II. These young men wrote sometimes funny, sometimes touching letters to her from basic training, from hospital beds, and in moments of homesickness.
- ❖ Every article printed in the *Arlington Historical Magazine* from 1957-2018 has been uploaded for free viewing by anyone interested in original research on Arlington’s history. A team of volunteers led by Karl VanNewkirk scanned them in, proofed them, and uploaded them to the website. It is a treasure trove of Arlington’s past!
- ❖ “Birch Family Collection: Part of Arlington’s Oldest Family” Johnathan Thomas wrote a brief history of this Arlington family and shared scores of photos to illustrate their life and times.

Crepe Upon the Doors: Epidemics in Arlington County

In battling the coronavirus, the government asks Arlingtonians to shutter businesses, cultural facilities, and schools and requests residents stay at home in order to stop the spread of this highly contagious pathogen.

Epidemics swept through America, and Arlington in the past. In 1918, Arlingtonians confronted the deadly Spanish Influenza pandemic. How they responded to this public health emergency shaped how they would react to future crises. Let’s take a look back and see how they coped with its devastating impact. 20th centuries, before public health was regularly practiced, outbreaks of typhoid, smallpox diphtheria, scarlet fever, and cholera were common in Arlington...

Read the rest on the *Arlington Historical Society* website at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>.

Stewardship of Your Money

The AHS depends on donations and membership fees to allow us to carry out our mission. The generosity of our members has allowed us to continue our work in the community. During the quarantine, our museum curator and director have staggered hours to work in the museum. Additional volunteers have worked from home to add to our resources. Their work which will continue through the end of June includes:

- ❖ The cataloguing of all items in the museum collection
- ❖ The organization of the museum space to make room for future exhibits
- ❖ The creation of virtual exhibits housed on our webpage
- ❖ The purchase of new software that will allow us to maintain our member database and our museum collections on one site
- ❖ The uploading of all the articles from four decades of our Arlington Historic Magazine on to our website

The work that is being done during this time will enhance our ability to use our museum artifacts for educational purposes. With this new software and catalogued artifacts, we can bring up items on a topic in one list instead of searching for the items individually. We look forward to sharing more of the great items we have in our collections.

Business Members

AHS is honored to have the support of the following local businesses:

BCN Homes

Clark Lithograph

EagleBank Foundation

E. G. Reinsch Companies

Glass Distributors

John Marshall Bank

National Capital Bank

Wells Fargo Bank

Arlington Historical Society in the Community April 2020-June 2020

AHS operates two local museums - The Arlington Historical Museum at Hume School and the Ball-Sellers House. Unfortunately, since our last newsletter, we have had to keep our museum properties closed by order of the Governor. To continue sharing the story of Arlington, we have launched a massive social media campaign to engage Arlington residents. In addition to our content rich website at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>, we have increased content on our Facebook page and have also expanded our social media platforms to include Twitter and Instagram. Our engagement of the community has included the following:

- ❖ Mystery Mondays - On Mondays we post a picture from our files that we know little about and ask for help identifying the location and the context of the picture. Collectively we are finding answers!
- ❖ What's It Wednesday? - On Wednesdays we post a picture of an unusual artifact from our collection and ask who can identify the object. It has been impressive to see how knowledgeable people are about some of these items.
- ❖ Film Friday - On Fridays we share a video from our website. We have a wide variety of videos on local history, from some of our programs as well as other content on Arlington history.
- ❖ History at Home - Recently we launched our latest social media campaign to help Arlingtonians know that they have pieces of history right in their homes. We have asked people to post pictures of items they possess that tell their family's stories in Arlington. Hopefully, some of these artifacts may eventually become objects in our museum.

In addition to these social media events, we have shared articles about the history of epidemics, and walking and driving tours of Arlington that allow the residents to enjoy Arlington while still social distancing. We salute the social media team of Annette Benbow, Jennifer Burgin, and Debra Pearson who have done a fantastic job of keeping history alive in Arlington.

AHS social media promotes Arlington history far and wide! Follow us!

facebook.

[ArlingtonHistoricalSociety](#)
[BallSellersHouse](#)



#ArlingtonHistory



ArlingtonHistory

Arlington Historical Society Membership

If you received this newsletter by email or USPS, congratulations! You are one of more than 360 Arlington Historical Society (AHS) members as of June 2020. Thank you for your continued support of AHS. Most annual membership terms end on June 30, 2020. Membership renewal letters and emails for 2020-2021 will arrive in late June 2020. Please be sure to renew promptly to continue your benefits and save AHS any follow-up costs. Members who are new or renewed since March 1, 2020, are already members for 2020-2021. Life members are just that, life members, and do not need to renew annually. Your membership dues support AHS's mission of preserving, promoting, and interpreting Arlington County's history.

All members get the following benefits:

- Subscription to annual Arlington Historical Magazine
- Subscription to periodic newsletter
- Priority ticketing and discounts on annual banquet and other ticketed events
- 10% discount at Arlington Historical Museum shop
- Invitations to members-only events

Sponsor and Life members also get:

- Free admission/shop discounts at over 1000 cultural institutions through the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) program
- Recognition in the Arlington Historical Magazine and annual banquet program

Business/Organization members also get recognition in each issue of the newsletter, Arlington Historical Magazine, annual banquet, and social media.

Watch for the renewal letter or email, and please renew right away! Membership levels are:

- ❖ Life: \$1,000
- ❖ Sponsor: \$100 annually
- ❖ Dual: \$50 annually
- ❖ Individual: \$35 annually
- ❖ Business/Organization: \$350 annually



P.O. Box 100402
Arlington, Virginia 22210

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
ARLINGTON, VA
PERMIT NO. 1578**

History Awaits Come Visit!

Arlington Historical Museum
1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Arlington, VA 22202
Hours: Friday-Saturday-Sunday
1:00-4:00 P.M.

Ball-Sellers House Museum
5620 Third Street South
Arlington, VA 22204
Hours: Saturdays 1:00-4:00 P.M.
(April through October)

The Arlington Historical Society, founded in 1956, is a non-profit organization incorporated under Virginia laws. The Society supports research, collection, preservation, discovery, and dissemination of Arlington County's history. Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. in the Arlington Historical Museum at the Historic Hume School and are open to the public.



Website: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>
Email: info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org
Facebook: [ArlingtonHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonHistoricalSociety)
8 703-892-4204