



Arlington Historical Society

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Arlington Historical Society
Fall 2022

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Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Saturdays, Sundays
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Ball-Sellers House

5620 3rd Street, South
Saturdays from 1:00-4:00 PM
through the end of October

Virtual AHS

Website: <https://arlingtonhistorical.society.org>

Facebook: Arlington Historical Society

Twitter: #ArlingtonHistory

Instagram: ArlingtonHistory

AHS Board Meeting

Board meetings are on the fourth
Tuesday of every month

President's Dispatch

This summer has been one of reflection for me. My 87-year-old mother was placed in Hospice in early June and passed away in late July. As I prepared for her celebration of life, I reviewed so many pictures of my childhood in Arlington. These pictures and my memories have made me more appreciative of the place I call home.

We were an Arlington family. My dad worked as an Arlington policeman, my mom was a school secretary at Williamsburg Junior High, and my brother and I were educated in Arlington Public Schools. We worshiped at Central Methodist Church and shopped in Clarendon and Westover. Our summer days were spent swimming at Dominion Hills and our evenings were spent at Barcroft Park where my dad coached, and my brother played baseball.

As I reminisce about growing up in Arlington, these are some of the memories that stand out:

- Friday night football and basketball games. Even as children we went to high school sporting events. And, like many who attended, we headed to Giffords for ice cream afterwards.
- Santa Claus. We met him each year at Ayers Variety Store in Westover. The owner, Mr. Ayers always had candy in his pocket for the kids and each year provided candy to the schools. We also knew Christmas was near when Santa and reindeer were placed atop the Westover Post Office building.
- Parkington messages. There was a big board in front of the Hecht Company in what is now Ballston. This board had continuously changing messages. There were also stores we could shop and a beauty parlor where my mom took me for my first hair styling.
- Wilson Boulevard Rush Hour Lanes. There was no I-66, so Wilson Boulevard was a main throughfare and had heavy traffic during commuting times. I got my first ticket there during rush hour!

In this issue, we begin a new series dedicated to Arlington of the past. We will highlight an Arlington location that is *Gone but not Forgotten* and focus on distinctive Arlington sites that are *Still Standing*. We hope these articles will help you recall some of your favorite Arlington memories from the past.

My Arlington story is special to me. The Arlington Historical Society is dedicated to making sure all the stories of Arlington's past are not forgotten. We would love to hear your unique Arlington story. Our museum always welcomes donations of items related to Arlington and appreciates all who have shared their story with us through their letters and social media posts. Your support helps us tell about this special place where we grew up or live today.

Cathy Bonnell-Hix

Upcoming AHS Events

For more information and updates, visit: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events/>

Now through Mid-November 2022

Museum Exhibit: Treating Arlington: Pharmacies, Doctors, and Medical Care in Arlington

From home medicines to apothecaries and doctors, a new temporary exhibit at the Arlington Historical Museum will help tell the history of medicine and health care in Arlington County through rarely seen artifacts. (*Arlington Historical Museum, Open Sat and Sun from 1-4 pm, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road, FREE*)



Saturday, October 1, 2022

Bee Day at Ball-Sellers

We're celebrating the honeybee. John and Elizabeth Ball kept bees in the colonial era at this c. 1750 house. We're dedicating a life-size model of a colonial bee skep built by Eagle Scout, Owen Yingling. The keynote speaker is Virginia Johnson, author of "Virginia Honey: A Sweet History." The Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association will offer tips on beekeeping today. Honey-centric treats and beverages will be served. (*Ball-Sellers House, 5620 3rd St., South, Arlington, 1-4 pm. FREE*)



Thursday, October 13, 2022, 7 pm

Arlington Mills: A Forgotten History

Beth DeFrancis Sun will share her groundbreaking research on the mills of Arlington County. In the colonial era and in early America, these mills were key to area development and local wealth. Their demise in the late 1800s and early 1900s reveals much about how Arlington developed. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, FREE*)



Thursday, November 11, 2022, 7 pm

Arlington in the 1920s: A Photographic Tour

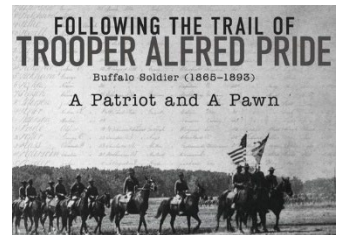
Historic photographs of Arlington never grow old, especially when many are unique or rarely seen. Arlingtonian archivist and local historian Peter Penczer was ready to present his collection of historic Arlington in March 2020 as part of the AHS celebration and commemoration of our county's name: Arlington, but the pandemic struck. He's back and looking forward to sharing his collection with us. (*In-person only at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, FREE*)



Thursday, December 8, 2022, 7 pm

Buffalo Soldier Trooper Pride: Patriot and Pawn

Dr. Alfred Taylor will lead us on two trails of discovery, first uncovering his great grandfather's personal biography and then delving into the role played by Trooper Pride as a Buffalo Soldier carrying out the US government's violent "manifest destiny" in the West. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, FREE*)



Members Only: 10% Discount at the AHS Online Book Store

<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/shop/>

AHS Members get 10% off all purchases online just as you would if you visited our museum shop. Use this Coupon Code on the Checkout page: **AHSMEMBER10**

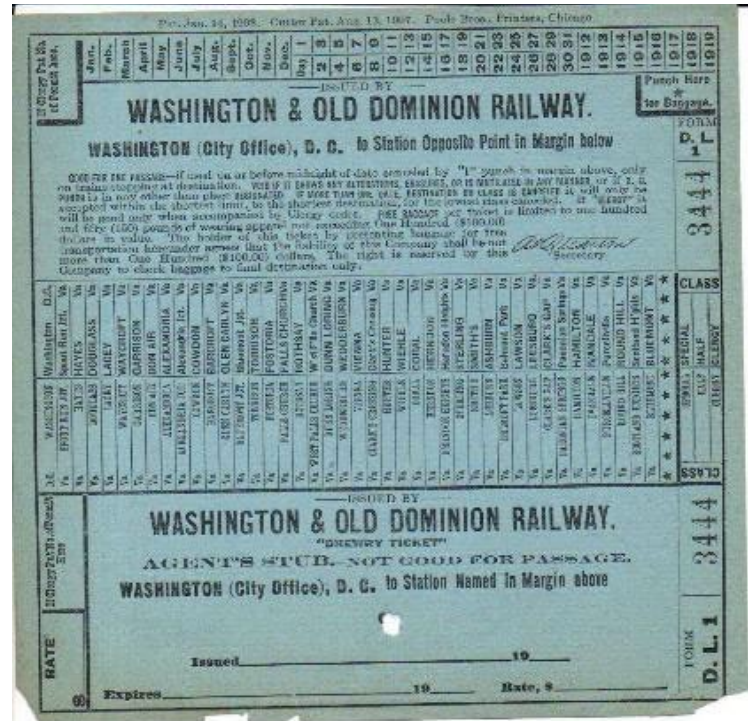
AHS offers the largest selection of books on Arlington history anywhere. Some are not even available on Amazon or Barnes and Noble! Every book you buy helps support the AHS mission to strengthen our community by improving the understanding of our shared history.

Gone But Not Forgotten: Washington and Old Dominion Railroad

This article was written by Adam Hall, Yorktown Graduate who volunteered for AHS for his senior community experience.

Today, Arlington is crisscrossed by roads and highways, but it was not always like this. For over a century, the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad moved passengers and freight all across Northern Virginia. The railroad had a turbulent history, operating under no less than ten names over the course of 115 years, and is now mainly remembered through the W&OD Trail. It never saw much success and, as with most of the rail industry in the US, was usurped by the highway.

The first organization to use the land that would become the W&OD was the Alexandria, Loudon, & Hampshire Railroad. It was chartered by Alexandria businessmen hoping to profit on the freight of the Shenandoah Valley and the coalfields of West Virginia. Construction began in the 1850s and by 1860 it had been built out to Leesburg. During the Civil War, it was seized by the Union Army and operated by the government, despite being sabotaged by Confederate troops.



After the war, it was run by a revolving door of managers who extended the line further west, hoping to connect to the Ohio River, but all of them struggled and went bankrupt. In 1886 the Richmond & Danville Railroad, which later became the Southern Railway, leased the line and built it to the final terminus at Bluemont.

At the turn of the century another railroad, the Great Falls & Old Dominion, was built from DC to Great Falls in order to bring Washingtonians to a park at the end of the line. Wishing to expand their business, the owners of the GF&OD leased the Southern Railway's Bluemont Branch, the line from Alexandria to Bluemont, and changed their name to the Washington and Old Dominion Railway. The new owners electrified the Bluemont Branch and connected it to the Great Falls Division with a new double-track line.

As the 20th Century progressed, railroads, as a whole, declined. They faced competition from cars, and despite an increase in traffic from the World Wars, the writing was on the wall. The W&OD certainly was not immune to this, and the Great Depression hit it hard. The company went into receivership in 1932 and had to sell off the Great Falls division in 1934, which became Old Dominion Drive.

Hard times continued, and the owners were compelled to sell the railroad to the C&O in 1956. The C&O expected new industries to spring up along the line, but that never came. The branch was a drain on the company, and over the line's last decade of existence it was slowly sold off and abandoned in order to build Interstate 66. Despite local opposition, the highways went ahead with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority reserving the option to operate in the median, laying the groundwork for the Orange Line. The last W&OD train ran on August 27, 1968. In modern times, the W&OD Trail Park follows much of the route the old railroad used, being built after the W&OD was abandoned. To this day, the route is used by the people of Northern Virginia to commute or have a nice day out.

**Help Support Local History
Renew or Become a Member of AHS!**
<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/membership/>

Still Standing: The Harry Gray House

One unique house still standing in Arlington is the Harry W. Gray house at 1005 South Quinn Street. This freestanding rowhouse of Italianate style was built by its namesake Harry S. Gray. Gray's story as an early resident of what would become Arlington makes the house even more valuable.



Henry W. Gray was born into slavery at the Arlington House. His mother, Selina Gray is well known for protecting George Washington's heirlooms when federal soldiers seized and occupied the Arlington Estate during the Civil War. By age 12, Henry worked on the estate as a free man, farming and working at the local brickyard. He continued to work in brickyards for the next 8 years and eventually worked for the US Patent Office.

As the Civil War was coming to an end, the federal government established Freedman's Village on the grounds of the Arlington Estate to provide housing for the many emancipated slaves. Harry and his family lived in this village for a short time. In 1880, Gray and his wife, Martha (Hoard) Gray, purchased a 9-acre tract of land for \$800.00 on Johnson Hill in Arlington, just south of the Freedman's Village near what is now Columbia Pike. Using his skills learned from the Arlington estate, Henry was able to build his house on that land.

In 2004, the house was put on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation provides some protection for the exterior of the home. Property owners are required to get permission to make changes to the exterior of the home as the goal is to preserve the historic look of the home.

Even with this designation, the Gray home has faced some challenges. Although it remained in the Gray family until 1979, there were some years of disrepair. Since 1993, it has been sold seven times. In 2011, Arlnow.com reported that the house was up for sale and was a "fixer-upper". While Gray's craftsmanship has stood the test of time, the interior required work due to water damage. According to county staff at the time, there was little left of historical significance within the interior due to extensive work by previous owners.

The last time the home was on the market was in 2021 and the previous owner had done some extensive interior remodeling. The 4-bedroom, 2 bathroom, 1624 square foot home sold to a private buyer for \$900,000. AHS is hopeful that this historic home, tracing back to one of Arlington's earliest families, continues to be a "still standing" tribute to the legacy of Harry W. Gray.

Volunteers Needed!

AHS is powered exclusively by volunteers, and we have many projects underway, two museums, and the need for constant flow of information to the community. We are looking for volunteers to help us as we move forward. Below are our categories of need. Please email AHS at info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

- ✓ Grant Writing
- ✓ Project management for construction/preservation work
- ✓ Social media communication
- ✓ Experience with WordPress for website assistance



AHS Wins Grant Funding for Memorializing the Enslaved Local History Project

The Arlington Historical Society, in collaboration with the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington, has launched an Arlington history project called *Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington*. This project is recovering the largely unknown history of the county's enslaved population. It will help bring African American experiences to light, confront a difficult history, and honor our shared humanity.



Last month, the project received a much-needed infusion of funding from a Virginia Humanities grant. The Arlington Historical Society received \$5,000 to be used exclusively on this project. Volunteer researchers are identifying men, women, and children enslaved in Arlington County and uncovering what can be learned about them.

AHS and its partners plan to develop an online interactive map and bring teaching materials into local schools to teach this little-known part of Arlington's past. Creative ideas are being sought to memorialize the enslaved outside of the classroom so we can, as a community, acknowledge the contributions of all. If you want to learn more, please email: ahsedlink@gmail.com

AHS at the County Fair



The county fair was back in full swing and AHS was there! From Friday August 19 through Sunday August 21, 15 volunteers staffed our booth for 25 hours loaded with fun history things to do like a local history quiz (with a prize) or finding where your home would be on an 1865 map. We shared information about AHS projects, like our *Memorializing the Enslaved*, and upcoming events. We also peaked fairgoers interest in history with a tabletop exhibit of a unique set of artifacts, a great reminder of our two museum!

From beginning to end, our booth got a steady flow of visitors. The county fair is always a great opportunity for AHS to be out in the community for folks who aren't usually focused on local history and impress them with the plethora of things AHS is doing! Thank you to everyone who volunteered!

AHS in the Community: July 2022-September 2022

AHS operates two museums, has monthly free public programs AND shares Arlington history in the community:

- Jul 13: Mark Benbow, Director of the Arlington Historical Museum, spoke to the Kiwanis about AHS activities and the history of the Hume School.
- Jul 14: "The Civil War Red Tape Worm" with Civil War reenactor and AHS Board member Michael Schaffner who revealed how red tape and bureaucracy could kill during the war.
- Aug 11: "Jewish Arlington: 1900-1940" presented by AHS Board member Jessica Kaplan on her groundbreaking research into the Jewish community and its important role in county development.
- Aug 19-21: AHS had a booth at the county fair and enticed people to take a local history quiz and win a prize, showed an exhibit of unique artifacts, and found several other ways to share local history.
- Sep 9: AHS Secretary Sean Denniston spoke to the Aurora Hills Women's Club about the Bennet v. Garrett court case that ruled against Clarendon's lawsuit to become its own city.
- Sep 17: Ball-Sellers House participated in Glencarlyn's AutumnFest featuring tools the Ball family would have used to make flour from wheat and corn.
- Sep 20: "Wise Gals: Women Who Built the CIA & Changed the Future of Espionage" with bestselling author Nathalia Holt who talked about four CIA women, including Adelaide Hawkins, an Arlington resident.
- Sep 28: Annette Benbow spoke to a 55+ history discussion group about how families had fun after the Civil War.

The Amazing Artifact Move

The restoration of Hume School is a work in progress. Our first step was to move our rich artifact collection in storage to a climate-controlled building. This cleared the way for workers who will be refurbishing the windows and revamping space to make more exhibit space. In June and July, a large group of AHS volunteers and some professional movers accomplished this task.

Earlier this spring, JBGSmith Cares answered AHS storage need with an offer to provide temporary space at a location in Crystal City. With the contract signed, our move team got to work. Under the guidance of Mark Benbow, Museum Director, and move manager, Annette Benbow, a score of AHS members volunteered to pack up the more than 5,000 artifacts for the move. Numerous community members donated boxes and packing materials. A group of

AHS volunteers then headed to the new facility to set up shelving to store the artifacts. Over a period of three weeks, AHS volunteers worked tirelessly packing up 1000 square feet of artifacts, large and small.

The AHS team of volunteers was so successful in their work. that the professional movers only needed one day instead of the three days we anticipated needing for the move. Additionally, the movers were able to use much of our donated packing materials, saving us from having to purchase few of their materials. Our volunteers reduced our moving bill by \$4,500, a savings that can be used for our museum restoration project! We are grateful to have such a supportive AHS community.



Preservation/Renovation Update

Over the past two years AHS has been working to launch the Preservation/Renovation work on our Arlington Historical Society Museum located in the 1891 Hume School. Phase I is focused on restoring the 42 windows that grace the property. While we have worked to maintain their exterior appearance, they are deteriorating inside, leading to environmental concerns that if unchecked, will impact our artifacts.

Partnering with Milner, a division of MTFA Architecture, we are beginning the bidding process and anticipate work on the windows to begin this fall, a process that should take about four months. With the artifact collection safely off-site, we are preparing the museum for this work. We still need some funding to finish the window project and move onto Phase II which will address waterproofing issues in the structure.



Annual Budget Report Arlington Historical Society Fiscal Year 2021-2022

*For more details on the budget, visit our website at
<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/ahs-financial-statement/>*

Income	
Ball-Sellers	12,113.00
Membership	21,749.00
Museum Shop Sales	6,230.00
Banquet proceeds (net)	8,279.00
Unrestricted Donations	10,145.00
Restricted Donations	76,057.00
Investments	(19,384.00)
Miscellaneous	2,587.00
Total Revenue	117,776.00
Expenses	
Administration	13,045.00
Hume School	5,077.00
Ball-Sellers House	16,020.00
Museum	18,304.00
Magazine	9,158.00
Miscellaneous	1,334.00
Hume School project	21,869.00
	84,807.00
Net	32,969.00
Cash: June 30, 2022	
Restricted	156,376.35
Unrestricted	224,474.19

Stewardship of Your Money

AHS depends on donations and membership fees to allow us to carry out our mission. Your financial donations have allowed us to continue the following work:

- Moving expenses to put artifacts in safe off-site storage for window restoration
- Shelving for our offsite storage facility
- Bathroom repair at Ball Sellers House for preservation and maintenance
- Expenses to rent a booth at the fair
- The management of a Zoom account that we now use to live stream events so we can have both in-person and virtual presentations
- Annual fees for our museum software program

**Thank you to our
business/organization
members**

Aurora Hills Women's Club
John Marshall Bank
JBG Smith Cares
Fairlington Historical
Society
Marymount University
MTFA

Learn more about local Arlington history at

<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

- AHS initiatives
- Upcoming events
- On-line bookstore
- Videos about local history
- Photo collections
- All past articles of the Arlington Historical Magazine
- Educational resources for learners of all ages.





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Arlington, Virginia 22210

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History Awaits Come Visit!

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Arlington, VA 22202

Open Saturdays and Sundays 1-4 pm
All year round

Ball-Sellers House Museum

5620 Third Street South
Arlington, VA 22204

Open Saturdays 1-4 pm
Now 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

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