



Arlington Historical Society

*The Quarterly Newsletter of the Arlington
Historical Society
March 2022*

Inside This Issue

Page

President's Dispatch	1
Upcoming Events	2
Notice of Annual Meeting	3
Hume School Update	3
Seeking Volunteers	3
Stewardship of Your Money	3
Ball-Sellers House News	4
Memorializing the Enslaved	4
The Evolution of Crystal City	5
Metro 29 Diner	6
Artifact Spotlight	6
AHS Preservation Support	7
AHS in the Community	7

President's Dispatch

Seven years ago, I was asked to become a member of the Arlington Historical Society Board of Directors. As a native Arlingtonian, then serving as the Arlington Public School Social Studies Supervisor, this was a natural choice for continued service to the community. Over the years, I have gained such an appreciation for the many individuals who volunteer their time to make our organization so robust.

Members of our community have been serving AHS since its inception in 1956 when a small group of people met at the Glebe House to form the society. Since that time those volunteers and all who have followed have added two museum properties, an annual research magazine, monthly events, quarterly newsletters, an extensive online presence, and extensive outreach to the community. Pretty impressive for a volunteer organization.

Today we have over 40 docents who volunteer to staff our museums. We have an additional 58 volunteers researching and writing articles, seeking out grants, doing repair work at the museums, entering data about membership, sending out mailings, posting on social media, doing presentations in the community and many other tasks. We have a volunteer Board of Directors that oversees the work of the society and takes leading roles on many of our projects.

We have numerous people who volunteer to present for us at our monthly events. In the past year, we have had several scouts who have done their Eagle Scout projects in connection with AHS. We have additional teens who assist with social media, write articles, and serve as docents.

All these volunteers have at least one thing in common. They believe in the mission of AHS which is to share history of our great county. An unknown author once said "Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." We are so thankful for all our volunteers who are helping us create a community that values and shares the stories of the past.

For those looking to get more involved in community service, AHS is always looking for more volunteers! Writers, researchers, data experts, maintenance and computer help. We have opportunities for all. If you have an interest in Arlington and its history, please reach out to info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

Cathy Bonnell-Stix

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://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

Facebook: Arlington Historical
Society

Twitter: #ArlingtonHistory

Instagram: ArlingtonHistory

AHS Board Meeting

Board meetings are on the fourth
Tuesday of every month and are
held at the Arlington Historical
Museum.

Board meetings start at 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming AHS Events

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

Saturday, April 2, 2022, 1-4 pm Colonial Games Festival



The oldest structure in the Washington area opens its 2022 season with a Colonial Games Festival. Children of EVERY age can play the games the Ball daughters would have in the 1700s. Colonial snacks and

beverages served, and a tour of the museum. Free! (*In-person only. Ball-Sellers House, 5620 3rd St., South*)

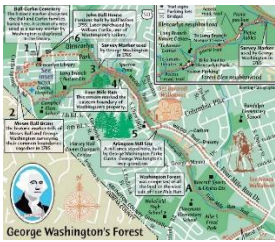
Thursday, April 14, 2022, 7 pm Selina Gray: Her Life and Legacy



Join Arlington Park Historian John McNair as he introduces you to Selina Gray, her life, heroism, and legacy in Arlington County. Not only did she protect and preserve priceless mementos that once belonged to George Washington but her family went on to become community leaders in Arlington

county. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, Free*)

Saturday, April 30, 2022, 1:30 pm George Washington's Forest Guided Walk



In 1775, George Washington bought 1200-acres of forest in what is now Arlington. After the Revolutionary War, he returned home and surveyed his property. Local historian Kevin Vincent will guide you on a walking tour

of about 3 miles starting at the Ball-Sellers House. You'll visit survey markers used by Washington in 1785, historic springs, the site of a mill built by George Washington's step-grandson, and more. Free, but donations appreciated. (*In-person only. Starts at the Ball-Sellers House 5620 3rd St., South*)

Thursday, May 12, 2022, 7:00-7:15 pm AHS Annual Members' Meeting



AHS holds a brief members' meeting to elect a slate of officers and members of the Society's Board of Directors for the coming year. Members vote

but we welcome all. The meeting will be immediately followed by the "Lost Arlington County" presentation. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, Free*)

Thursday, May 12, 2022, 7:15 pm Lost Arlington County



Local journalist and author Charlie Clark provides a compendium of gone-but-not-forgotten institutions, businesses, homes, and amusements. He'll also outline the new AHS

preservation education program for homeowners, builders, and real estate agents. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, Free*)

Thursday, June 9, 2022, 7 pm Bennett v. Garrett: When Arlington Became Arlington.



Did you know Did you Clarendon tried to secede from Arlington County to become its own municipality? The resulting court case in 1922 helped make Arlington what it is

today. Local historian Sean Denniston will walk us through Clarendon's case and the impact it had on the county. (*Virtual on Zoom and in-person at Marymount University Reinsch Library Auditorium, 2807 N. Glebe Rd, Free*)



We will not have a banquet this May. Look for a special event to occur in September. Details will be in the June newsletter.

Notice to Members of Annual Meeting

The Arlington Historical Society will hold its annual meeting of members on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held BOTH on Zoom and in person at the Reinsch Library Auditorium on the main campus of Marymount University. If you plan to attend by zoom, please register at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTae5MM-W8dltFwy_eadbNJVxWfVjzbzufCR5YI-GeCYf7VQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

The business portion of the meeting, where new officers and other directors will be elected, is expected to be short. It will be followed immediately afterward by “Lost Arlington,” presented by AHS Board Member, author and columnist Charlie Clark. Further information can be found at AHS’s website at ArlingtonHistoricalSociety.org.

The Nominating Committee intends to nominate the following for election as officers and directors at the meeting: Cathy Bonneville Hix as President, David Pearson as Vice President, Sean Denniston as Secretary, John Tuohy as treasurer and *Catherine Aselford, Annette Benbow, Charlie Clark, Tom Dickinson, Dr. Gerald Haines, Del.

Patrick Hope, Tracy Hopkins, Jessica Kaplan, *Sandy Newton, Michael Schaffner, and *J. Dale Smith as directors. * Denotes new board member this year.

Hume School Preservation/Renovation Update

AHS has been steadily working on our project to preserve and renovate the Arlington Historical Society at Hume School. We continue to partner with John Milner Preservation Division, part of MTFA Architecture on this project. In July of 2022, we launched a capital fundraising drive to help fund this project. We anticipate the project to be completed in four phases:

- Phase 1: Window restoration
- Phase 2: Exterior repair to provide waterproofing to the building
- Phase 3: Renovation of the interior to provide expanded exhibit space and to update the HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems.
- Phase 4: Addition of an elevator to provide accessibility for all.

Our capital campaign has successfully raised enough funding to start the Phase 1, the window restoration. We are thankful for the donors who have provided their financial support. We are currently seeking grant funding to be able to complete Phase 1 this year. We have also met with county staff to seek some support. To learn more about our preservation/renovation project, visit <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/2021/06/preservation-and-renovation-of-the-arlington-historical-museum/>.



Seeking Volunteers

AHS has numerous ongoing projects. We are looking for volunteers to help us. Below are just some of the types of jobs where you could help AHS. Please email info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

- Grant Writing
- Project Management for preservation/renovation work
- Experience with WordPress for website assistance
- Video editing



Stewardship of Your Money

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

- Upgrading our security system to 5G technology.
- Management of a zoom account that we now use to live stream events so we can have simultaneous in-person and virtual events
- Initial work on window restoration at the Arlington Historical Museum.



Ball-Sellers House News

The Ball-Sellers House reopens for the 2022 season on Saturday April 2 at 1:00 pm. Besides being the oldest structure in the Washington area and offering free tours to visitors by a cadre of knowledgeable docents, we also host special events. This year we aim to have at least one special event each month and we are fortunate to have a team of people working to bring it all to you. Here's what's in our line up so far:

- April 2: Colonial Games Festival, young and old alike will have fun playing the games the five Ball daughters played.
- April 30: George Washington's Forest Guided History Walk
- May (date TBD): Wine and Wisteria, back by popular demand, tickets available soon.
- June 4: Glencarlyn Heritage Days, partnering with the Glencarlyn Civic Association
- July 4 weekend, the movie 1776 shown on the lawn (specific day TBD)
- August (date TBD): Bee History in Colonial Virginia. John and Elizabeth Ball kept bees. AHS will be unveiling Owen Yingling's Eagle Scout project of a life-size model of a bee apiary similar to that owned by John Ball's family
- September AutumnFest in partnership with Library gardeners
- October (date TBD): Beer Garden, in partnership with Glencarlyn Civic Association.

Before all the fun starts in April, the Ball-Sellers House will have had a lot of activity. In preparation for expanding the vegetable garden, archaeologists from the Archaeology Society of Virginia, Northern Virginia Chapter, with lead archaeologist Patrick O'Neill are conducting shovel tests on the property. The data from these will help show where the most artifact rich areas are and help guide how we enlarge the garden. Master Gardener Kathie Clements and her colleague, Cheryl Vann, conducted research on colonial kitchen gardens (They will present their work at a future monthly AHS event.) AHS plans to use all the data from both projects to enlarge and make the garden a working colonial garden in partnership with the Friends of Urban Agriculture. The garden will be able to grow more produce for local food pantries using many of the same methods the Ball family would have used.

Neighbors of the Ball-Sellers House can also expect to see a team of Anne Washington's landscapers from her company Digging in the Dirt, PhD as they tidy the flower gardens and trim the wisteria. Finally, just before the season opening, a small, efficient, and experienced group of volunteers will have cleaned and freshened the inside of the Ball-Sellers House. It takes a village to take care of and share a 270-year-old house with the public and AHS is proud to do it!

Thank You to Our Business and Organization Members

Aurora Hills Women's Club	John Marshall Bank
Fairlington Historical Society	Marymount University
Prudential Financial	

Memorializing the Enslaved: New Collaborative Project



The Arlington Historical Society, in collaboration with the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington, announces the beginning of a new project, "Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington, 1669-1865." The project aims to recover the largely unknown history of our community's enslaved people and to chronicle their lives. We will partner with Arlington Public Schools to develop a website with stories, documents, and an interactive map of areas where the enslaved lived and toiled. We are hopeful that memorial markers linked to the website will be placed at these locations with the names and life dates of those once held in bondage. Lectures, articles, and social media will inform and engage the wider community. Through this project, we fervently hope to bring African American experiences to light, confront a difficult history, and honor our shared humanity.

The Evolution of Crystal City

By Anuj Khemka

Crystal City is known for its office buildings and high-rise apartments. Its proximity to the Pentagon and the nation's capital has enabled it to become one of Arlington's most commercially active areas.

However, over a century ago the northern part of what is now Crystal City was a hotbed of gambling and criminal activity known as Jackson City.

Named after then-president Andrew Jackson, Jackson City was established in the early 1830s by a group of investors from New York City. Its founders envisioned it as a gateway to Washington D.C. and as a building block for the Capital City's transformation into one of the world's most prestigious cities.

At first, Jackson City failed to develop. It struggled to attract establishments and residents and earned the nickname "the invisible city." It was the target of more than a few jokes about its lack of settlement. At last, after the Civil War, business finally took hold. When Congress cracked down on gambling in Washington D.C., Jackson City became the refuge of choice for avid risk-takers. Over the next two decades, the city became a heavily trafficked area with thousands of visitors streaming into its saloons, gambling joints, and its horse-racing track every day and night.

Jackson City attracted more than just gambling. Violent criminals from the nation's capital also flocked to the area, forcing its citizens to always be on the alert. Local historian Eleanor Lee Templeman wrote that "Killings were commonplace and cases were never brought to trial." As a result, Jackson City and the wider Northern Virginia area became known as the "Monte Carlo of the East."

The city would start to change in 1892, when the Virginia State Assembly passed a bill banning gambling. Jackson City managed to thrive for a decade after that but eventually began to crumble in 1903, with the election of Crandal Mackey as the Alexandria County Attorney General. During his three terms in office, Mackey oversaw a vicious crackdown on gambling in the city. Mackey staged multiple raids on saloons around Jackson City and made more than a few arrests for gambling. Soon, due to Mackey's efforts, the area collapsed, and Jackson City was no more.

Gambling dens, brothels, and saloons were replaced by warehouses, brickyards, factories, and other industrial buildings. Though not quite the makings of a booming city, these establishments laid the foundation for Crystal City's future economic development.



Eventually, with the aid of real estate developer Charles E. Smith, the place began to morph into the version of Crystal City that we know today. Smith built an 800-unit apartment tower named "Crystal House." In the tower's lobby, residents were greeted by a large crystal chandelier that hung right above them. Later buildings built by Smith in the area were named "Crystal Gateway," "Crystal Square," and "Crystal Plaza." Thanks to Smith's efforts, the area eventually earned the name "Crystal City."

In the 1960s, Crystal City saw the arrival of the U.S. Patent Office and the Institute for Defense Analyses. Soon, the city became a location of choice for the General Services Administration, which was in charge of constructing and purchasing land for government buildings. Over the second half of the 20th century, Crystal City saw a continuous stream of demand for government office buildings along with apartment space for its workers.

After four decades of economic growth and prosperity, however, Crystal City's development was finally threatened in 2005, when the Department of Defense decided to shut down several military bases and government buildings in the area. For Crystal City, the decision meant that nearly 3 million square feet of commercial space were soon to become empty.

In response to the dire development, the county created a task force comprised of local stakeholders to determine how best to keep the area alive. Under this team's guidance, Crystal City has transformed from a home of impersonal government towers to a more modern, vibrant area. Over the last decade-and-a-half, one-way roads have turned into two-way streets, while retail shops and restaurants have become more common.

Metro 29 Diner

By Alexander Aguilar

Metro 29 Diner has been a local favorite for Arlington restaurant-goers of all ages since it opened in 1995. Metro 29 was first introduced to the Arlington community in its current location on Lee Highway by the Bota and Kanellias families who shared a wealth of experience working in and operating New York diners. The families used their expertise to shape the restaurant into a New York style diner, fully equipped with an onsite bakery, a full bar, and table and booth seating. The bar's iconic architecture and aesthetic, described by *The Washingtonian* as an "art deco ode to Americana," is distinguished by its nostalgic, retro-style stainless steel siding and sign easily seen from the road.

Over the years, both Arlingtonians and out-of-town visitors have enjoyed Metro 29's renowned retro diner ambiance. The diner has received visits from WMAL radio station, Joe Biden, and was even featured on a 2010 episode of Guy Fieri's hit *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* TV show. In the episode, Fieri enjoyed the lamb and famous French toast homemade challah bread made from scratch in Metro 29's own bakery, a favorite among frequent diners.

Patron favorites also include the Belgian waffles, golden brown pancakes, sandwiches, and 18 different types of pastries, among other diner classics. If that's not enough, the diner also features specialty waffles, including an order with whipped cream and strawberries as a dessert for breakfast. An integral part of the Arlington community and the Lee Highway corridor's economic prominence, Metro 29 is also known for its staff's friendly service and an authentic environment that welcomes families, friends, and colleagues from all over the world every day from 6 AM through 12 AM. It is no wonder that the diner is known for having a line consistently waiting at the door!



Photo Source: <https://www.metro29diner.com/about.html>

Artifact Spotlight: Tin Toy Capital Airlines Model Plane

The Arlington Historical Museum has acquired a rare tin toy Capital Airliner model made in 1955 by the Biller Toy company of Germany. It is a gift from Ciro Taddeo and was restored by George Axiotis to working condition. The model has an ingenious hand trigger under the carriage that spins the four propellers when squeezed. It is approximately 11 inches with a wingspan of about 10 inches.

The body has the design and logo of Capital Airlines. This airline was the 5th largest airline in the US and its headquarters, training school, and maintenance facilities was based at National Airport from 1948 to 1961 until it merged with United Airlines. The model and an original advertisement are on display now at the museum in the "Pandemic Treasures" exhibit.



AHS Provides Support for Preservation

As part of a new push to improve preservation of historic properties, the Arlington Historical Society has sent an appeal letter to dozens of area homeowners, homebuilders, and real estate agents. Since the appeal letter has gone out, we have received multiple inquiries about preserving historic properties.

The recent demolition of several valuable properties—the historic Febrey-Lothrop house at 6407 Wilson Boulevard and the “Memory House” at 6404 Washington Boulevard—are key examples of beloved properties that fell to the wrecking ball without sufficient consideration, in the view of AHS or creative alternatives, AHS believes the best way to preserve more properties that reflect Arlington’s heritage is through education and negotiations that honor the interests of all parties.

In the letter, AHS acknowledges that the county is changing and expresses respect for by-right ownership and the free-market considerations that go into home sales and improvements. AHS asks that before rushing to a tear-down option homeowners, builders, and agents conduct research on their properties. AHS is not offering official advice as to whether a given property is historic, but we have placed resources on our website to assist in research on the house and explorations of alternatives to demolition—finding a historically minded buyer, or an architect who could design a partial renovation. These new resources can be viewed at

<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/2022/02/preservation-education-program/>

AHS believes that Arlington’s government, residents, and businesses could do more to preserve properties that represent either notable people, events, or architectural styles. If you want to find out more about how AHS can help you, please email us at: info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

AHS in the Community: January-March 2022

AHS operates two local museums: The Arlington Historical Museum at the historic Hume School and the Ball-Sellers House. We have also been active elsewhere in the community:

- Hosted a free public event in February about *James Parks: His Life and Legacy*. Arlingtonian Tamara Moore provided an in-depth look at her ancestor, James Parks who was enslaved on the Custis Estate and was buried in what would become the National Cemetery.
- Provided artifacts for a unique temporary exhibit on historic writing implements at the Aurora Hills Library.
- Hosted a free public event in March titled *Mapping Exclusion: Locating Racially Restrictive Covenants in Arlington* presented by a panel of experts who shared a closer look at the historical context in which racial covenants emerged and discussed the initial phase of research that involves mapping these land records from 1900 to 1968.
- Worked with Boy Scouts who are doing Eagle Scout projects involving the history of our county.
- Responded to numerous requests via our website for educational resources about Arlington history.
- Created a new exhibit *Treasures of the Pandemic*, highlighting interesting artifact donations during the past two years.

Get Your Member-Only 10% Discount at the AHS Online Book Store

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



To get the Member-only 10% off on 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.



Arlington, Virginia 22210

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History Awaits Come Visit!

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Arlington, VA 22202
Open Saturday and Sunday 1-4 pm

Ball-Sellers House Museum

5620 Third Street South
Arlington, VA 22204
Open Saturday April through October
1-4 pm.

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: arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org
Email: info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org
Facebook: [ArlingtonHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonHistoricalSociety)