



Arlington Historical Society

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MARCH 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

	Page
President's Dispatch	1
AHS Members Meeting	2
Upcoming AHS Events	2
AHS Annual Banquet	3
Three Sisters	4
AHS in the Community	5
Westover Preservation	6
AHS Stewardship	7

Arlington Historical Museum

1807 South Arlington Ridge Road

Open: Fridays: 12:30-3:30

Saturdays: 1:00-4:00 pm

Sundays: 1:00-4:00 pm

Or by appointment for group tours

Ball-Sellers House

5620 3rd Street, South

Open April through October

Saturdays 1:00-4:00 pm

Or by appointment for group tours

AHS Board Meeting

April 23, 2019, 7:00 pm

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road

AHS Members Welcome

The AHS Board of Directors meets the 4th Tuesday of each month.

President's Dispatch

Greetings and Happy Spring,

Recently, I had the opportunity to ride down through Clarendon, Courthouse, and Rosslyn. Seeing the growth of that area was amazing to someone like me who remembers what Arlington looked like in the 1960s. Once a quiet bedroom community of the district, Arlington has become a thriving urban area.

From my childhood in Arlington during the 1960s and 1970s, I remember pre-66 driving where the commuting lanes to D.C. included Wilson Blvd. with arrows directing the traffic flow morning and night. In the pre-Metro era, I remember the bus as the way we got around. We also did a lot of walking and biking. I remember everything we needed was in Arlington: groceries, clothing, household items. We did not have much need to go to Tyson's which did not open until 1968; instead we explored the stores of Parkington (now Ballston Quarter). And while there were busy shopping areas, neighborhoods were quiet with low traffic. In good weather, we spent a large part of our time outdoors playing neighborhood tag and using our streets as playgrounds for kick ball and hide and seek.

My aunt Betty Bonneville also grew up in Arlington but during the 1940s. Even though she moved away from the area six decades ago, she still has stories to tell of her childhood. She remembers moving frequently to find better places to live and even sharing houses with other families. She remembers Arlington as "little towns" like Cherrydale and Clarendon which she often walked to for shopping with her friends. She remembers working in the penny store in Clarendon (perhaps a forerunner of the Dollar Store?). Because there was little traffic, she and her friends roller skated throughout the county and enjoyed exploring the many wooded areas. A big treat she remembers was going to D.C. to participate in sing-alongs and see movies at the large theatres.

Another former Arlingtonian, Don Deder, can remember even further back. He grew up in the Ballston area in the 1930s and the 1940s and also has fond memories. He was born in a Sears house on Pollard Street and the doctor's bill was paid with the family's home-grown root vegetables. He remembers of his childhood, "We fished perch, shad, herring. Mom waited tables for the after-theatre rush at downtown Child's and my big brother Frank and I snuck through the fence to watch the Washington Redskins pre-season practice against our Ballston Skulls... I was a Patrol Leader in BSA Troop 104, one of Scouting's oldest... Our church league played hardball below the South Lawn. I hunted squirrels near Fort Myer. I remember waiting in our '34 Chevy at the runway to allow a passenger airplane to land at or depart Hoover".

These great memories of the past remind us that in the vibrant Arlington of the present, we have much to learn of the legacy of the past. It is through the stories that we can see where we came from. The goal of the Arlington Historical Society is to preserve and share Arlington's history. We hope you will reach out and share your memories of Arlington's past. We also invite you to take part in the many activities of AHS

(<https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>) that we offer to help citizens of our county understand the legacy of people and events that forged the Arlington we know today.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Arlington Historical Society will hold its annual meeting of members on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at 7:00 pm, at the Reinsch Library Auditorium, Marymount University, 2807 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, Virginia. The meeting, where new directors will be elected, is expected to be short. It will be followed by a lecture by historical researcher Jessica Kaplan entitled “The Bottom: An African-American Enclave Rediscovered.”

The Nominating Committee intends to nominate the following for election as directors at the meeting:

- Cathy Bonneville Hix: President
- Robert White: Vice President
- Gerry Laporte: Secretary
- John Tuohy: Treasurer
- Directors at large: Haley Anderson, Annette Benbow, Sean Denniston, Tom Dickinson, Gerald Haines, Tracy Hopkins, Jessica Kaplan, Annette Marrero, Dakota Springston, and Karl VanNewkirk.

Directions to the Annual Meeting and AHS Public Programs

The easy way to get to the Reinsch Library Auditorium on Marymount University’s Main Campus is the following:

- Go North on Glebe Road.
- Take a right onto N. 26 Street.
- After the intersection at Yorktown Road, take the next left into the entrance to campus.
- The Reinsch Library will be to your left.



UPCOMING AHS EVENTS



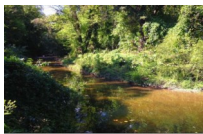
April 6, 2019: Ball-Sellers House Opening Day

The oldest house in Arlington, built c. 1742 opens the 2019 season with the Monumental City Ancient Fife and Drum Corps who will perform colonial and revolutionary era music at 1:00. They’ll talk with us about music of the era and share with us some favorites that the Ball and Carlin families would have been familiar with. (5620 3rd Street, South, 1:00 pm and open Saturdays through Oct 1-4 pm)



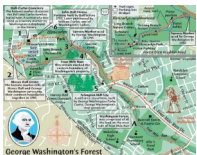
April 11, 2019: Hall’s Hill: More Than a Family

Halls Hill native Wilma Jones tells the story of this Arlington neighborhood that got its start in 1850 as a plantation. After the Civil War the residents were African American, and many were former slaves and their descendants. Ms. Jones tells the history of the community through her family’s experiences. (Reinsch Library Auditorium, Marymount University Main Campus, 7:00 pm)



May 9, 2019: The Bottom: An African-American Enclave Rediscovered.

Historical researcher Jessica Kaplan brings this small Arlington African-American community to life based on newspapers articles, Civil War soldiers’ drawings, and Southern Claims Commission documents to provide us with a small window into the lives of its residents. (Reinsch Library Auditorium, Marymount University Main Campus, 7:15 pm, following a brief AHS Annual Meeting)



May 11, 2019: George Washington’s Forest History Tour

In 1775, Washington bought 1200-acres in what is now Arlington and after the Revolutionary War, he returned to survey his property. You’ll walk in Washington’s footsteps and see survey markers he used, a DC boundary stone, the site of a mill built by his step-grandson, and much more. (Starts at the Ball-Sellers House at 5620 3rd St., South in Glencarlyn 1:30 pm)



June 13, 2019: Arlington History Through Architecture

The Arlington County Preservation Staff will sample key elements of Arlington’s historic districts to illustrate the range of historic properties and how they reflect Arlington history. From neighborhoods to homes, churches to cemeteries, schools to Civil War Forts, each tells a story of Arlington’s past. (Reinsch Library Auditorium, Marymount University Main Campus, 7:00 pm)

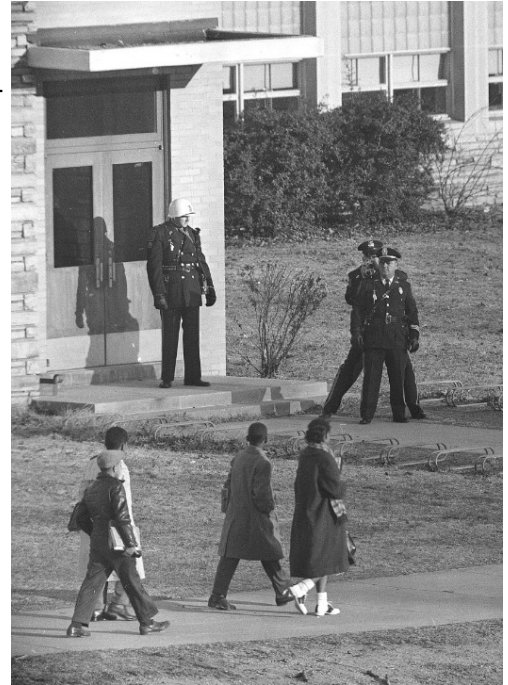
ANNUAL AHS BANQUET: MAY 16

Plan to attend the upcoming AHS Banquet on Thursday, May 16 starting at 6:30 pm at the Washington Golf and County Club.

James McGrath Morris Keynote Speaker

AHS is excited to welcome former Arlington resident, author James McGrath Morris as our keynote speaker at this year's Annual AHS Banquet. As we continue to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the desegregation of Arlington public schools, Mr. Morris will share his abiding interest in civil rights history. His landmark article *A Chink in the Armor: The Black-Led Struggle for School Desegregation in Arlington, Virginia, and the End of Massive Resistance* told the full story of what Arlington's African-American community went through to desegregate Arlington public schools after the 1954 Supreme Court mandated nationwide desegregation. He worked closely with key activists including Dorothy Hamm and his detailed account of the effort to desegregate schools in Arlington has been widely cited among scholarly works.

In addition, his bestselling *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press* was awarded the Benjamin Hooks National Book Prize for the best work in civil rights history. A previous biography, *Pulitzer: A Life in Politics, Print, and Power* was selected by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the five best books on American moguls and American Library Association's *Booklist* placed it on its list of the ten best biographies of the year. His most recent book is *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway, Dos Passos, and a Friendship Made and Lost in War*. He is currently working on a biography of Tony Hillerman, the author of a ground-breaking series of Navajo detective novels.



Cornelia B. Rose, Jr. Award

AHS will present its Cornelia B. Rose, Jr. Award to Edward, Bernard, and Carmela Hamm, the family of Dorothy and E. Leslie Hamm. The Cornelia B. Rose, Jr. Award honors a member or members of the community who partnered with AHS to share Arlington's history. The Hamm family has loaned the papers of civil rights activist Dorothy Hamm to the museum for an exhibit on school desegregation. The Hamm family has also worked with AHS to provide several programs this year focused on school desegregation.

Invitations Coming to You!

Invitations for this event will go out first to members in early April. We expect a full house so please make sure to RSVP as quickly as possible. Tickets ordered will be at the reception table the night of the banquet. The event will be held at the historic Washington Golf and Country Club at 3017 N Glebe Road in Arlington. We look forward to seeing you at this exciting evening.



Do you love history?

Do you want to learn more about Arlington's history and share it with others?

VOLUNTEER TO BE A DOCENT!

No experience necessary, training available

Email: robertwhite7@aol.com

Or Call: 703-892-4204



Each issue of the AHS Newsletter offers “Three Sisters” to showcase three historical things that make Arlington so unique. Our Three Sisters consist of a person, a place, and an artifact from the AHS collection.

The Person - Dorothy Hamm



Dorothy Bigelow Hamm (1919–2004) was born in Caroline County. Hamm and her son, E. Leslie Hamm, Jr., joined a civil action case in 1956 that sought to end segregation in Arlington schools. In 1958, a US district court judge ordered that four African American children be admitted to the all-white Stratford Junior High School the following year, making it the first white public school in Virginia to admit African Americans students. In the intervening years, Hamm participated in a successful challenge to the Pupil Placement Act, which was designed to delay school integration while giving the appearance of compliance.

Even after school desegregation began, in 1963 Hamm and her husband, E. Leslie Hamm, Sr., participated in a challenge to Virginia’s poll tax. That same year, she took part in a court action resulting in the desegregation of Arlington theaters, and was arrested for publicly protesting their white-only admittance policies. Hamm was politically active, serving as delegate to Arlington County and state conventions in 1964. She was later appointed assistant registrar and a chief election officer in the Woodlawn precinct in Arlington. She worked with the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) as they organized in Arlington, and participated in the 1968 “Poor People’s March on Washington.”

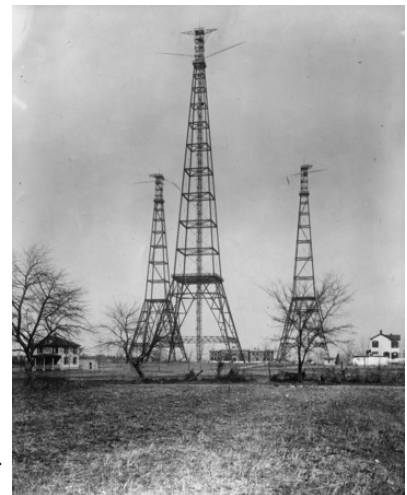
In 1982 Hamm received the first Arlington County Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. In 2002 the Virginia House of Delegates honored her lifelong contributions in a joint resolution. *(Courtesy: Library of Virginia Trailblazers program)*

The Place - Three Sisters: The Radio Towers of Fort Myer

In 1913, the US navy established Radio Arlington trio of radio antennas near the intersection of Columbia Pike and Courthouse Road. They towered over the area and became known as “The Three Sisters.” They were the world’s tallest and one of the towers was 45 feet taller than the Washington Monument. Radio Arlington launched the US military’s global communications system. At the time, the towers were the second largest manmade structure in the world behind only the Eiffel Tower.

The towers were key to communication during World War I, enabling US military commanders to communicate more quickly with forces abroad—particularly US naval vessels.

The towers were moved in 1941 because they were in the flight path of the new Washington National Airport. The towers stand today at Annapolis Naval Academy in Maryland, on the edge of the Chesapeake Bay.



The Artifact - US Navy WAVES Uniform Jacket



In honor of Women's History Month in March, the artifact we choose to highlight is a US Navy WAVES jacket. It was donated by Margaret Moody in 1983. We're not sure who wore it or what role she played in World War II but she was one of the many heroic women who served her country. In addition to this jacket, AHS also has the skirt and the tie.

The US Navy WAVES were established in 1942 to support the Navy because men were posted in warfighting areas and roles. Elizabeth Reynard, a professor at Barnard College, coined the acronym "WAVES" which stands for Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services. She wanted to ensure that the name emphasized that these women would only serve for the duration of the war.

Robert Main Boucher, of the Mainbocher fashion house in New York, designed the uniform specifically for women so it would actually fit a woman's form—unlike the army's first uniform for women which did not allow for women's proportions. Some women said they choose to join WAVES because of the stylish uniform!

The Navy WAVES uniform remains the basis for the uniform naval women wear today. More than 80,000 women joined WAVES, and 20,000 were officers. This allowed for thousands of male sailors to serve in combat. Their contributions ranged from yeoman, mechanics, and intelligence to decoders, cooks, and lawyers. More than thirty percent of the women in WAVES worked in the Bureau of Aeronautics. If you know more about this uniform or wore one yourself, please let us know. — *Haley Wallace, AHS Collections Manager*

We welcome your tax deductible donations of artifacts. We will research them and let you know what we find AND we will share them with our community at our museums or community outreach events. Contact us!

AHS IN THE COMMUNITY

On February 4th, AHS joined Arlington Public Schools, Arlington Arts, the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington, and the Office of Historical Preservation in commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Desegregation of Stratford Junior High School. The standing room only event at H.B. Woodlawn featured, Michael Jones, one of the four students that desegregated Stratford on February 2, 1959, as Stratford became the first public school to challenge Virginia's policy of "Massive Resistance." Jones recounted the day, the preparation it entailed, and the generally tolerant reaction of his white classmates.

The program, emceed by Sharon Monde, featured remarks from School Board Chair Reid Goldstein, Arlington NAACP Chapter President Julius Spain, and County Board Chair Christian Dorsey. Dorsey reminded the audience that the desegregation milestone was not *that* long ago and there is still much work to be done. Two H.B. Woodlawn student essay participants in the Martin Luther King Jr Literary and Visual Arts contest, read their submissions.

Before and after the program, AHS participated in an exhibit of artifacts and art. AHS President, Cathy Hicks and volunteer, Jessica Kaplan, helped interpret AHS's display of newspaper articles and documents from Dorothy Hamm's personal papers on loan to AHS. The items, including E. Leslie Hamm's application to attend Stratford Junior High (later rejected), encapsulated the family's role in the struggle to integrate Arlington's public schools. A local news station covered the event and highlighted the AHS exhibit. A more thorough exhibit featuring Dorothy Hamm's papers, "Forging the Way: Arlington's Fight Toward School Desegregation," is currently on display at the Arlington Historical Museum. *(continued on page 7)*

WESTOVER HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORT

The AHS Historic Preservation Committee is closely following local advocacy efforts to save the remaining historic Westover Apartment buildings. In 2014, these 1930s era, 8-10 unit two-story brick apartment buildings (mostly low-income tenants) started to disappear, to be replaced by near million dollar condos and homes. These apartments already have national historic district designation, but not local historic district designation, which would allow for some additional legal protection. For the past three years, the County halted the historic review required for such designation, and several of the historic buildings have been demolished.



In November 2016, the Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) of Arlington County found that the garden apartments within Westover met the initial required criteria for local historic district designation. Subsequently, the HALRB put everything on hold until the county government completed a separate, new, proposed zoning ordinance, the Housing Conservation District (HCD). At present, the county indicates that action on the HCD may not happen until the end of this year or later. In the meantime, historic Westover apartment buildings continue to suffer demolition.

Arlington County policies appear to oppose or delay efforts to designate the Westover apartments as a local historic district. The HCD has not stopped demolitions.

If any AHS members would like to join and support this effort to preserve the historic Westover Apartments, please contact Tom Dickinson, Chair, AHS Historic Preservation Committee, tomwd3@gmail.com

DID YOU MISS RECENT AHS PUBLIC PROGRAMS?

At our January public program, local historian and long-time AHS member Garrett Peck gave a well-received talk on the history of the Potomac River to an audience of over 130 people at the Reinsch Library Auditorium of Marymount University. Peck gives tours of the river's historical sites for the Smithsonian and is the author of *The Potomac River: A History and Guide*. He is also the author of a number of other books on the local history of our area. Garrett is one who belies the old adage of history being boring. His enthusiasm for his topic was infectious and his illustrated tour of the river was a delight to all who attended.



At our February event, we put desegregation of our schools in historic context with a panel discussion.

- Bernard Hamm whose mom was on the leading edge of the fight to desegregate was permitted to attend a “white school” after the first four African-American students began at Stratford Junior High movingly shared his family’s story and helped us all understand what was on the line 60 years ago.
- Kimberly Springle, the Director of the Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives in DC explained the history of African-American education in the DC area.
- Cathy Hix, retired head of the Social Studies Program of Arlington Public Schools discussed how Arlington teaches this in school today.
- Dr. Erin Devlin, Professor of American history at Mary Washington University and author of “Remember Little Rock” discussed today’s challenges to desegregation.

AHS IN THE COMMUNITY (CONT.)

AHS is proud to offer two museums where visitors can learn about Arlington history. These museums are staffed by a terrific group of volunteer docents. In addition, AHS volunteers participate and share their expertise in many community endeavors. These volunteers use their knowledge of Arlington history to inform the public. In the past few months:

- Karl Van Newkirk and Tom Dickenson have made historical presentations to local community groups.
- John Tuohy, Max Gross, and Robert White judged the National History Day contest at a local middle school.
- Cathy Hix and Robert White both spent time in local elementary schools helping students learn about the community and how to share their knowledge with museum exhibits of their own.
- Jessica Kaplan and George Axiotis volunteered as AHS representatives on Arlington committees.
- Mark Benbow continues to represent AHS on the DC Historical Society's Conference Planning Committee and on the National Park Service's Arlington House Community of Practice reviewing how the his-

AHS STEWARDSHIP OF YOUR DONATIONS

This year, AHS has received many donations from our faithful members and local businesses. We depend on donations to keep our museums open and to help us offer free monthly events for our members. We are very thankful for the support we receive. Some of the highlights of the work your donations have allowed us to do include the following:

- Updating our AHS website (<http://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>) to upgrade the software and provide more content for visitors. This includes photo and document collections, videos of Arlington history presentations, and copies of AHS newsletters and magazines.
- Ball Sellers House improvements: Maintaining the oldest building in Arlington is a constant job. This year, that work included carpentry work on the farmhouse and the outbuildings as well as painting and new trellis supports for the 100 year old wisteria vine. This work will ensure this house is ready for visitors throughout our 2019 April-October season.
- Arlington Historical Museum at Hume School: Our work has included improved lighting and entryway. We anticipate a much needed repair of the parking lot after the construction work in the parking lot is finished. Inside the museum, we have been able to use funding to create several new exhibits over the year including a WWI exhibit and a School Desegregation exhibit.

AHS receives no operational funding from the county, so we depend on your donations to continue this work. We want you to know how we use your donations and we are grateful for all your support in helping us share the history of this great county.

Seeking Exhibit Space or a Home for “Windows to the Past: Arlington, Then and Now”

Tom Dickinson's recent exhibit at the Westover Library of his collection of photos over the last 40 years depicting residential and commercial structures in Arlington which have been demolished was a hit! He would like to offer it to other area locations for exhibit. The purpose of the exhibit is to illustrate the drastic and on-going changes to the character of the Arlington community and to illustrate the on-going loss of affordable housing, green space, tree cover, and historic structures. If you know of a location that might be interesting in hosting this exhibit—long or short term—email Tom at tomwd3@gmail.com, or call him at 703-841-4992.





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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

History Awaits. Come Visit!

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Arlington, VA 22202

Hours: Friday 12:30-3:30 PM,
Saturday and 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. Board meetings are open to the public.



WWW.ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

FACEBOOK: 'ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY'

703-942-9247