

Spring 2010

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Arlington Historical Society
P.O. Box 100402
Arlington, VA 22210
703 892-4204

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee of the Arlington Historical Society is seeking nominations for board and officer positions for election at the annual meeting of the Society on May 13th.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please contact George Dodge, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, at (703)892-4204 or gdodge@georgedodge.com.

The Committee is seeking nominees for all positions established under the Society's by-laws, including President, Vice President, Recording and Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer and Director.

"HISTORY OF WOMEN'S CLUBS IN ARLINGTON" RECAP

Our appreciation goes out to Diane Gates, chair of the Program Committee, for putting together an excellent program for our March members meeting, "History of Women's Clubs in Arlington." Diane is also a reference librarian at Arlington Central Library and liaison to Arlington County's Commission on the Status of Women.

Diane gave an opening presentation on the local and national history of women's clubs. Speakers representing the women's clubs of Aurora Hills, Potomac, Lyon Park, Woman's Club of Arlington, and the Zonta Club all shared inspiring stories of their club's formation and the important community improvement and philanthropy projects they're involved with today. While some of Arlington's women's clubs folded during the past few decades as

population demographics and social trends changed, those in existence today are in the revitalization phase with growing and inclusive membership. We even had a male speaker representing the Lyon Park Woman's Club!

This type of program was a great form of outreach to other community organizations. We also added to the historical record as Diane took notes documenting the speakers' and attendees' stories, including information about disbanded clubs, to add to her research. Thanks again to Diane Gates and to our speakers, Van Newstrom, Diane Perry, Ike Barnhart, Michael O'Connor, Pamela Chambers and Karen Albert.

A FEW UPCOMING DATES

Potomac Overlook Open House & Heritage Festival - Sunday, May 2, 1:00-4:00 p.m. - Come visit the Arlington

Historical Society's table at this springtime tradition full of fun activities and exhibits for all ages! The event will include music, entertainment, food, community exhibits, games, and much more! Free. 2845 N. Marcey Rd.

Society Annual Meeting - Thursday, May 13th, 7:00 p.m. - This is the annual General Membership meeting and election of the Society board. The program topic is "We Also Served ... Women in the U.S. Military." Arlington Central Library auditorium, 1015 North Quincy Street.

Save the Date - Annual Banquet, Saturday, June 12 - The Arlington Historical Society's Annual Banquet will be held on the evening of Saturday, June 12 at the Army Navy Country Club. Special guest speaker to be announced. Invitations to be mailed in May.

Book Reviews

By Willard Webb
Visit the Virginia Room

Ellis Nassour, *Honky Tonk Angel, the Intimate Story of Patsy Cline* - This biography of Winchester native and American country idol Patsy Cline is touted as the definitive work on her life and career. Cline, who died tragically in a plane crash at age thirty, is revered as one of the most acclaimed female vocalists of the 20th Century. This work is based on extensive interviews with her husband, mother, and other country stars and includes never-before published letters and photos. An afterword looks at claims about Cline's birth, the battle between her siblings for her possessions, and her influence on a new generation of singers.

Charles V. Munro, *A Southern Spy in Northern Virginia* - Laura Ratcliffe, a Fairfax belle, was an ardent Confederate. She provided safe havens for Rebel soldiers and passed on information gathered from Union troops. Early in the war, J.E.B. Stuart presented Laura with an album. At war's end the album contained four poems, two by Stuart and two copied by Stuart for Laura, as well as forty signatures - twenty-six Confederate soldiers and sixteen civilians. Who were these soldiers and civilians and what was Stuart's relationship with Laura? Munro looks into the mystery of Laura and her album and investigates these soldiers and civilians and their connection with Laura.

Helen C. Rountree, Wayne E. Clark, and Kent Mountford, *John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607-1609* - Everyone is familiar with the story of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas. Less well-known are Smith's extensive explorations of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and the resulting map of Virginia and the Bay. The authors of this scholarly volume describe the lands, waterways, and native people that Smith explored, cover the native American reaction to the intruding British, and discuss how the British settlers learned to survive in the exotic new world. They then turn to

Smith's two expeditions relying mainly on Smith's own journals. The book concludes with a discussion of changes in the region's waters and plant and animal life since Smith's voyages. Anyone interested in the settlement of Virginia will find this volume a must.

Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty, African Americans and Revolutionary America* - Against the sweeping background of America in the last quarter of the 18th Century, Egerton examines the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary era. He looks at what they did for themselves and how their actions contributed to the advance of freedom. Each chapter centers around the experience of a little-known person. One is Mulatto Will, a slave of George Washington. Will accompanied Washington to the Continental Congresses to serve as Washington's valet and continued thereafter with Washington in a troubled relationship. Washington, in his will, freed all the slaves held "under his name," and Will received his freedom. But with no education or training, Will did not find freedom a utopia. Will's life mirrored the fate of many in the Revolutionary era and their struggles for freedom and rights.

Mary V. Thompson, "In the Hand of a Good Providence," *Religion in the Life of George Washington* - Was George Washington baptized a Baptist? Did he secretly convert to Catholicism? Or was he a Deist? Such stories have circulated for years, and for answers, you need to read this book. Thompson, a research historian at Mount Vernon, explores the place of religion in Washington's life, an aspect of his life that has received little attention. Thompson relies on contemporary 18th Century sources, including Washington's own writings, as well as statements by the Washington family - Martha's grandchildren and Washington's nephews who served as his aides and secretaries. The result is a detailed study that follows the religious influences on Washington and his family through several generations.

Linwood Holton, *Opportunity Time, A Memoir by Governor Linwood Holton* - With his election in 1969, Linwood Holton became the first Republican governor of Virginia since Reconstruction, an event that marked the demise of the Byrd machine in the state. Holton's administration is best remembered for its championing of civil rights. He reversed Virginia's stance of massive resistance and supported school integration and busing. Holton, as Governor, escorted his children to integrate Richmond schools. Interestingly, Holton's daughter, Anne, is recent Democratic governor of Virginia, Timothy Kaine. This low key, easy-to-read memoir is a must for all with an interest in recent Virginia political history.

Kathleen A. Foster, *Captain's Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772-1818.* - This overlooked work deserves more attention. Captain Joshua Watson of the Royal Navy was an accomplished artist, but has received little attention in either America or his native Britain. Following the Napoleonic wars, he took a year's leave of absence from the Royal Navy and traveled to Philadelphia to visit an uncle. He made a grand tour of the eastern seaboard from Lake George to Mount Vernon doing a beautiful series of sketches and watercolors. During a week in Washington in April 1817, he did a number of sketches rarely, if ever, seen here. These include views of the Capitol, Pennsylvania Avenue, a scene looking down the Potomac from the War Office (Old Executive Office Building), the Potomac from the Gun (Foxall) Foundry showing the Three Sisters, Chain Bridge, Mount Vernon, and the Washington tomb.

Ralph Heinmann, John G. Kolp, Anthony S Parent, Jr., and William G.. Slade, *Old Dominion, New Commonwealth: A History of Virginia,, 1607-2007* - The authors take the reader through four centuries of Virginia history from Captain John Smith to Governor Tim Kaine. Of particular interest will be the final two chapters: "The Politics of Race, 1945-1960" and "A New Commonwealth, 1960-2007." These cover the fall of the Byrd machine and defeat of massive resistance to racial desegregation. The authors use new scholarship in the areas of social and economic history, giving attention to "long-neglected" minorities, average citizens, and women in the Virginia story.

Donald G. Shomette, *Flotilla: The Patuxent Naval Campaign in the War of 1812* - This volume is part of the continuing series of Johns Hopkins Books on the War of 1812. In 1814 Captain Joshua Barney led the American Chesapeake Flotilla against British raiding parties in the Chesapeake. The author, Donald Shomette, is director of archaeological excavations of the Flotilla's flag ship, and he uses new information gained from his work to revise an earlier edition. The U.S. Flotilla Service attempted to build a coastal defense force to challenge British attacks. Although destined to ultimate failure due to sparse funds and the natural limitations of the Chesapeake coastline, the Flotilla did turn back a number of British attacks, won a victory at Leonard's Creek, and went on to take part in the battles of Bladensburg and Fort McHenry.

*Curl up with a good book
this spring and summer!*

Phyllis W. Johnson, long time Historical Society member, passed away Saturday, January 9, 2010. She served as a Society Director and as the Magazine Editor (1986 – 1991) for the Society. She was also historian for Clarendon United Methodist Church and wrote a history of that congregation. Phyllis was active in the National Genealogical Society and taught classes locally.

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FROM THE LIBRARY "BACK PAGE"

Arlington has never had a shortage of unique local eateries and for many, one of the most memorable was the **Tops Drive Inn** on Lee Highway. Home of the "Sir Loiner," a double-decker hamburger thought by many to be a forerunner of today's Big Mac, Tops was founded by businessman James J. Matthews in 1953. The original Tops Drive Inn was a 15-seat facility which included a team of carhops and a machine called the Teletray, enabling drivers to order their food without getting out of the car. The interior featured turquoise-colored phones at the tables for placing your order, and mini-juke boxes for hearing the hits of the day. There were eighteen Tops in the DC Metro area before Matthews merged the chain into Gino's Inc. in 1968.



Some Tops trivia:

- Three of the sandwiches served at Tops were the Sir Loiner, the Jim Dandy, and the Maverick.
- Tops was the original server of Col. Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken in the area, and owner James J. Matthews served on the board of Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation after Colonel Sanders retired.
- There was once a fifteen minute television afternoon weather show sponsored by Tops called "Top Of De Vedder." The program was hosted by "Professor Felix Von Topsnak," who used a hand-drawn map of the U.S. on which he'd chart the weather while dressed in an overcoat, top hat and monocle.

The **Little Tea House Restaurant**, located on Arlington Ridge Road, opened in 1920 and remained there until 1963 when it was demolished to make room for a high-rise apartment building. During its heyday, many famous people ate at the restaurant, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Known for its lovely gardens and views, it was also one of the first places in Arlington where racially mixed groups could meet. Gertrude Crocker, who started the restaurant, was active in women's issues throughout her life and started the restaurant so she could be independent and her own "boss."

When Mrs. Crocker leased, and later sold, the business to Gertrude Allison, it became known for a period as Allison's Little Tea House.

The Virginia Room's Oral History Project includes an interview with Ellen C. Puterbaugh, daughter of Gertrude Crocker, and the Arlington Community Archives has a photograph collection of images of the Little Tea House dating primarily from the 1920s.



Visit the Virginia Room, located in Central Library, for all kinds of historical matters.

Visit the Virginia Room website for more back stories.

(Source - <http://virginiaroomarlingtonva.blogspot.com/>)

A Scrapbook of Arlington



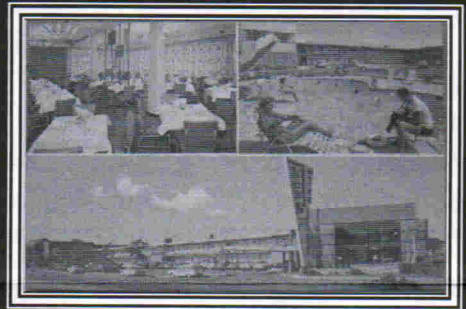
*Westmont Shopping Center
at Columbia Pike and Glebe Road*



Pla-Mor Lanes on Fairfax Drive



State Theatre on Lee Highway



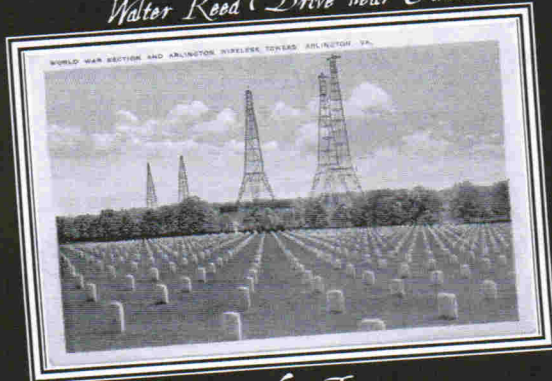
Arva Motel



*Old Thomas Jefferson Junior High School
Walter Reed Drive near Columbia Pike*



Five Historical Society Presidents



Wireless Towers



Kenyon-Peck Chevrolet on Wilson Blvd

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The Arlington Historical Society wishes to express its deep appreciation to the members, community organizations, local businesses and partners who generously provided financial support to help us continue our mission. We also thank our members at the Donor and Sponsor level for their commitment.

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There is no admission fee, but a
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calling 703-379-2123.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Thursday, May 13, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.

"We Also Served ... Women in the U.S. Military"
General Membership Meeting &
Election of Society Board

Central Library Auditorium
1015 North Quincy Street

Saturday, June 12, 2010

Annual Banquet

Army Navy Country Club

Look for information in the mail