



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 56, NO. 3 SEPTEMBER 2011

TIME TO RENEW YOUR AHS MEMBERSHIP!

Please take a moment to renew your AHS membership for 2011-12. You can renew online at www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/membershipform.html. The membership form is also enclosed in this newsletter. Thank you!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Members:

Summer 2011 slips away, and because historians tend to look backwards as much as forwards, it's the right time to take a quick look back at how I spent my summer vacation.

On June 17, four days before summer officially started, the Arlington Historical Society hosted more than 80 guests at the Army-Navy Country Club for our annual banquet. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of AHS board and banquet committee members **Patty Kime** and **Alice Andors**, the event was a wonderful success and a most enjoyable evening. Special guests included 10 local high school students, who were present as the result of a very generous donation from **Andy Barr**, a very good friend and AHS Life Member. Among that group of high school students was **Maya Giacobbe**, from Wakefield High School, who was the designer of the winning selection for the Arlington County automobile registration decal with the terrific photo of the AHS Hume School Museum. Also attending were County board members **Chris Zimmerman** and **Walter Tejada**, AHS Magazine editor **Karl VanNewkirk**, "Our Man in Arlington" **Charlie Clark** from the Falls Church News-Press, **Dr. Talmadge Williams**, president of the Black History Museum in Arlington, and **Warren Nelson**, chairman of the Arlington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Committee (ACCWSCC).

Our banquet guest speaker was **Wally Owen II**, co-author of the book "Mr. Lincoln's Forts" and a renowned and highly respected expert on the subject of Civil War fortifications and sites in the Washington, D.C., area. Owen focused his remarks on the 22 Civil War perimeter defense locations that existed in Arlington. Owen noted that the Army-Navy Country Club is located on the site of Ft. Richardson, where earthworks are still present and clearly visible. The date of the banquet was also noted, which, as **John Mroz** correctly stated, happened to be 150 years precisely since the date of the Battle of Vienna in 1861. That was the first military engagement involving railroad equipment, which began with the departure of a train engine and five cars being pushed northwest along the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire railroad tracks from the Arlington Mill area. Under the leadership of Brigadier General **Robert "Fighting Bob" Schenck**, 200 Ohio troops were caught by surprise by more than 600 South Carolina Confederates on both sides of the track near the point where the current bike trail crosses Park Street in Vienna.

As summer progressed, I found myself on vacation, spending a precious week with my son, who was at home on leave from the U.S. Air Force Academy, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. I took advantage of the opportunity to visit two small, local museums, similar in scope and scale to our Hume School and Ball-Sellers museums.

Please see President, page 2

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AHS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, September 15
7-8:30 p.m.

Memories of W-L High School

Arlington Central Library
Auditorium, 1015 N.
Quincy St.

See page 4 for details.

PRESIDENT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Chincoteague Oyster and Maritime Museum is ideally situated at the foot of the bridge crossing over Assateague Channel to the island of the same name and the Atlantic Ocean beach. It is a beautiful, modern building with very nice exhibits about the history of the islands, people, industry (especially the oyster business), unique island architecture, shipwrecks and, of course, the wild ponies of Chincoteague.

With my family, we drove about 35 miles south on Route 13 on the peninsula to the little town of Parksley, where the Eastern Shore Railway Museum is located. Parksley itself is full of interesting history: It is the first “planned” community in the region; the land was bought and developed by wealthy New Yorkers, and the community was laid out on the New England style town square and surrounding grid pattern. The outdoor museum is an absolute treasure for fans and aficionados of railroad history, as there are numerous railway cars (dining car, Pullman car, freight and passenger cars, a caboose) spanning a hundred years of railroad history, as well as actual train stations, maintenance sheds, and other railroad related buildings, artifacts and memorabilia. I would highly recommend both of these small museums to anyone interested in the history of the Eastern Shore.

I also spent time during this vacation reading back issues of our AHS annual magazine, capably edited and carefully managed today by **Karl VanNewkirk**. I enjoyed reading the many terrific and fascinating articles in these issues from the ‘60s and ‘70s, but what struck me most was the full two pages in each issue dedicated to listing the names of so many members involved with and participating in such a wide range of Society activities – including programs, publications, membership, fundraising, legal counsel, collections, artifacts, museum operations, board of directors, officers, etc. It was amazing to see this list of 50 or 60 dedicated and committed people when today, we are reduced to less than 10 people who shoulder all of these duties.

It’s quite clear that we need to attract more members in the Society, and we need more of our current members to get involved and contribute in any of a number of ways to help keep the Society strong, solvent, and fully engaged in the schools and community, particularly now as we commemorate 150 years since the Civil War. Please contact me if you can spare even a few minutes a month to help the Society! Also, we are always looking for Arlington-related artifacts, old photos, movies, films, letters, documents – anything with a connection to Arlington’s past. Please contact AHS or me directly if you have anything you think would be a good addition to our collections.

As I write this the day after the end of the Arlington County Fair, I note our AHS support and sponsorship with the ACCWSCC for the Virginia Tourism Commission HistoryMobile at the Fair, which attracted close to two thousand visitors in Arlington at the Fair and at Arlington Cemetery. If you didn’t get a chance to see this very well produced display that focuses on the deep impact of the Civil War on Virginians of all walks of life – military, civilian, slave, young, old, rich, poor – make a note to do so, as it will be travelling the state over the next four years. Special credit and thanks to **Warren Nelson**, who worked many hours over months to ensure that Arlington was among the very first stops for the HistoryMobile, and to the many committee volunteers who staffed the welcome tent!

On July 24, the Society honored and hosted more than a dozen of our wonderful museum docents at a social event at Hume School. The result was a very nice summer afternoon of good food and conversation, and a small gesture to say THANK YOU in a big way to all of our volunteer docents who do so much to keep the Hume School Museum open and operating. Thank you to board members **Matthew Keough** and **Susan Daniel** for planning and organizing this event! Thank you to all of our docents, who work with wonderful dedication and commitment!

On Friday, August 5, the new second-floor air conditioning unit was installed at the Hume School Museum. The old unit was 20 years old, and leaked condensation through the first floor ceiling, necessitating removing ceiling tiles and requiring docents to place buckets and pails around to catch the water. In order to keep our many precious artifacts in the museum collection safely stored in proper temperature and humidity, the board of directors voted to have this expensive work done, in spite of our precarious finances and budget situation.

Be sure to check the calendar of events in the newsletter, as there are many scheduled that you will regret missing! In particular, the two following events, both at Central Library:

12 September: **Ed Bearss**, noted Civil War and National Park Service historian, will speak on the Civil War in Arlington.

(Continued next page)

15 September: AHS Membership Meeting and Program. AHS and the Washington-Lee High School Alumni Association will co-host the “reprise” of the Washington-Lee High School “Reunion of the Classes.” We did this two years ago, and it was very popular, informative, entertaining. W-L Alumni Association president **Mary Strehle** and colleagues are lining up another terrific panel of alumni, going back to the 1930s and including her mother, **Virginia Dodge**, who possesses great wit and a wealth of knowledge on Arlington history. (Dodge is, of course, also the mother of AHS Past President **George Dodge**.)

At present, we are also planning a low-key event at Hume School on Sept. 11 to commemorate the 10th year since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The event will include a bell-ringing for the Pentagon victims.

Lastly, in looking back to the past and forward to the future, I am very pleased to announce that **Dr. Mark Benbow**, adjunct professor of history at Marymount University, will be joining Society staff as our new Curator of Museums, including responsibility for Acquisitions and Collections Management. The board of directors acknowledges **Linda Gouaze**'s efforts in the latter area. Dr. Benbow was previously involved with AHS as Director of Museums, and was involved in designing and creating many exhibits at the Hume School. He will be a great and positive addition to our volunteer staff. In addition, he will help with placement of Marymount student interns at the museum to help with various tasks there.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any ideas or suggestions, and especially if you can contribute time, your talent or financial support. I hope all of you have had a safe, rewarding and productive summer!

P.S. Please note that unless you are a Lifetime Member, your membership is up for renewal. A form is enclosed with this newsletter. Please fill it out and return it with your annual dues. Additional donations to the Society would also be welcomed, of course. Thank you!



Tom Dickinson

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AHS BOARD MEETINGS

AHS board meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the Hume School Museum, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Rd.

Upcoming meetings:

September 26

October 19

November 16

Meetings are free and open to the public.

GIVE THE GIFT OF HISTORY

AHS memberships make great gifts!

Visit the AHS Museum or
www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org for details.

Memberships include:

- A quarterly newsletter
- Copy of the annual AHS Magazine
- Discounts at the AHS Museum bookshop
- Invitations to special member-only events

CHANGE FOR AHS

Do you want to help out the Arlington Historical Society every time you make a credit card purchase? The Arlington Historical Society has partnered with SwipeGood, a company that maximizes your loose change for Charity. To get started,

go to the AHS page on SwipeGood and sign up your credit or debit card. SwipeGood rounds your purchases up to the next dollar, letting you donate the change to AHS. That means each purchase you make helps in a small way to support the research, collection, preservation,

discovery, restoration and dissemination of the local history of Arlington County. For more information or to sign up, visit <http://swipegood.com/charity/arlington-historical-society>.

MEET THE NEW AHS BOARD MEMBERS

The Arlington Historical Society recently welcomed new members of its board of directors for the 2011-2012 term. They are:

Rebecca Kupper, Recording Secretary

Kupper, who currently works as a marketing associate and freelance writer and editor, was formerly an English and journalism teacher at Mount Vernon High School in Alexandria. She has prior experience taking minutes for a number of boards and committees.

Warren Nelson, Director

Nelson is a journalist who once covered the Pentagon for United Press International and who spent 20 years working for the House of Representatives, chiefly for the Armed Services Committee. He is currently the editor of a weekly newspaper about Iran.

In addition to these newcomers, two board members took office during the 2010-11 term. They are:

Ali Ganjian, Director

Ganjian's professional experience includes ten years in the financial services industry; he is currently with Wells Fargo. As the volunteer president of a condo association, Ganjian helped balance the budget without raising condo fees. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Hamilton College.

Timothy Gribben, Treasurer

Gribben is the Director of the Office of Performance Management at the U.S. Small Business Administration. He is responsible for the agency's financial and performance reporting, strategic planning, and performance analysis. Gribben, a CPA, holds a master's degree in business administration from Duke University and a bachelor's degree in accounting from the College of William & Mary.

AHS 2011 EVENTS CALENDAR

Save these dates for exciting AHS programs.
For updates and additions, please visit
www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

September

9/11 Commemorative Event
Sunday, September 11, 9:37 a.m.
AHS Hume School

Event will include a bell-ringing for the 184 victims of the Pentagon attack and a memory book for visitors to sign.

Memories of Washington-Lee High School
Thursday, September 15, 7-8:30 p.m.
Arlington Central Library

Co-hosted with the W-L High School Alumni Association

Washington-Lee graduates, representing different decades, will discuss life at W-L and in Arlington when they were students.

Memorabilia from the class of 1944 will be featured on display.

November

Membership Meeting/Program
Thursday, November 17, 7-8:30 p.m.
Arlington Central Library
1015 N. Quincy St.

Co-sponsor program with Potomac Overlook
Saturday, November 19, 7-8:30 p.m.
"Indians of Arlington County"

Karl VanNewkirk

December

Winter Social
Saturday, December 3, 7-8:30 p.m.
AHS Hume School

CIVIL WAR REMEMBERED AT AHS ANNUAL BANQUET

By Lindsey Wray, Newsletter Editor



Wally Owen

The sights and sounds of the Civil War are still alive in **Wally Owen's** mind.

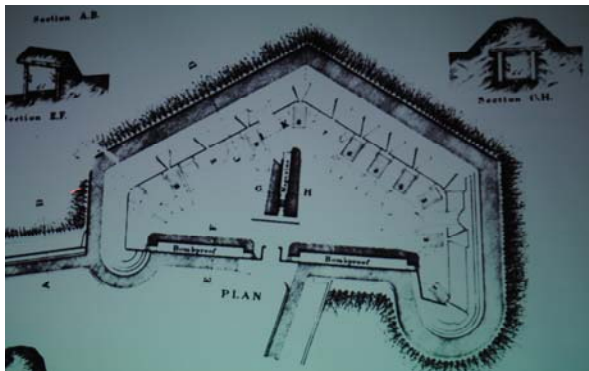
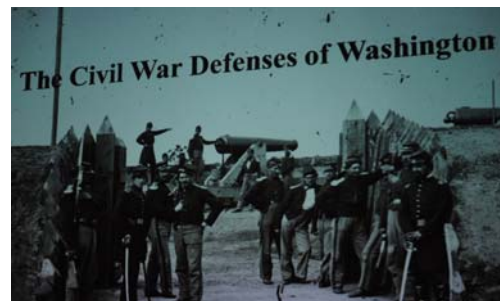
He can clearly imagine – 150 years later – the click and shuffle of picks and shovels used to build and maintain Civil War forts.

Owen shared his insight on what the war looked and sounded like in the Washington, D.C., area at the Arlington Historical Society's annual banquet June 17 in Arlington.

The associate director and curator of Alexandria's Fort Ward Museum, Owen is co-author of "Mr. Lincoln's Forts – A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington."

He began his discussion of Civil War defense sites in the exact spot banquet attendees were sitting: the Army-Navy Country Club. The property formerly held Fort Richardson, constructed in 1861 and named for Israel B. Richardson of the Second Michigan Infantry.

To explain how sites such as Fort Richardson came to be, Owen gave banquet attendees a brief lesson he called "Fort Building 101." Constructing a fort, he said, began with digging a huge ditch, and piling up dirt and adding sod to make a wall. Next, trees in the area were cut down and used for wood and fuel. The domino effect of falling trees would help clear surrounding hillsides for a better view.



A typical Civil War fort in Arlington, Virginia.

"The fort shapes are dictated by the topography they're protecting," Owen said, adding that projecting angles in forts created places for crossfire and protected the faces of forts.

After forts were in place, soldiers spent their days engaged in drills, taking occasional excursions when possible.

Today, 27 fort sites in the Washington area can be visited, 19 of which are owned by the National Park Service. Owen encouraged everyone to learn more about the Civil War defenses of Washington, some of which are right in their own backyards.

Defenses of Washington by the Numbers
164 enclosed forts and batteries
20 miles of rifled trenches
7 blockhouses
807 cannons and 98 mortars

"Visit some of these sites," he said, "and ponder their deeper meaning in the war."

ARLINGTON REUNION: QUEEN CITY

The Arlington Historical Society will co-host "Queen City: Down the Road, Before the Pentagon" from 10 a.m. to noon Sept. 19 at Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. in Arlington. Discussion will focus on Queen City, a part of Arlington that disappeared when the Pentagon was built. The event is part of "Tell Arlington's Story" program. For more information, please contact the Virginia Room at Arlington Central Library, 703-228-5966.

<p>"Queen City: Down the Road, Before the Pentagon"</p> <p>September 19, 10 a.m.-noon</p> <p>Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St.</p>

HISTORICAL EVENTS OF INTEREST

This year is the sesquicentennial of the start of the Civil War. Many of the following events are related to this commemoration.

September

Construction of the Civil War Forts

September 4, 1 p.m.

On the 150th anniversary of the construction of Fort Marcy, learn about how and why Union soldiers constructed the forts around Washington. Parking is available on-site (northbound on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington). Contact Civil War Defenses of Washington, (202) 829-2161.

A Tactical Civil War

September 11, 1 p.m.

With advancement in weaponry, the tactics of war changed. Learn how the generals of the Civil War adapted to the changing battlefield. Fort Totten. Parking on street (4000 block of Fort Totten Dr. NE, Washington). Contact Civil War Defenses of Washington, (202) 829-2161.

"Breaking News Breaking Down"

September 11, 2 p.m.

The Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center will mark the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks by showing an award-winning documentary film that examines the reactions and reflections of journalists who cover major breaking news stories. Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Free. 703-385-8414.

The Role of Northern Virginia in the Civil War

September 12, 7 p.m.

Well-known Civil War historian and Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service Ed Bearss will discuss the role of Northern Virginia in the Civil War, including smaller battles at outset of the war in Fairfax and Falls Church, and the use of Virginia as a base for transporting troops and supplies. Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington.

Lincoln-Thomas Day

September 17, noon-4 p.m.

A historic day designated by The National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs of America. Honoring President Abraham Lincoln and Elizabeth Thomas, known as the owner of Fort Stevens. Programs include Junior Ranger activities, living history presentations, ranger-led programs and lectures. Parking is available on the street (1000 Quackenbos St. NW, Washington). Contact Civil War Defenses of Washington, (202) 829-2161.

The Maryland Campaign of 1862

September 18, 1 p.m.

Learn about the Confederate campaign into Maryland and how the Civil War forts around Washington impacted General Robert E. Lee's strategy. Battery Kemble. Parking on site (2900 block of Chain Bridge Rd NW, Washington). Contact Civil War Defenses of Washington, (202) 829-2161.

"Letters to Virginia"

September 19, 7 p.m.

Local author Barbara Winters will discuss her book, "Letters to Virginia," a collection of correspondence from three generations of Alexandrians before, during and after the Civil War. The Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Free. 703-591-0560.

October

Civil War Georgetown: House and Walking Tours

October 8 and November 12

10:30 a.m.: Tour of the historic Tudor Place mansion, converted to a boarding house for Union officers and their families, where "war talk" was banned at mealtimes.

12:30 p.m.: Walking tour of Civil War Georgetown. See graves and other sites associated with spies, a Union hospital, residences of two Union military leaders, and a neighborhood once populated by enslaved and free African Americans.

Cost: \$8-\$15. Registration information at: <http://www.tudorplace.org/calendar.html>.

Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, 1644 31st St. NW, Washington. (202) 965.0400.

Tudor Place History Haunt

October 27, 6-8 p.m.

Take a guided tour through Tudor Place's ghostly garden to hear tales of the dearly departed. Then enjoy chilling cocktails and refreshments in Tudor Place's historic out-buildings and gardens. Ages 21+. Members \$10, nonmembers \$15. Register at: <http://historyhaunt-eorg.eventbrite.com>. Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, 1644 31st St. NW, Washington. (202) 965.0400.

November

Northern Virginia Studies Conference

November 11

"At the Crossroads of History: Baileys Through the Centuries" will commemorate the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's Review of the Troops in 1861. The conference will focus on the evolving economic, cultural, and political life around Bailey's Crossroads. Proposals for papers, panels, and presentations are welcome and should be submitted no later than July 15. Conference events include a reenactment of the 1861 parade of the Union Army, the dedication of a monument to President Lincoln, and a concert featuring Civil War era music. Contact Dr. Jean H. Braden, 703-845-6357 or braden@nvcc.edu.

Sesquicentennial of Lincoln's Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac

November 12

The original review consisted of 70,000 soldiers divided into seven marching divisions; the sesquicentennial will consist of approximately 5,000 soldiers/Civil War civilians and local citizen organizations divided into five marching divisions, each headed by a ceremonial detachment and marching band representing each of the five uniformed services. See www.lacra.org.

To learn about more area events, visit www.virginiacivilwar.org, www.arlcivwar.org, or the Virginia Room at Arlington Central Library.

ARTIFACT WATCH: SICKELS PORTRAIT



According to Eleanor Lee Templeman's "Arlington Heritage: Vignettes of a Virginia County," Frances Lee Sickels (c. 1878-1956) was the granddaughter of Anthony Rensil Fraser (1794-1881), who acquired 1,000 acres of land near Alexandria City on which he built Green Valley Manor in 1821.

This property was inherited by Sickels' parents, Presha Antonia Fraser (1838-1919), and Jackson E Sickels. As for Frances Sickels, she was a true cosmopolitan who divided her time between America and Europe. An individual of dynamic personality, charm and unconventional decisions, she retained her maiden name through two marriages. She died in England in 1956. The Green Valley Manor residence burned down in the mid-1920s. The Army-Navy Country Club currently occupies much of the plantation's land.

DO YOU HAVE A PIECE OF HISTORY?

If so, please consider sharing it with the Arlington Historical Society. AHS is soliciting artifacts, as well as found films and photographs of historic structures and landmarks in Arlington. Please contact the AHS collections committee, P.O. Box 100402, Arlington, VA 22210. Contributing to the Arlington Historical Society will help us meet our important mission of supporting research, collection, preservation, discovery, restoration and dissemination of the local history of Arlington County.

www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

HISTORY AWAITS. COME VISIT!

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

1805 South Arlington Ridge Rd.
Open Saturdays & Sundays
1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Free
Come visit our permanent exhibits on the 200+ year history of the county.



Photo by Maya Giacobbe



BALL-SELLERS HOUSE

5620 South Third St.
Open Saturdays 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
April through October
Free admission, but donations appreciated.
Also arrange a visit by calling 703-379-2123.

AHS IS ON FACEBOOK

Arlington Historical Society is now on Facebook! Join now to keep up-to-date about AHS programs and information.

- 1) Go to www.facebook.com
- 2) Login or create a new account.
- 3) In the search bar, type in Arlington Historical Society and press enter.
- 4) The AHS has two pages:

The first page is labeled AHS and underneath is says "page." This has the green and white logo of the AHS as an icon.

The second page is labeled AHS and underneath is says "organizations." This has a picture of the Hume Schools as an icon.

- 5) Click on the "like" or "join group" buttons to the right.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Arlington Historical Society (AHS) is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization founded in 1956 and incorporated under the laws of Virginia for literary and educational purposes that support research, collection, preservation, discovery, restoration, and dissemination of the local history of Arlington County.

WWW.ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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