



# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 58, NO. 3      SEPTEMBER 2013

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow AHS Members:

Over the course of the past year I interviewed officers of virtually all the Washington metropolitan area historical societies, private as well as taxpayer-funded. I undertook this mission partly for personal edification but more importantly to get to know other laborers in the history vineyard, learn more about area history, and compare/contrast AHS with area counterparts. Interviewees were as follows:

- Alexandria Historical Society
- Fairfax County Historical Society
- Historic Fairfax City (municipal)
- Historical Society of Washington
- Montgomery County Historical Society
- Office of Historic Alexandria (municipal)
- Prince George County Historical Society

Among multiple details, two realities stood out: 1) AHS is the only private historical society that owns and maintains real estate (Arlington Historical Museum and the Ball-Sellers House), and 2) AHS is virtually the only private group that receives no funding or other direct support from local taxpayers. Considering that AHS's two historic properties are old and in constant need of maintenance, bearing the full burden of their upkeep presents a challenge to an all-volunteer organization with a limited budget.

AHS and most of its regional counterparts are similar in many respects, combining a mix of lectures, publications, tours and special events. The challenges also are similar, including a limited (and often aging) membership base; relatively few new, younger members; weak income strains; small boards of directors; and no paid staff. As is often the case with all-volunteer groups, energy levels often depend on the activities of a few key individuals. AHS has established a major outreach campaign this year to provide value added to Arlington's schools, minority communities and neighborhoods, but it will require resources beyond current levels.

Please see Letter from the president, page 2

### LEARN ABOUT HISTORIC ARLINGTON HOME

The Arlington Historical Society's September program will feature the Dawson-Bailey House. Historian and AHS board member **Karl VanNewkirk** will give a presentation on the house, which dates from the late 1700s.

The free program will be held at 7 p.m. Sept. 12  
at Arlington Central Library Auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy Street.

Read more about the program on page 3.

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### BECOME A DOCENT FOR AHS

Stay connected with local history and educate the public at the Arlington Historical Museum.

See page 7.

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Arlington County prides itself on a synergistic mix of private and public interaction captured in the phrase “The Arlington Way,” yet traditionally there has been a puzzling reluctance to invest in Arlington history for intrinsic as well as economic reasons. The roots of this disconnect are traceable to various factors, primarily inertia (i.e., we’ve never done it before) and a conscious looking forward rather than back.

Recent conversations with county officials give reason to think that local government has begun to appreciate the importance of public-private cooperation in support of Arlington history, but it is a work in progress. The Arlington Heritage Center, a hope if not yet a plan for a one-stop visitors’ introduction to Arlington’s historic and touristic attractions, is a project that never will come to fruition without such a public-private partnership. It is well worth working on, starting now.

**John P. Richardson**

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### AHS EVENTS CALENDAR

Save these dates for exciting Arlington Historical Society programs. And check out our new, regularly updated calendar on the AHS website for information on AHS programs, as well as other area events of historical interest.

[www.arlingtonhistory.org/events-calendar](http://www.arlingtonhistory.org/events-calendar)

#### SEPTEMBER

Membership meeting & public program  
Dawson-Bailey House – *Karl VanNewkirk*  
Thursday, September 12, 7 - 8 p.m.  
Arlington Central Library,  
1015 N. Quincy St.  
**See details on page 3.**

#### NOVEMBER

Membership meeting & public program  
Civil War Logistics – *Ron Beavers*  
Thursday, November 14, 7 - 8 p.m.  
Arlington Central Library,  
1015 N. Quincy St.

#### JANUARY

Membership Winter Social  
TBD  
AHS Hume School,  
1805 S Arlington Ridge Rd.

### AHS WELCOMES TREASURER

The Arlington Historical Society is pleased to welcome a new treasurer: **Nick Noble**.

Originally from a small town outside of Denver, Colorado, Noble relocated to the Washington, D.C. metro area last summer with his wife.

He works for P3XBRL as a Senior XBRL Technologist; he provides financial reporting services for his clients, who are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. He is a Certified Public Accountant in Colorado.



**Nick Noble**

Noble looks forward to helping AHS preserve the community’s heritage and educate residents and visitors.

His term began Sept. 1.

### DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA?

AHS wants to hear from you! We’re filling the 2014 calendar with fun, engaging public programs. Perhaps there’s a lecture topic you’d like to hear? Do you have a walking or biking tour idea that highlights interesting historic facets of Arlington County? Are there fundraising events for AHS? Please let us know your ideas via our website:

[www.arlingtonhistory.org/contact/](http://www.arlingtonhistory.org/contact/)

## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM TO FEATURE DAWSON-BAILEY HOUSE

By Garrett Peck, AHS board of directors

Arlington County's second-oldest house will be featured Sept. 12 during Arlington Historical Society's public program.

AHS will host historian and AHS board member **Karl VanNewkirk** for a visual presentation about the Dawson-Bailey House, now the core of the Dawson Terrace Community Center (2133 N. Taft Street).

The Ball-Sellers House, owned by the Arlington Historical Society, "is the oldest house in Arlington – and this may be the second oldest," VanNewkirk noted. The building dates from the 1780s, and was occupied for almost a century by the Dawson and Bailey family, until it was deeded to Arlington County in 1955.

VanNewkirk will share anecdotes about Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, who may have visited the house. The historic house and community center today overlooks Spout Run Parkway in the North Highlands neighborhood.

The hour-long program will begin at 7 p.m. at Arlington Central Library Auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy Street, Arlington. A question-and-answer session will follow. The program is free and open to the public.

## NEW AHS EXHIBIT SHOWCASES UNION SOLDIER

By Garrett Peck, AHS board of directors

The Arlington Historical Society seeks to remind us of the rich history of our community through thought-provoking, rotating exhibits. **Dr. Mark Benbow**, who oversees the Hume School Museum, has put together an exhibit for the sesquicentennial of the Civil War entitled "A Union Soldier in Arlington: John W. Bates of the 23rd Massachusetts Volunteers 1864–1865." It opened July 20.

Union forces occupied Arlington (then Alexandria County) early in the Civil War, and a ring of sixty-eight earthen forts were dug around Washington to protect the capital. A string of forts, known as the Arlington Line, was emplaced along the high ground along Arlington ridge. Altogether, more than twenty forts were built in Arlington.

At the core of the exhibit are Civil War-era objects loaned by **M. Wesley Clark**, a direct descendant of John Bates. Bates and his heavy artillery unit garrisoned Fort Reynolds, near Fairlington, in the last year of the war. He rose from private to second lieutenant. Although his unit never saw combat, it lost two officers and twenty-three enlisted men to disease.



Photo courtesy of Garrett Peck

**AHS Museum Curator Dr. Mark Benbow stands by a restored Civil War fort model that is part of an exhibit entitled "A Union Soldier in Arlington: John W. Bates of the 23rd Massachusetts Volunteers 1864-1865." Visit the museum by Oct. 27 to see the exhibit.**

### LOOKING AHEAD

A new exhibit is coming this fall: "The Old Arlington Brewery Reborn: The Cherry Smash Story."

Also featured in the exhibit is a Civil War fort model, first built in 1960 by Percy Smith, and recently restored by AHS intern **Khalid Abdallah**, a 2013 history major at Marymount University. And there are artillery shells and cannon balls found in the county – and more.

"A Union Soldier in Arlington" runs through Oct. 27. The Hume School Museum, located at 1805 S. Arlington Ridge Road, is open Saturdays and Sundays year-round from 1 to 4 p.m.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Margaret Gibson** died July 26 in Alexandria. She was 104.

Gibson, a native Washingtonian, lived for many years in Arlington County, where she was involved with the Arlington Historical Society. She served as president of AHS from 1971 to 1972. She was also first vice president of the society (1970-71), secretary (1968-69) and an AHS board member (1969-70).

According to her obituary in The Washington Post, Gibson worked as a teacher in Washington, D.C., schools for 40 years. She retired in 1968.

Gibson is survived by her husband, **Patrick Rock**, and her "adopted niece," **Connie Ann Lacy-Rock**. A memorial service was held Aug. 24 at Goodwin House Alexandria.

**Jack Melnick**, a lifelong Arlington resident, died Aug. 21. He was 78.

Melnick was for many years the AHS Legal Counsel, serving in a pro bono capacity.

"Jack Melnick was a long-time supporter of the Arlington Historical Society, including serving without fee as our Legal Counsel," said AHS President John Richardson. "He and his service to AHS will be remembered and appreciated by our members and friends."

Melnick, who practiced law in Arlington, also represented the county in the General Assembly during the 1970s.

A funeral service was held Aug. 28 at Clarendon United Methodist Church, followed by interment at Columbia Gardens Cemetery.

## AHS BOOTH INFORMS, ENGAGES AT ARLINGTON COUNTY FAIR

By **John Richardson**, AHS President

AHS was once again a participant in the Arlington County Fair, held at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in South Arlington over the weekend of Aug. 9-11. Like last year, the AHS booth was shared with the county Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission and demonstrated the complementary nature of the two exhibitors; former AHS Board Member **Warren Nelson** and AHS Museum Curator **Mark Benbow** were the backbone of the operation. Further strengthening the "curb appeal" of the booth was our next-door neighbor, a table for the Black Heritage Museum, whose poster anticipated the eventual establishment of the Arlington Heritage Center, which should bring together several of Arlington's historic collections, along with the Air Force Memorial, the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, and possibly the county Visitors and Convention Bureau for a one-stop visitors' introduction to Arlington.

The AHS-Commission booth generated steady foot traffic, inquiries, and purchases of books and T-shirts (more than \$150 for AHS), enhanced by a display case with Civil War artifacts from **Al Eisenberg**'s personal collection. As always, volunteers from both exhibitors manned the booth from start to finish. Without these dedicated souls, it would be impossible for there to be such an elegant exhibit.



Photo courtesy of John Richardson

**Volunteers Warren Nelson (from left), Mark Benbow and Annette Benbow staffed an Arlington Historical Society booth at the Arlington County Fair in August.**



## POLICE RIDE-ALONG PROVIDES LAW ENFORCEMENT INSIGHT

By John Richardson, AHS President

I participated in a special Arlington experience July 29: a four-hour ride-along in an Arlington County police cruiser making its rounds. The county offers this unique insight into police practice to residents who apply and are screened before being slotted into a ride-along. Riders are permitted to observe all the officer's activities, subject to guidance and avoidance of personal safety concerns. A signed waiver releases the Police Department from legal responsibility.

I rode with **Officer Barry Owens**, a 10-year veteran who provided many insights into policing theory and practice over the course of our time together. The route we took was primarily in "Beat 12," a grid north of Wilson Boulevard and west of Glebe Road. Ironically, the first call to Owens – "Charlie 12" on the radio – was to return to headquarters to assist a woman reporting harassing telephone calls and visits from her husband, from whom she has a separation agreement. After a long interview assisted by a department translator, it appeared that the husband was increasingly anguished over the separation and possible alienation of affection from his children now that their mother has a new friend. Officer Owens called and had a long talk with the father, taking an unthreatening, conversational stance that appeared to make the right impression. Later, Officer Owens noted that a non-confrontational approach often yields the desired result.

After a brief stop at Fire Station #2 (Wilson Blvd. and George Mason Dr.), where I admired a small but excellent display of fire equipment, Charlie 12 was directed to support a police presence at a round-robin basketball tournament in a neighborhood park. The event, watched by a number of spectators, was good-natured and friendly, but in past years tempers had flared. The senior officer was **Detective Troy Newenhouse**, assisted by three officers, including **Rich Kelly** (nephew of AHS supporter and entrepreneur of the same name). The late afternoon was cool and sunny, spirits were high, and it was soon time for me to be taken back to headquarters at the end of my ride-along.

By observation and Owens' answers to my questions, it became apparent that a great deal of police work in Arlington involves paperwork – endless paperwork "95 percent" of his time, Owens said. The low level of violent crime in Arlington is good news for residents as well as the police, even if it makes for less exciting ride-alongs. Arlington is by no means free of problems, particularly narcotics, gang activity and crimes against property, but Arlington's police force is up to the challenge. The police ride-alongs are an excellent way for residents to see police work up close and personal. It's well worth the small effort required.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO ON A POLICE RIDE-ALONG?

For an application, visit Arlington County's website:  
<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/Police/citizens/forms/docs/RideAlongApplication.pdf>

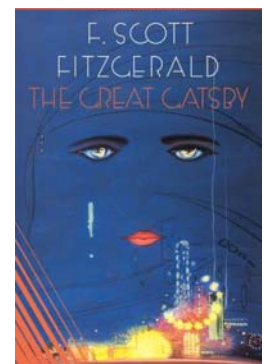
## AHS IN THE COMMUNITY: THE EIGHT-THIRTEEN BALL

The Friends of Arlington Library will present a literary-themed Night Out with the Great Gatsby to raise money for the library's Early Literacy Initiative.

**Garrett Peck**, AHS board member and author of two books on Prohibition, will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, which will feature 1920s music, the Fidgety Feet dance troop, prizes for best costumes, a silent auction, and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for purchase.

The event will be held from 8 to 11 p.m. Sept. 28 at the Artisphere, 1101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington. Tickets are \$30.

For more information, go to <http://library.arlingtonva.us/lit-up/813-ball/>



### LIKE AHS ON FACEBOOK

Arlington Historical Society is on Facebook! Like our page to keep up to date on AHS programs, and historical news and events.

## NAUCK: A COMMUNITY RICH IN HISTORY

Courtesy of the Nauck Civic Association

The Nauck community is a roughly triangular area lying to the south of Columbia Pike and north of Shirlington bounded by South 16th Road to the north, Walter Reed Drive to the west, Four Mile Run to the south and straddles Glebe Road to the east where the Army-Navy Country Club forms its eastern extremity.

In 1669 John Alexander purchased 46 acres, which was eventually sold to Anthony Fraser during the 1800s. His daughter, who married J. E. Sickles, inherited the property. It is said that a member of the Fraser-Sickles family who did not believe in slavery freed his slaves and gave them land as well as money to construct homes on the land. This area became known as Green Valley. (Nauck and Green Valley are used interchangeably).

It is doubtful that any of the early settlers in Northern Virginia made a more significant and large scale contribution to the development of Arlington (and have received less credit and recognition for it) than the Frasers of the Green Valley estate. Anthony Fraser built Green Valley Manor in 1821 on what is now the Army-Navy Country Club. His great-grandfather was Daniel Fraser of Scotland, a nephew of Simon Fraser, the last man beheaded in the Tower of London in 1747. Daniel arrived in Virginia as a ship's stowaway. Daniel's son, William, is recorded as settling in Arlington in the mid-1700s as a tenant of the Alexander family of Abingdon, the plantation along the Potomac River whose ruins are located between the parking garages of National Airport. William's son, William, Jr. (the father of Anthony) acquired from the Alexander family several hundred acres of land straddling lower Long Branch, a tributary of Four Mile Run. The lands were known as Green Valley, perhaps named for James Green, who lived on the land near the present location of the clubhouse at Army Navy Country Club.

Green Valley Manor was sited in the floor of a valley about a hundred yards from Long Branch. The estate included what is now the Oakridge Elementary School, Gunston Middle School, Shirley Park and Arna Valley as well as land from Pentagon City and the River Houses almost to the banks of Four Mile Run. In selecting the particular site for his home Fraser must have been influenced by the existence of a productive spring, where he also built a spring house. It is recorded that long before the establishment of Green Valley Estates, George Washington stopped frequently at the spring for drinking water when inspecting his lands along Four Mile Run. Washington also stopped at the spring with his troops when moving through the area on his way to Yorktown in September 1781. From the high ridge above Fraser's manor and about a mile to the east the Frasers could easily have seen Abingdon on the banks of the Potomac River. To the north about two miles away (unless the view was blocked by trees) they could have seen the Arlington House mansion of George Washington Parke Custis, started in 1802 and completed in 1817, only a few years earlier.

When the Frasers first arrived in Green Valley the area was rustic, undeveloped, largely forested and unsettled. The closest dwellings, about where Pentagon City is now located, were three structures known as Awbrey's, Griffen's, and Wheeler's places. Across Four Mile Run close to the Mount Vernon Avenue Bridge entrance to Alexandria there were two structures, Chubb's House and Chubb's Mill. Around 1840 the Frasers acquired new neighbors with the arrival of James Roach and his family. They would build their home on Hoe Hill, which they renamed Prospect Hill, at the northern end of Arlington Ridge.

Once established at Green Valley Manor, the Fraser family grew steadily. Anthony and his wife Presha Lee had five daughters: Cornelia, Mary, Frances, Miranda and Presha. Also included among their family group were two farmers, John Casey and Edward Clements, and two black men (probably slaves) named Nathan Butler and Douglas Jones. Fraser became a leader in local affairs and on 26 June 1849 was elected Overseer of the Poor, as recorded in the Minute Book of Alexandria County.

The Fraser properties were extensively occupied and used by the Union Army through most of the Civil War. Barracks for troops were erected in numerous places, as was Fort Richardson, one of the numerous forts built to protect the Capital from attacks from the south or west, and Fort Albany, on the high ground to the east. The earthworks and ditches of Fort Richardson now remain beside green #9 at the Army-Navy Country Club. Additionally, a hospital and convalescent camp were established on Rapid Run where it empties into Long Branch. The late Arlington historian Eleanor Lee Templeman wrote that the run was renamed Bloody Run because it ran red with blood from the numerous amputations performed there. During this period, Fraser, steadily growing blind, was saddened to hear the constant chop of axes as Union soldiers worked through the nights to fell the hundreds of trees on his land to clear fields of fire for the forts' guns, to obtain lumber for the construction of

Please see Nauck, next page

## NAUCK, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

barracks and hospitals, and for firewood. He survived the war but died soon after, in 1881, and was buried on his property. The Fraser family grave site is at hole #26 on the Army-Navy Country Club.

In 1924 Green Valley Manor was destroyed by fire, originating from causes that have never been conclusively established. Frances Lee Sickles, the granddaughter of Fraser, and her daughter were in Paris at the time. Some foundations and parts of the fireplace and walls remained until modern times almost completely concealed in the midst of heavy overgrowth. One of the few items of furniture retrieved from the fire is a desk known as the "Desk of Infamy." Legend has it that the desk was once owned by Jefferson Davis, who used it when he penned his fatal refusal to consider a *carte blanche* request from President Lincoln to write his terms for ending the war., at a time when the losses on both sides had become overwhelming.

Free blacks, Levi and Sarah Ann Jones were among the first African-Americans to establish themselves in what is now known as Nauck. They were landowners prior to the Civil War and they built their home in 1844. The local community began to grow as the Jones family began selling some of their property to other black families. Indeed, members of the Jones family were original owners of the land where Dunbar Homes (now Shirlington Crest at Nauck) was constructed in 1944.

The Nauck community is named for John D. Nauck, Jr., a resident of Washington, D.C., who bought 46 acres of land in south Arlington in 1874 and began subdividing it. Prior to that time, the area was known as Green Valley, named for the Green Valley Mansion, which sat at 23rd Street and Ridge Road and overlooked the current site of the Army-Navy Country Club. People in the Nauck community continued to refer to the area as Green Valley well into the middle of the 20th century.

*The Nauck Civic and Community Pride Day will be held from noon to 5 p.m. Sept. 21 at Drew Model School, 3500 S. 23rd Street, Arlington.*

## BALL-SELLERS HOUSE WELCOMES NEW TENANT

The Ball-Sellers House Committee would like to introduce our new caretaker/tenant, **Margaret Wagner**. She will live in the 1880s section of the house. As the live-in caretaker, Wagner will be keeping an eye on our Arlington treasure of a historic home. Here's a little bit about her in her own words:

I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. I did a four-year stint in the military and graduated with a fine arts degree from Southern Illinois University. I've been living in Arlington since 2002. A local University employs me as an executive assistant.

Living in the Ball-Sellers House will give me a chance to be part of something that exists on a larger scale than my small, insulated world. It will put me in touch with a great community and a greater history, so that I will have a chance to interact with people of whom I would otherwise be ignorant. In other words, I probably need this house as much as it needs a caretaker. So it is a good match.



**Margaret Wagner**

## VOLUNTEER AS A DOCENT FOR AHS

Have you ever wanted to be a part of living history? The Arlington Historical Society has openings for new docents at the Arlington Historical Museum, housed in the Hume School building at 1805 S. Arlington Ridge Road. The museum is open from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, and may soon expand to opening on weekdays. New docents can also help the AHS obtain grants that require the museum to be open during the weekdays. This is an important part of upgrading and expanding the museum.

Docents are expected to volunteer once a month for three hours on either Saturday or Sunday. Training is provided by our coordinator, **Matthew T. Keough**, in consultation with our museum director, **Dr. Mark Benbow**. To learn more and sign up to become an AHS docent, visit our website at [www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org). You will learn new skills, educate yourself further about Arlington history, and provide a public service in the process.



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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.ARLINGTONHISTORY.ORG**

**HISTORY AWAITS.  
COME VISIT!**

**ARLINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

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

**BALL-SELLERS HOUSE**

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

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