

Arlington Historical Society

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Arlington Historical Society

September 2020

President's Dispatch

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Arlingtonians from the 1970s may remember Warren G. Stambaugh. A local attorney who moved to Arlington when he came to attend Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, Warren served for 16 years as an Arlington delegate in the General Assembly until his untimely death in 1990. His fierce support for the citizens of Northern Virginia included advocacy for mental health, fairness and equity in tax reform laws, equal rights, and support from the Commonwealth for the local Metro system. Warren was also a friend of the Arlington Historical Society. In 1985, he co-sponsored a bill that successfully secured \$35,000 from the Commonwealth of Virginia for replacing the roof and upgrading security and fire protection at the Arlington Historical Museum. For his many achievements, he was often rated by journalists as one of ten most effective representatives in the Virginia House of Delegates.

His most notable achievement was his advocacy and two-year effort to pass the Virginians with Disabilities Act in 1985. This comprehensive "civil rights" bill for the handicapped guaranteed the rights of all disabled citizens access to employment, housing, education, transportation, public accommodations, and needed services. This legislation is considered by many as the model for the Americans with Disability Act adopted by the federal government in 1990.

After his death, a Warren G. Stambaugh Memorial Foundation was created to honor his memory. The trustees of this organization recently reached out to the Arlington Historical Society and asked to partner with us to help make our museum properties more accessible. Since Arlington is a first-class county, we feel strongly that we need to maintain a first-class museum that is accessible to ALL Arlingtonians.

We will be working with the Stambaugh Foundation on a virtual event entitled "I Remember Warren." This event will share the legacy of this Arlington leader and help raise funds for the preservation and future renovation of the AHS museum. It seems appropriate to have the help of this foundation as Warren once helped our museum when he was the Arlington delegate. As we ring the bell for preservation and renovation, we hope that you will join us to remember a leader who worked to make Arlington a better place as well as to support our efforts to preserve our AHS museum.

Cathy Boneville Stix

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Closed until the coronavirus threat has passed.

Ball-Sellers House

5620 3rd Street, South
Open by appointment only
due to the coronavirus threat.

Virtual AHS

Website: <https://arlingtonhistorical-society.org>

Facebook: Arlington Historical Society

Twitter: #ArlingtonHistory

Instagram: ArlingtonHistory

AHS Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month and are conducted virtually until further notice due to the coronavirus threat.

AHS Wins National Trust Grant

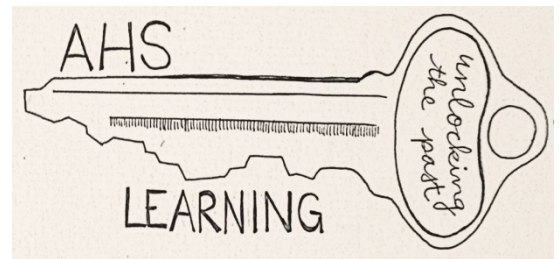


NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

In August, the National Trust for Historic Preservation notified AHS that it was awarding AHS with a grant to aid in preserving the Arlington Historical Museum. The grant team led by board member Tom Dickinson and AHS President Cathy Hix submitted the grant in June to seek funding for a preservation study of the Arlington Historical Museum. The Museum was once the Hume School built in the 1890s. As a result, there are building concerns that need to be addressed due to its age. The grant will allow AHS to begin the process of evaluating the museum and identifying and prioritizing the work. After receiving bids, AHS has selected Milner Preservation, part of MTFA, a highly respected Arlington firm to help us with this work. AHS looks forward to embarking on the journey to preserve our AHS museum for the residents of Arlington.

AHS Launches Education Site

This summer, AHS launched an online education initiative. The goal is to encourage student and adult learners to learn about and experience Arlington history in fun and creative ways. Another aim is to extend our outreach to the schools in Arlington County. The story of Arlington's settlement and growth is rich. In addition, because of its proximity to Washington, D.C., much of our nation's history happened right here. Through our many resources and local knowledge, AHS is well-positioned to share our insight and resources with local educators.



To spread the word about our educational activities, AHS has created an Education page on our website. This page can be accessed at <http://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/education>. The AHS educational outreach committee will be continually adding resources to the page.

Our first activity has been to create two scavenger hunts, one for younger learners and one for older. The scavenger hunts enticed participants to explore Arlington and learn unique facts about its past. Because of this success, AHS sponsored two scavenger hunt contests this summer and received many submissions. We received glowing comments from participants, especially the parents of younger children, and from the Sun Gazette.

Our next activity, launched in September has focused on the creation of local history exhibits. Younger learners will be asked to suggest an artifact for a virtual exhibit and older learners will be tasked with putting together a virtual exhibit about Arlington. Future plans for the education page include lesson plans for teachers, image and article databases, and information on touring the Arlington Historical Museum and the Ball Sellers House. We look forward to sharing these valuable resources with Arlington educators and residents.

AHS Scavenger Hunt Engages Arlington Sleuths



AHS engaged Arlingtonians in learning more about our community's past this past summer with two scavenger hunt contests for elementary students and older learners of any age. Our July competition ended with elementary winner Evelyn Petty and older learner winner Margaret Ehlers. Our August competition ended with elementary winners Mason and Andrea Wynn and older learner Katie Robinson. Winners received gift certificates from local restaurants Joe's Pizza and Nam Viet.



The scavenger hunt got great reviews from participants. One remarked that "This was a great family adventure! We especially appreciated having an activity that got us out of the house in a safe way." The scavenger hunts are still on our website. If you are interested in exploring Arlington, go to <https://Arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/learning-activities>

Upcoming AHS Events

AHS is adapting our monthly free public events to the virtual world. These events are easy to attend from the comfort of your own home and they don't require special technological know how. You can even ask questions of the speakers. Here is what we have planned for the fall:

October 8, 2020

The Fastest Growing County in America: Suburbanization, Segregation, and Community Development in Arlington



Dr. Lindsey Bestebreurtje will explore segregation and racialized zoning and planning laws in Arlington to see how these policies impacted the county's suburban growth from the 1900s to the 1970s. Please register for this event by Wednesday, October 7 by going here <https://forms.gle/GDNAPHrkrZoYwJUq5> and providing your email address. The morning of the event, an AHS representative will email you details on how to access the event using Zoom at 7:00 pm.

November 12, 2020

Section 27 and Freedman's Village in Arlington National Cemetery



Author Ric Murphy will discuss his award-winning book and describe how Arlington National Cemetery's history has been intertwined with that of African Americans. During the Civil War, the property initially served as a pauper's cemetery for men too poor to be returned to their families, and some of the very first war dead to be buried there included over 1,500 men who served in the United States Colored Troops. More than 3,800 former slaves are interred in Section 27, the property's original cemetery. A brief members' annual meeting will be held before this presentation. Please register at tinyurl.com/AHSNov12

December 10, 2020

Local Women and Their Role in the Suffrage Movement



Alice Reagan, Professor of History at Northern Virginia Community will discuss local northern Virginia women who protested, marched, and eventually succeeded in getting a constitutional amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote in 1920. But it wasn't easy and many were imprisoned and horribly mistreated in the Occoquan Workhouse for protesting. Registration for this 7:00 pm Zoom virtual event will be available after the November event.

AHS Virtual Annual Meeting: November 12, 2020 at 7:00

Due to pandemic restrictions, AHS was unable to hold our annual meeting in May. Regulations related to non-profits now allow us to conduct the meeting virtually. At the November 12, 2020 annual meeting, we will officially elect AHS Officers and Board of Directors for 2020-2021.

AHS Officers:

President: Cathy Bonneville Hix
Vice-President: Dr. Gerald K. Haines

Treasurer: John Tuohy
Secretary: Sean Denniston

Board of Directors:

George Axiotis
Annette Benbow
Tom Dickinson
Delegate Patrick Hope
Tracy Hopkins

Jessica Kaplan
Annette Marrero-Oliveras
Lara McCauley
David Pearson
Karl Van Newkirk

We hope you will join us for this annual meeting to be followed by a presentation by author Ric Murphy on Section 27 and Freedman's Village in Arlington Cemetery

Register online to attend at tinyurl.com/AHSNov12

Remembering Jim Pebley and His Dedication to the USS Arlington



On June 23rd, the Arlington Historical Society lost a friend with the passing of James “Jim” Pebley. While stationed at the Pentagon in the 1980s, he and his wife settled in Arlington and he became active in Arlington civic life. Even after he retired and moved to North Carolina, he continued to support Arlington and was a member of AHS.

In 2012, Jim was asked by the Navy League to Chair the local Commissioning Committee for the USS Arlington (at right). Our county’s namesake ship was being created to honor those who died at the Pentagon on 9/11 and those who so courageously responded to the crisis. A girder from the Pentagon was incorporated into the ship’s keel and a “Tribute Room,” a museum behind the bridge of the ship, was created, reflecting events at the Pentagon on 9/11.

Currently, AHS is collecting donations to provide for the installation of a model of the USS Arlington in the atrium of the Ellen M. Bozman Government Center, the site of our local government. Additionally, AHS will be developing educational materials to continue to tell the story of 9/11 in Arlington. One of Jim’s last acts of generosity and service to the county was a donation of \$10,000 to AHS for this 9/11 fund. We are grateful for his service to Arlington and look forward to the unveiling of the model of the USS Arlington in the future. A unique aspect of the exhibit will be the flags on the ship that will spell out Jim’s name. Jim will be missed by all who knew him but his legacy will live on.



John Glenn’s House

John Glenn was one of many historic residents who have lived in Arlington. Among his many accomplishments, he was the first American NASA astronaut to orbit the Earth in February 1962. Glenn and his family lived in Arlington in a 1950s style modern ranch home on North Harrison Street from 1958 to 1963. The property was bought in the fall of 2019 and the demolition occurred in May 2020 with plans for a new home to be built on the property.

The AHS Preservation Committee took several proactive steps to encourage local authorities to step in to preserve the former home of Senator John Glenn without success. We were fortunate to have been able to acquire and preserve several artifacts from the house prior to its demolition.

Sadly, Glenn's wife Annie, who shared the home with him and their children during his time of world fame as an astronaut, died at the age of 100 just 3 days prior to the demolition of the home. Senator Glenn is interred in Arlington National Cemetery and his wife Annie is buried there with him. The AHS Committee continues to work with others in the county to encourage the placement of a local historical marker at the site of the home.



The press waited outside the Glenn house (on the right) during his launch waiting for statements from the family and visitors to the house like Vice President Lyndon John and the Director of NASA.

Three Sisters

September is the time when students head back to school, this year through virtual education. In this newsletter, we are highlighting this return to education throughout our history. Our three sisters are a person, a place, and an artifact from our museum collection.

Person: Alice West Fleet

The Alice W. Fleet Elementary School is Arlington's newest elementary school and it is named for an educator who broke several color barriers throughout her career and inspired hundreds of children to want to read. The granddaughter of slaves, Fleet taught at four Arlington elementary schools over the course of 31 years: Hoffman-Boston, Drew, Woodmont and Reed. She was both the first African-American reading teacher in the Arlington school system and the first black teacher at a previously all-white school (Woodmont). Her personal motto was "Let nothing and no one stop you."



Born in 1909 in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, Alice West was the daughter of a respected stone mason and the granddaughter of slaves. She attended nearby Thyne Institute, a prestigious Presbyterian boarding school for minorities. After graduation, she became a public-school teacher after earning a degree in elementary education from Virginia State College. In 1937 she married Edmond Fleet, a widower with three children, and moved to Arlington with her new family.

Mrs. Fleet became a reading teacher at Hoffman-Boston, which was Arlington's first junior high school for African Americans. She loved to teach according to her family and also loved to learn. She spent her summers continuing her own education, becoming one of the first black women to receive a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Fleet would serve as an educator at Drew Elementary (now Drew Model School) in Nauck/Green Valley and Reed Elementary in Westover. She retired from teaching in 1971, but continued as a tireless advocate for equal rights in education, she served two terms on the Virginia State Commission on the Status of Women and was one of the first African-Americans to join the American Association of University Women. Fleet died in 2000, but her legacy lives on in the school that bears her name.

Place: Columbia School



The Columbia School is believed to be the first public school in the county. It was built in 1870 at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive. Although opened by a private organization, the school board worked out an arrangement with the school's trustees to allow it to be opened as a public school. The school was opened for public use by white students on January 25, 1871, and the county rented the school until 1892 when the School Board bought it for \$1,000. The existing school eventually was replaced with a new building and renamed Patrick Henry Elementary School. Two other schools opened in the county the same year as the Columbia School and they were the Walker School (white) and a school in Freedman's Village (black). But the Columbia School was deemed school No. 1. by county officials.

Artifact: School Attendance Medal for 1901

This Gold Attendance Medal was awarded to Sadie Falkner, a student at the Hume School for "attendance and recitation." Sadie never missed a day of school for the 1900-1901 school year. She received a medal the previous year for perfect attendance, too. But this year's medal was more ornate with a leaf cluster. Apparently, Sadie not only had to have perfect attendance but also had to demonstrate her recitation skills. Thank you to Mrs. William Moore, Sadie's daughter who donated this to the museum in 1978. (If you have any Arlington-related family artifacts, consider donating them to the museum.)



AHS Tribute to Arlington Businesses: The Portofino Restaurant Turns 50

An integral part of Arlington's history are the businesses that provide services within our community. Many of these businesses have been part of our community for decades. AHS is launching a series to highlight the great business community of Arlington. Stories of these businesses can also be read at <https://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

Celebrating Arlington's history has literally never tasted so good. This August, The Portofino Restaurant in Crystal City celebrated its 50th anniversary. Over the years, three generations of the Micheli family have brought delicious Northern Italian cuisine to Arlingtonians from their homey establishment on South 23rd Street while participating in the transformation of Crystal City into a cultured, urban neighborhood.

The concept for The Portofino Restaurant started at an upscale Georgetown restaurant, 1789. Adelmo Micheli, one of the original proprietors of Portofino's, immigrated to the US in the 1960s to work with his son, Sergio, at 1789. Sergio attended culinary school in Carata, Italy, and later found employment at the Italian embassy in Washington, D.C. as a chauffeur and chef, while balancing part-time work at 1789. He eventually worked his way up to chef and asked his father, who ran a market and liquor store in Genoa, Italy, to join him.



Angelo Mele, a regular customer at 1789, became impressed with the father-son duo. He hired Adelmo to be a chef at a new Italian restaurant at Crystal City following a move by the US Patent and Trademark Office. It was a smart move. Eventually, the US Patent and Trademark Office employed 7,000 employees across 18 buildings in Crystal City and it provided a steady customer base to The Portofino Restaurant until 2005, when the office relocated to Alexandria.

The Portofino opened in Crystal City in the midst of its transformation from an industrial to urban business district. Brickyards, warehouses, and factories once made up much of the neighborhood. By the mid-1960s, the need for extra office space outside Washington, D.C. transformed the area. Crystal City's proximity to the District, the Pentagon, and National Airport drew in commercial businesses and federal agencies, which built large office complexes. This, alongside the arrival of a Metrorail station, led to the neighborhood's development into the urban center it is today.

The Portofino Restaurant was at the forefront of this transformation in Crystal City. Richard Micheli, who currently owns and operates the restaurant with his sister Maria Puletti, thought that there were few restaurants on the block when Portofino's opened. He recalled a hot shoppe and a counter service restaurant. Today, there are about 15 restaurants, cafes, and bars! The block is even referred to as Restaurant Row because it contains so many diverse eateries, an unthinkable term for the area when Portofino's opened.

Richard described The Portofino's early days as a destination restaurant: Washingtonians drove across the river to get out of the district and dine at the restaurant. The restaurant became so busy that Adelmo brought in his son Sergio, as well as Sergio's wife Pilar, to work with him in the restaurant. In 1975, they expanded the front of the building into a former porch area to create another dining room, called the Veranda Room. By 1977, they opened another restaurant across the street called Cafe Italia, which served casual Italian cuisine like pizza. Mele eventually dropped out of the partnership, the Micheli family continued to expand. At one point the family operated 8 restaurants in the Washington metro area.

Through it all, the Michelis have maintained the warm atmosphere. The restaurant occupies a former private home, which the *Washington Post* described as "charmingly converted" in its first review of the restaurant. The setting provides customers with the expectation of coming home, so it's easy to feel comfortable. Customers could also always expect to see a familiar, friendly face. Richard recalled that one of his parents, Sergio and Pilar, was always hard at work at Portofino's and Richard himself has long been a fixture at the restaurant--as a baby, he sat in a bassinet in the corner of the main dining room. In 1993, after graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, Richard formally joined his parents as a chef at the restaurant. Richard and his sister, Maria now are the partners carrying on the Micheli family tradition.

Stop by The Portofino Restaurant for a delicious meal and to soak up some Arlington history! Portofino's is currently open for dinner from 5PM to 10PM Tuesday through Sunday. They offer a variety of dining options, including indoor and covered outdoor patio seating, carry out, and free delivery.

Stewardship of Your Money

The AHS depends on donations and membership fees to allow us to carry out our mission. During the quarantine, our museum curator and director have staggered hours to work in the museum. Additional volunteers have worked from home to add to our resources. Your financial donations have allowed us to continue the following work:

- The final cataloguing of all items in the museum collection.
- The use of new museum software to create a membership database.
- The development of an education page on our website
- The management of a zoom account to offer virtual programming
- The initiation of a preservation study to address current needs and plan for future renovation

Your donations have allowed us to continue to serve the residents of Arlington even during the pandemic.

Business Members

AHS is honored to have the support of the following local businesses:

BCN Homes
 Clark Lithograph
 EagleBank Foundation
 E. G. Reinsch Companies
 Glass Distributors
 John Marshall Bank
 National Capital Bank
 Wells Fargo Bank

Annual AHS Financial Summary

To ensure that AHS has the utmost transparency of our fiscal status to our members, AHS provides an annual summary of AHS finances. Below you will find the summary for our fiscal year: July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

If you have questions, please contact AHS at info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

Net Income		Arlington Historical Society, Inc. Summary Financial Report As of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020	
Unrestricted Revenues			
Ball-Sellers donations	0.00		
Ball-Sellers rent	12,750.00		
Bell Ringer & general donations	45,796.56		
Banquet	75.00		
Membership	14,507.42		
Museum Shop sales	1,282.44		
Other revenues	6,725.87		
Total Unrestricted Revenues	\$81,137.29		
Restricted Revenues			
Restricted donations	15,000.00		
Life Memberships	1,977.70		
Arlington Community Foundation income	2,738.30		
Total Restricted Revenues	\$19,716.00		
Total Revenues	\$100,853.29		
Expenses			
Ball-Sellers House	22,821.56		
Banquet	5,075.00		
Administration & Hume School	29,408.85		
Museum	9,585.21		
Publications	5,931.10		
Other Expenses	2,531.72		
Total Expenses	\$75,353.44		
Net Income July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020	\$25,499.85		
Net Assets			
Unrestricted Funds			
Operating Funds	69,380.05		
Reserve Funds	58,744.20		
Total Unrestricted Funds	\$128,124.25		
Restricted funds			
Hume Building Fund	3,600.22		
Museum Accession/Delation	3,304.62		
Ball-Sellers Security Deposit	505.34		
9-11 Funds	20,080.67		
Community Foundation - Endowment	57,208.68		
Community Foundation -Building Fund	35,501.44		
Total Restricted Funds	\$120,200.97		
Liabilities			
Ball-Sellers Security Deposit	505.34		
Total Liabilities	\$505.34		
Net Assets at June 30, 2020	\$248,830.56		



P.O. Box 100402
Arlington, Virginia 22210

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History Awaits Come Visit!

Arlington Historical Museum

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road
Arlington, VA 22202

Closed until further notice due to the
coronavirus threat

Ball-Sellers House Museum

5620 Third Street South
Arlington, VA 22204

Open by appointment only
due to the coronavirus threat.

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: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

Email: info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: [ArlingtonHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonHistoricalSociety)