



Arlington Historical Society

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Arlington Historical Society

Winter 2023

President's Dispatch

As we look forward to 2024, we have lots to tell you about AHS's end of 2023. After spending the past couple of years on the plans to preserve and transform the Arlington Historical Museum, we have begun the project! If you look closely, you'll see plywood over some of the basement and second floor windows. As you will read in this issue, these windows are currently in the Ohio workshop of the "Sashmaster" receiving the type of careful preservation work that will not be needed again for another half century.

Looking forward, we are busily preparing for the future phases of this project. In addition to receiving some much-needed care, the museum will be updated into a more vibrant, welcoming, and accessible community space. It will feature areas for presentations, for local groups to showcase co-curated exhibits, and for temporary exhibits that highlight the history behind current topics. As part of this project, we will be updating our permanent exhibits. Keep an eye out for opportunities to help shape the future of the museum!

In the last newsletter, we told you that we were planning to unveil the first of the "stumbling stones" to honor those who were enslaved in Arlington. Not only did we finish planning the event, but we held it at the Ball-Sellers house at the end of October! Read about it in this issue—we are very thankful for all the hard work of the project leaders, volunteers, and students who made this happen, as well as to Virginia Humanities and JBG Smith Cares for providing the funding. We hope these plaques inspire further exploration and contemplation of the stories of the lives of those who are honored by them.

One person who loved to tell the many stories of Arlingtonians was AHS board member Charlie Clark, whose life we celebrate in this issue. The memorial service for Charlie was held, appropriately enough, at Yorktown High School and was extremely moving. If you missed it, I would encourage you to watch it here: <https://youtube.com/live/iSpbSnMUAeg>. This truly was a celebration of the life of someone who loved Arlington and someone whom Arlington loved.

Finally, a note of appreciation for all that the Aurora Hills Women's Club has done for the Arlington Historical Museum throughout the years. Founded in 1958, the club consistently contributed greatly to the upkeep of the museum. As its final act, the club has donated \$8,012, the remainder of its treasury, to AHS for use towards our preservation and renovation of the museum. We are thankful for all that they did for the community and are honored to be a long-time beneficiary of their work.



Joyce Suydam (left) and Elizabeth Dichysyn (right) presented AHS President David Pearson with a check from the Aurora Hill's Women's Club.

Remembering Charlie Clark



On Saturday, December 16, many members of the Arlington Historical Society (AHS) Board of Directors gathered at Yorktown High School with so many of our Arlington community for a celebration of the life of Charlie Clark. Charlie served as a member of the AHS Board of Directors and was chairperson of our preservation committee. He also was a prolific speaker for numerous AHS events in the community and a constant source of information about Arlington and its history. Charlie, the ultimate storyteller, had the unique ability to make connections throughout the community as evidenced by the outpouring of love at his celebration.

Charlie grew up in the Rivercrest section of Arlington where he made lifelong friends. He attended Yorktown High School where his interest in journalism was sparked by his work on the school newspaper, *The Sentry*. He attended Oregon University and graduated from McGill University in Canada. After university, he began his career in journalism, working for Time-Life Books in The Washington Post, Congressional Quarterly, National Journal, and retiring as a senior correspondent at Atlantic Media's Government Executive Media Group.

Charlie was a prolific writer, most notably about the history of Arlington. His books include *George Washington Parke Custis: A Rarefied Life of America's First Family*, *Arlington County Chronicles*, *The Hidden History of Arlington*, *Lost Arlington*, and most recently, *The Life and Times of the Falls Church Free Press*. He is also beloved for his weekly column, "Our Man in Arlington" where he delved into unique stories about our community.

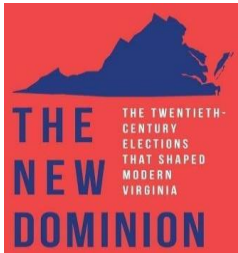
Although Charlie was "retired" he was non-stop! In addition to being a proud husband, father, and grandfather, he was active throughout the county. He was a popular speaker for local civic groups and was the "go-to" expert on Arlington history. He worked to share the history of neighborhoods and schools in Arlington as well as launching a preservation education program for AHS. Prior to Charlie serving on the AHS Board, he was honored by AHS as volunteer of the year for his creation of the 1920s story map to celebrate the 100th year naming of Arlington. He was also honored with the Cornelia B. Rose award for his contributions to the preservation of Arlington history.

AHS has established the Charlie Clark Memorial Preservation Fund to continue his work on county preservation projects. Additionally, AHS will award the Charlie Clark Journalism Award each year to the winner of our annual student essay contest. These are fitting honors to a person who truly was "Our Man in Arlington." He will be missed but his legacy will live on.

Upcoming AHS Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free to the public and monthly events are held virtually via Zoom and in-person at the Reinsch Library Auditorium on the Marymount University main campus.

Visit <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events> for Zoom access or directions to free on-campus parking.



Thursday, January 11, 2024

New Dominion: 20th Century Elections that Shaped Modern Virginia

Just in time for the beginning of election primary season, author John Milliken will discuss his new book *Virginia went from the limited electorate of the Byrd era, with the support of only 5-7% of the adult population. Today Virginia has set new records for voter participation nearly every year. What has driven this? The answers to this and other questions are in this close look at Virginia's key 20th century elections.*



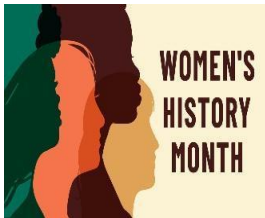
Thursday, February 8, 2024, 7 pm

Black Decoders at Arlington Hall

VIRTUAL on ZOOM ONLY

In Arlington Hall, a secret African American unit – mostly women and unknown to most white workers – tackled commercial codes, keeping tables on which companies were doing business with Hitler or Mitsubishi. National Security Agency historian Dr. David

Hatch will tell us the invisible history of African-American codebreakers during World War II. (*Virtual on Zoom ONLY*)



Thursday, March 14, 2024, 7 pm

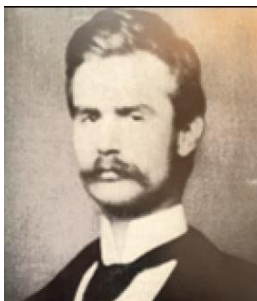
Arlington Women Who Fought for Their Community Educator and former AHS President, Cathy Hix will highlight the story of Dorothy Hamm and Elizabeth Campbell, two women who worked to bring about major changes in our community: school desegregation. These two highly educated women took on this fight for different reasons. Several other notable Arlington women will be highlighted for their actions to improve not just Arlington but Virginia and the nation. Celebrate Women's History month.



Saturday, April 6, 2024, 1-4 pm

Opening Day at the Ball-Sellers House

We're celebrating the opening of the Ball-Sellers House 2024 season, the oldest building in the county. To help kick-off Arlington's commemoration of 250 years as a country, we'll show you what life was like in the 1750s with music from the Monumental City Ancient Fife and Drum Corps (1:30), hand crafts and cooking by re-enactors. (*Ball-Sellers House 5620 3rd Street, South, FREE*)



Thursday, April 11, 2024, 7 pm

The Rambler: The Washington Star's Local Reporter in Arlington, 1912-1927

Harry Shannon the photographer and journalist known as "The Rambler" wrote many stories about Arlington over 100 years ago. His articles are a historian's treasure. He described houses, forts, businesses, schools, churches, mills, and families. He interviewed residents including Civil War veterans. Reading his articles is like traveling in a "time machine." Author and local historian Martin Suydam will take us along on this ramble through time.

Memorializing the Enslaved: Dedication of Arlington's First "Stumbling Stones"

On October 28, the Arlington Historical Society and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington unveiled the inaugural "stumbling stones," bronze plaques paying homage to three enslaved individuals once held at the historic Ball-Sellers House.

The plaques memorialized Nancy, who lived from about 1775-1838, and two unnamed males, one born c.1806 and the other born in 1844. Their stories were unearthed through research in probate and census records. These individuals were listed as part of the Carlin family's estate; the Carlins owned the house from 1772 until 1887. Today, the house can now represent the struggles and stories of all those who once dwelled within its walls.

Over 100 people attended the dedication of the stumbling stones. Speakers included the coordinators of Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington: 1669-1885, Tim Aiken, Scott Taylor, and Jessica Kaplan; AHS President David Pearson and Ball-Sellers House Director Annette Benbow; and County Board Member Takis Karantonis. Arlington Career Center teacher Jordan Kivitz and three of his students, Anna Litwiller, Jason Spitzak, and Andreas Chrysanthou, also spoke about their role in helping manufacture the stumbling stones and the personal importance of the project.



Students Jason Spitzak, Anna Litwiller, Arlington Career Center teacher Jordan Kivitz, student Andreas Chrysanthou, and Charles Whitmore who helped in the manufacture of the memorials.

"Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington" hopes to physically mark sites of enslavement across the county with plaques or "**stumbling stones**," akin to those placed at the Ball-Sellers House. The plaques aim to commemorate the lives of the enslaved and to serve as poignant reminders of a dark past that must never be forgotten.

Stewardship of Your Money

AHS depends on donations and membership fees to enable us to carry out our mission. Your financial donations have allowed us to continue the following work:

- First payment toward the window restoration project at the Arlington Historical Museum
- Moving five boxwoods at the Ball-Sellers House in preparation for a vegetable garden expansion
- Renewing membership in the North American Reciprocal Museum Association
- Printing and distributing *The Arlington Historical Society Magazine*



Thank you to the many members who donated to the annual AHS Bell-Ringer Fundraising Campaign this year. Named for the school bell atop the Arlington Historical Museum in the county's oldest standing schoolhouse, your money will go a long way towards preserving, refurbishing, and transforming this building into a museum that serves everyone.

Meet Duffy Hoffman

By Sharon Park, AHS Museum Renovation Committee

The Arlington Historic Society (AHS) is excited to introduce you to Duffy Hoffman, as we initiate Phase 1 of our restoration work on the Arlington Historical Museum, the site of the historic Hume School. This phase entails the restoration of 43 original or early windows by Duffy, a preservation specialist with over 40 years of experience and a national reputation in the wood craft industry.

Duffy comes highly recommended by a variety of preservation organizations including the National Park Service and the Preservation Trades Network. Located in Ohio, Duffy does work on the east coast and Midwest and in the last few years restored the windows on the historic Maryland State House, a National Historic Landmark in Annapolis. He works with his son and several other helpers, many of whom are in training to become the next generation of wood crafters. He has provided training with hands-on sessions at conferences and has been featured several times on HGTV network's "Restore America" program. He has several training videos and published guidelines for restoring windows. He is renowned in the industry as "the Sashmaster" so we are pleased to welcome him into our community.



Duffy "The Sashmaster" Hoffman at work in his Ohio workshop.

Duffy uses traditional old-world methods while bringing windows into the 21st century. He carefully removes each window sash and transports them to his shop in Ohio. After removing the glass (for reuse later), each sash is placed in a steam box to soften the paint for easy removal with gentle pressure. He avoids chemical stripping as it can raise the grain of wood. Because the historic sash has been painted with lead-based paint, Duffy implements lead-safe practices both on site and at his shop. He will make necessary repairs to deteriorated wood, replace the glass, and paint the windows with durable paints. He will improve the weather stripping of the sash to help with their energy performance. The restored windows will be fitted with interior storm panels and shades by others once this phase is completed.

Duffy will remove the AHS windows in three stages which allows the museum spaces to continue to have natural light for the maximum period of time. The scope and specifications for the work were developed by the firm of John Milner Associates Preservation, a division of MTFA Architecture and the work will be overseen by architect Andrew Marshall. As the work begins, it is an opportune time for members to consider contributions for the on-going work to complete all phases of this preservation and transformation project in the coming years!

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## Help Wanted—Museum Collections!

Have you ever wanted to work behind the scenes in a museum?

You might know that most of the artifacts held by Arlington Historical Society are not on display in the museum, but do you know that we have an ongoing effort to improve documentation of these artifacts so that they can be made publicly viewable on our website? In 2020, we migrated our collection records to a system that will make this possible, but there's a lot of work that needs to be done to make it happen.

Here's where you can help! We are looking for dedicated volunteers to clean up computerized records, research artifacts, and catalog new artifacts. No experience is necessary but curiosity and a willingness to learn are crucial.

Additionally, we are looking for volunteers to help us document the artifacts collected from the archeological dig at Ball-Sellers House in 2016. This primarily involves reviewing artifacts and entering data into a spreadsheet. No experience is necessary, but willingness to dig through online identification resources is important.

A minimum commitment is 3 hours/week for at least 3 months, and this on-site work is done Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9-3 at the Arlington Historical Museum. There is also an opportunity to do remote work cleaning up computerized records for qualified volunteers.

Interested? Please contact [AHScollections@outlook.com](mailto:AHScollections@outlook.com) for more information and an application.



*Volunteer Fayonne Doughty catalogs artifacts from the Ball-Sellers House archaeological dig.*



*Volunteer Erena Nakashima inventories artifacts on display at the Arlington Historical Museum.*

## Commemorating Our Country with All Voices

In early November, AHS convened the inaugural meeting of organizations interested in participating in the county's commemorations of the founding of our country. More than 30 organizations turned out to learn more and to raise their hands to say "We want to participate!"



Celebrating America and Arlington history isn't just about the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It's about celebrating the principles we were founded on—the revolution of ideas that we continually strive towards attaining. Arlington's history is the nation's history and this county has had a role in every major national event since the "Fairfax Resolves" in 1774—including new immigrant communities, desegregation, and the Civil War. The November meeting introduced everyone to these ideas and that we want to involve ALL of Arlington's voices in the many events from 2024 through 2026.

Since the November meeting AHS has reached out to organizations that could not attend the November meeting. AHS has shared information from the state's VA250 Commission on the grants available for next year's event planning and AHS created a central online site so all participants can work collaboratively and stay informed.

If you would like to be involved in this multi-event, multi-year project, or if you know of an organization you would like to make sure is included, please email Annette Benbow at [arlingtonva250@gmail.com](mailto:arlingtonva250@gmail.com)

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AHS in Our Community

AHS Banquet

September 27: AHS held a sold-out banquet featuring nationally known preservationist, David Rubenstein. He answered questions from Charlie Clark and explained his desire to give back to this country and why it is so important to preserve sites that help identify who we are working to become as a country.

Memorializing the Enslaved

In addition to the October 28 plaque dedication at the Ball-Sellers House, on November 15, Jessica Kaplan, a project leader, spoke to Mount Olivet Methodist Church about the project's findings.

Civic Groups

On November 4, AHS President David Pearson spoke to the Columbia Pike President's Group to introduce the leaders of the ten civic organizations along Columbia Pike to AHS.

Arlington VA250

November 6: AHS held the first informational meeting for Arlington organizations interested in participating in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation.

AHS's Monthly Free Public Lectures on Local History

- Oct 12: George Washington's Heirs and the Making of America. Historian Dr. Cassandra Good showed how the step grandchildren of George Washington played an overlooked but important role in the development of American society and politics from the Revolution to the Civil War.
- Nov 9: Operation Skyshield: Cold War Games and Their Impact on Arlington, Retired Smithsonian journalist Roger Mola gave the best description of the impact of the Cold War on Arlington and shared the lessons of Skyshield, military exercises that closed civil aviation 50 years before 9/11.
- Dec 14: Desegregating Libraries in Northern Virginia, Fairfax County librarians and authors Chris Barbuschak and Suzanne LaPierre recounted the overlooked and little-known history of segregated library services in Northern Virginia.

See the videos of past events on the AHS You Tube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/@arlingtonhistoricalsociety3162>

Thank you to our business and organization members for their continued support.

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**The Arlington Historical Society strives to build a stronger community by sharing stories of  
our diverse history.**

**Visit AHS online or in-person**

Website: <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org>

Email: [info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org)

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

Instagram: [@ArlingtonHistory](https://www.instagram.com/ArlingtonHistory)

**Arlington Historical Museum**  
1805 South Arlington Ridge Road  
Arlington, VA 22202

**Ball-Sellers House Museum**  
5620 Third Street South  
Arlington, VA 22204

**The Arlington Historical Society**, founded in 1956, is a non-profit organization incorporated under Virginia laws. The Society's goal is to help build our community through a better understanding of our diverse 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.