



The Arlington Historical Society Fall 2025 Newsletter



President's Dispatch

Building on our successful reopening of the Arlington Historical Museum in May this year, the Arlington Historical Society has experienced a significant increase in visitors to the Museum and the Ball-Sellers House. This success is attributed to the efforts of Museum Director Bethany Baker and Ball-Sellers House Director Annette Benbow, along with our docents and volunteers, as well as the invited 15-Minute History speakers. AHS's growing engagement with the community is evident through collaborative projects with the Central Library (*From Barriers to Ballots*) exhibit, participation in community events like Juneteenth, Arlington County Fair, and George Mason University's Virginia Campus Student Welcome Fair, along with the society's expanding online and social media presence.

AHS has also been awarded two Virginia Humanities grants. This includes a \$3,500 grant for a "traveling history trunk," and a \$10,000 grant for a history festival. Both grants will support AHS and its VA250 programs for 2026. The Historical Society has secured a three-day Arlington visit of the VA250 Mobile Museum (May 7-9, 2026), which will culminate with a one-day history festival at Kenmore Middle School on May 9, 2026. The festival will allow civic, cultural, service, and historical groups to participate in honoring our shared history. Visit (<https://arhist.org/arlington-va250/>) for more information.

To mark the upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, AHS has launched a new history writing initiative called 250 by 2026. We are looking for new or forgotten stories about the people, places, and events that have had the most impact on Arlington. If you have an idea for a story about Arlington, visit (<https://arhist.org/arlington-va250/250-by-2026/>).

Finally, on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, AHS will host its annual banquet at the Army-Navy Country Club. The guest speaker will be Dr. Benjamin Filene, Deputy Director for Public History at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Dr. Filene will discuss how museums nationwide are encouraging public participation in meaningful conversations about the 250th Anniversary of the United States and our shared history. If you haven't purchased your tickets yet, there's still time: the deadline is **October 3rd**. Click here to get yours now: arhist.org/annual-banquet/.

Thank you for your continued support.


Peter Vaselopulos
President, AHS

Inside the Museum: Notes from the Director

By Bethany Baker, Museum Director

Since reopening in May, the Arlington Historical Museum has welcomed over 1,000 visitors through its doors. The newly renovated space, redesigned exhibits, and restored historic windows have made the museum a destination for both longtime supporters and new audiences eager to learn more about Arlington's rich and complex past.

In the Community

The museum continues to build partnerships across Arlington. On August 5th, we joined ARCA (Arlington Ridge Civic Association) for National Night Out at the museum where our activities welcomed more than 100 visitors including local law enforcement. These community events are vital opportunities to share history outside the museum walls and connect with Arlingtonians of all ages.

More Ways to Engage

Exhibits

Until November visitors can explore the temporary exhibit *From Barriers to Ballots* developed in collaboration with the Arlington County Library, which highlights the long struggle for voting rights in Arlington and beyond. Work also continues on our upcoming exhibition *Education in Arlington County*, which will open soon and tell the story of schools, students, and the fight for equal education.

Programs

Our popular "15 Minute History" series remains a highlight. On September 28, George Axiotis will present *Vice on the Virginia Shore* at 2pm, discussing the areas of Rosslyn and Jackson City at the turn of the 20th century. October brings two engaging talks: *The Ball-Sellers House: A Microcosm of Arlington History* celebrating AHS's 50 year history of preserving its structure and story with Annette Benbow on October 5 at 2 p.m., and *Protesting in Arlington: The Ups and Downs of Standing Up for Your Rights* with Bill Fogarty on October 12 at 2pm.

Stay Tuned!

As we look ahead to America's 250th anniversary in 2026, the Arlington Historical Museum is busy planning a full calendar of talks, temporary exhibits, and special programs to mark this milestone. From exploring overlooked local stories to hosting community conversations about Arlington's place in the nation's history, we'll have something for everyone. Stay tuned for announcements in the coming months—you won't want to miss it!

Visiting

The museum remains open with extended hours—Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm and Sundays from 1 pm to 4 pm Admission and parking are always free. We invite you to visit, explore, and be part of the conversation about Arlington's history.



Officer Reed poses with his motorcycle at National Night Out.

Remembering the Underground

by Sean Denniston, AHS Vice-President

When the Crystal City Underground closed at the end of 2024, it was the end of an era. Although it still exists physically as tunnels (and perhaps a shortcut to the Metro), we can't go there to pick up a prescription, purchase a military-themed gift, or buy a child a puppet. AHS wants to tell the story of the pharmacist, the veteran, and the puppet master. We also want to tell your Crystal City Underground story. If you have a story, please submit it here: <https://arlhists.org/stories-from-the-underground/>

The next phase of AHS's "Stories from the Underground" will be an oral history. Details on this project and how you can participate will be posted on the AHS website.



Shop At Our Online Museum Store

Members! Use your 10% discount code
AHSMEMBER10 on every

product. You can get stationary, maps, books, games, and more. Go to:

<https://arlhists.org/shop/>

Or visit the store at the Arlington Historical Museum during open hours



Do You Have the App?

Want stories of our shared history at your fingertips wherever you go? Get the "Arlington Historical"



app. It's free wherever you get your cell phone apps. You can visit also see it online at <https://arlingtonhistorical.com>. This is a fun place to read about stories of our history or go on your own tour in the Tours section identifying the location where the stories took place. Credit our AHS President, Peter Vaselopulos for this 21st century way to view our history

Barcroft Elementary School 100th Anniversary Celebratory Video

By Peter Vaselopulos, AHS President

On September 19, 2025, Arlington's oldest elementary school, Barcroft, celebrated its 100th anniversary with student-centered activities and a community picnic. Festivities at Barcroft Elementary School included a human chain beginning at the site of the original Barcroft School and a mini "field day" where students participated in games and activities that kids might have played 100 years ago. Teachers and students gathered for a schoolwide assembly that highlighted Barcroft's history.

AHS President, Peter Vaselopulos, portrayed Dr. John Wolverton Barcroft, the namesake of the school. "Dr. Barcroft" addressed the students and reminded them that, despite advances in artificial intelligence, they still needed to focus on their studies. AHS produced a video of what life in here looked like when Barcroft was first established: [Barcroft 100th Anniversary](#)



Two New Stumbling Stones Honor People Once Enslaved in Boulevard Manor

By Jessica Kaplan

Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington (MEA) dedicated two stumbling stones in the Boulevard Manor neighborhood commemorating the lives of Killemacse and Con, who were enslaved by John Hurst in the 1760s.

Killemacse and Con along with two additional enslaved people were responsible for “making of a crop of corn, tobacco, wheat... erect[ing] and build[ing] and keep[ing] in good repair good and sufficient tobacco houses, corn houses and quarters for the reception of the crop and slaves...”



Michael and Barbara Raizen welcomed the large crowd of attendees. MEA volunteers and Susan Cunningham of the Arlington County Board discussed the history of enslavement in the neighborhood and beyond. Cunningham spoke movingly of the cost of slavery and racism citing the fact that many inequalities remain today with negative economic and health results for African Americans.

Visit the MEA website, enslavedarl.org, to learn more about the project.

Michael and Barbara Raizen pose in front of stumbling stones honoring Killemacse and Con. The stones are embedded by their home in Boulevard Manor.

NAACP Names Three Awardees for Its Meritorious Service Award

The Executive Board of the NAACP Arlington Branch selected three people to be this year's winners of the Henry L. Holmes Meritorious Service Award for their work on the Memorializing the Enslaved of Arlington project. **Jessica Kaplan**, a long-time AHS Member of the AHS Board of Directors; **Tim Aiken**, a member of the AHS Advisory Board; and **Scott Taylor**, President of the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington are all co-directors of the project.

The multi-year project is revealing through historical research and honoring the lives and contributions of our county's enslaved people by placing stumbling stones at locations of enslavement.

The award will be presented at this year's NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on October 4, 2025, at 7:00 PM, being held at GMU's Arlington campus. This award is named after Henry L. Holmes, the first African American elected to office in Arlington, and a long-time civil servant who set the standard for service to our community.

AHS Historic Research and Preservation Committee

By Marty Suydam, Research Committee Chairman

Sean Denniston and Marty Suydam will take an oral history course during September conducted by Francesco De Salvatore, Manager and Curator of the Alexandria Oral History Center, City of Alexandria, Office of Historic Alexandria. The goal is to create an in-house capability to conduct oral history for Arlington Historical Society.

The course introduces oral history methods and practices and provides resources to complete oral history projects. Over the course of four sessions, students will become familiar with standardized practices and methods within the oral history field, and design a unique oral history project.

Course Objectives are:

- become familiar with best practices and methods within the oral history field.
- become familiar with community history in Alexandria.
- become familiar with audio recording devices and practices.
- become familiar with justice-centered and restorative public history methods.
- design and complete a unique oral history project by employing oral history best practices.

Topics in this training include:

- interviewing methods
- audio recording equipment training
- overview of the ethics and values of justice-centered and restorative oral history practices
- transcriptions
- archival preservation
- community history in Alexandria, which we will apply to Arlington.

Armed with this course, AHS plans to launch an oral history project to record the experiences of Arlingtonians. AHS will put the histories on its website for all to benefit from.

Upcoming AHS Events

For more details: visit: <https://arhist.org/events>

The Arlington Historical Society has participated in or held more than 70 events in Arlington this year, so far! In some cases, we sent representatives who spoke to community gatherings, in other events, we hosted and ran the event. We strive to bring history alive for Arlington. Here's what's happening in the next few months:

Friday, October 3: Deadline for Student Contest Arlington's Role in America's 250-Year Journey



As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, we reflect on the stories and places that have shaped its history. Arlington has witnessed some significant moments that contribute to the story of our nation. Grade 8-12 students who live or study in Arlington are invited to identify what you believe is the most significant historical event that took place in Arlington and how it is

linked to America's 250-year journey. It can be an essay, a poem, a video, a design of a new memorial about the event. Cash prizes. <https://arhist.org/event/student-history-contest/>

Friday, October 3: Deadline for AHS Banquet Tickets Honoring America's Story and Local History



Time is running out to buy your tickets for the AHS Banquet at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington. Our keynote speaker is Benjamin Filene, PhD, Deputy Director of Public History at Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Tickets are \$130 each for members and \$150 each for non-members. Sponsorships available. Order your tickets at arlhist.org/annual-banquet/ Banquet Contact: Cathy Hix at apscathy@gmail.com.

Sunday, October 5 @ 2 PM 15-Minute History: Spotlight on the Ball-Sellers House



The Ball-Sellers House is wrapping up its 50th Anniversary season as a museum at the end of October, so we thought we'd remind folks what's so unique about this c. 1750 farmhouse and still enable you to visit before the end of the month. Annette Benbow will talk about why this building is so historically relevant. (Arlington Historical Museum, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road)

Tuesday, October 7 @ 5:30 PM AHS is at Causes & Cocktails



This fun and meaningful networking event brings together civic-minded individuals and community partners who want to be a part of future solutions. The featured cause is education. Come connect and get inspired. <https://arlhist.org/event/ahs-is-at-causes-cocktails/>

Thursday, October 9 @ 7 pm The Inspiration and History of Arlington's American Legion Post 194



In 1946, a group of determined and like-minded individuals set out to establish the American Legion Dorie Miller Post 194 & Auxiliary Unit in Arlington. Their courage to start a new post speaks volumes about who they were and the man who the post honors. Post Commander Clarence Buchanan and several officers of this American Legion Post will tell the story of how Dorie Miller's heroic actions aboard the USS West Virginia on December 7, 1941 inspired African American veterans to establish a post honoring a Black Navy Messman even before the US military was desegregated in 1947. (Location pending)

Sunday, October 12 @ 2 PM 15-Minute History: The Ups and Downs of Standing Up for Your Rights.

Bill Fogarty (Our Man in Arlington for the *Falls Church News Press*) spotlights protests in Arlington, a review of the civil rights struggles in Arlington in the 1950s followed by a discussion on how these



"echoes from the past" might inform civil rights issues today. (2nd Floor, Arlington Historical Museum, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road)



Tuesday, October 14 @ 6 PM
Annual AHS Banquet: Tickets Available Through Sep 30

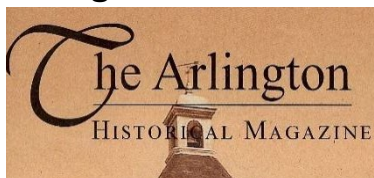
The annual AHS banquet will be held at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Anthea M. Hartig, Director of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Tickets available through September 30 at arlhist.org/annual-banquet/

Saturday, October 25, 9 AM to 3 PM
AHS Museum Store at Women's Club Bazaar



AHS is bringing its games, kids books, historical toys, and more to the Arlington Woman's Club Annual Bazaar. We're raising money to help enable us to run two museums, host special events, monthly lectures, and more. (700 S. Buchanan Street, Arlington)

Thursday, November 6 @ 6-8 PM
Arlington Historical Magazine Release Party *for AHS Members*



AHS Members have the unique opportunity to meet the authors from this year's Arlington Historical Magazine at our first ever "Release Party!" Refreshments served. (Arlington Historical Museum, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road)

Thursday, November 13 @ 7 PM
Dark Star Park and the Birth of Arlington's Public Art Program



Angela Adams, founding Director of Arlington Public Art discusses the creation, stewardship and legacy of Nancy Holt's *Dark Star Park* and how it inspired the more than 40 year commitment to public art as placemaking. Includes screening of Holt's film: "Art in the Public Eye: The Making of Dark Star Park."

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**Thank You to Our Business and Organization Members**  
**for Your 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: [arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org)

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

**Arlington Historical Museum**

1805 South Arlington Ridge Road

Arlington, VA 22202

Saturday: 10 AM – 4 PM

Sunday: 1 PM – 4 PM

**Ball-Sellers House Museum**

5620 Third Street South

Arlington, VA 22204

Saturday: 1-4 through October

**The Arlington Historical Society**, founded in 1956, is a non-profit organization incorporated under Virginia laws. The Society's goal is to strengthen our community by sharing our diverse history.

Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. and are open to the public.