

The ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

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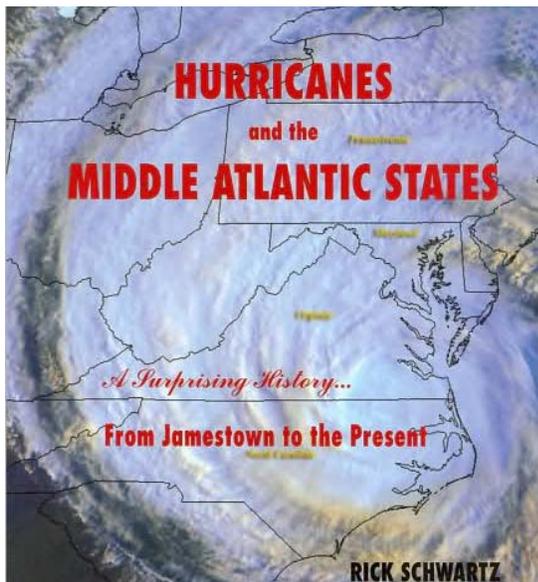
PLACE: The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street

TIME: 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: Richard Schwartz, hurricane scholar and former journalist and defense contractor

FREE LECTURE

“Hurricanes and Alexandria: A Surprising History”



Hurricanes and Alexandria: A Surprising History ushers in the 2014-2015 Lecture Series of the Alexandria Historical Society with a very engaging presentation about the history of hurricanes in Alexandria and their characteristics, patterns and effects. Richard Schwartz, author of *Hurricanes and the Middle Atlantic States*, the first book of an upcoming four-volume set covering the hurricane history of the United States, is our featured speaker. His extensive research will be featured in a PowerPoint format that includes seventy-five slides with information, maps and many photographs of the damage to our area from hurricanes.

“Hurricane history is repetitive,” according to Mr. Schwartz. In other words, the types of events that we have experienced in the past will occur again. Hurricane Arthur, which developed this past June, was the earliest hurricane in modern times to make landfall in North Carolina. This strongly suggests the general paths of potential storms and the likelihood of more East Coast activity later in the season.

Alexandria has experienced extreme wind, tidal flooding and rainfall flooding from tropical cyclones, and some have even spawned tornadoes. George Washington, a meticulous recorder, noted in his journal on July 23-24, 1788 that the remnant of a hurricane passed through his estate. This storm whipped eastern Virginia with strong gales, heavy rain and severe flooding in the tidal areas that included Mount Vernon.

Long-time residents may remember the hurricane of August 1933, as well as Hurricanes Hazel and Agnes. More recently, Hurricane Isabel in 2003 created record tidal flooding and devastated the New Alexandria and Belle View areas of Alexandria. In 2011 Tropical Storm Lee dumped “a once-in-a thousand-year rainfall.” And if Hurricane Sandy in 2012 had taken a more southerly track, we could have experienced a storm not unlike the killer Hurricane of 1933.



Coincidentally, Mr. Schwartz was born on June 1st, the first day of the official hurricane season. In the late 1960s, he searched for a local hurricane history book and came up empty-handed. After seven years of considerable research, he published his own book in 2013.

Mr. Schwartz attended the University of Maryland and Salisbury University, graduating from the latter. He began his employment in the journalism field before working as a defense contractor. He has lived in the Metropolitan Washington area since 1968 and in Northern Virginia for the past thirty years. In 2013 Mr. Schwartz spoke at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans, the Maryland Emergency Management Conference and the Howard County, MD Emergency Management Conference. He is currently working on his next book, *Hurricanes and the Southeast Coast*, which is projected for publication in 2015.

Please arrive early as seating is limited.

The Alexandria Historical Society Board for 2014-2015

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*Completing Audrey Davis’s term as director

**Completing Tal Day’s term as director

President's Message

Huzzah! Greetings! As the new president of the Alexandria Historical Society, I am very excited about our dynamic 2014-15 Lecture Series beginning this month with Richard Schwartz's presentation on *Hurricanes and Alexandria: A Surprising History*. This engaging topic explores the history of hurricanes in Alexandria and their characteristics, patterns and effects. In October, Catherine Miliaras and Stephanie Sample, both Historic Preservation Planners for the City of Alexandria, will share their expertise on the area of Alexandria known as Parker-Gray, a historic African-American neighborhood first settled during the Colonial period.

This past year, much of our focus had been on the Commemoration of the War of 1812 as we recognized the role that Alexandria played two hundred years ago when British troops sailed up the Potomac in August 1814 and threatened to burn the town. The reenactment of this incident at the Signature Event on August 31st included period music, costumed interpreters, and a yacht race between the British and Americans which I'm happy to report that on this occasion the Americans won the day!

The Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War will conclude in April 2015 when most of the Confederate troops surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse ending the war. We will then be turning our attention to the Centennial of World War I officially beginning in April 2017 when America declared war against Germany.

I am truly honored by the opportunity to serve as the leader of such a stellar organization as the Alexandria Historical Society. Founded thirty-one years ago, our Mission has been to offer premier lectures by experts in their fields as well as to award those who have made a notable contribution in the field of history and to recognize high school students who have demonstrated an aptitude in this area. Our board members have a variety of expertise and experience which they generously volunteer, and our five new members bring with them backgrounds in law, history and professional writing. We welcome ideas and input from all of you who are the backbone of the organization. Please reach out to us thorough our website or personally at one of our lectures.

Debbie Ackerman, President

AHS October Lecture on Wednesday, October 22nd: Please join us for a lecture by Historic Preservation Planners for the City, Catherine Miliaras and Stephanie Sample, on the evolution of the Parker Gray Historic District. They will share anecdotes about the neighborhood's residents and controversy over its historic designation. The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, 7:30 PM. Free.

Event on Tuesday, October 7th: In October 1862 an abolitionist named Julia Wilbur traveled south from Rochester, NY to Alexandria, where she spent the next three years witnessing many of the pivotal moments of the Civil War. As part of [Virginia Archaeology Month](#), Paula Whitacre will illustrate—through Julia Wilbur's diaries, letters, other writings and photos—how a single woman got here, what she did once she arrived and how we know. Morrison House Hotel, 116 South Alfred Street, 6:00 PM. Call 703-746-4399 for more information. Free.

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The AHS Newsletter is published by the Alexandria Historical Society, Inc., and mailed free to members. To join the Society, either go to www.alexandriahistorical.org and follow the membership links, or submit your check made payable to "Alexandria Historical Society," together with your name, address, and telephone numbers, to the Alexandria Historical Society, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Annual dues are: \$10.00, Student; \$20.00, Single; \$30.00, Couple; \$50.00, Sustaining; and \$100.00, Patron. The membership year is July to June. Dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The purpose of the Society shall be to promote an active interest in American history and particularly in the history of Alexandria and of Virginia.
The Society is organized exclusively for educational purposes.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.alexandriahistorical.org