

The ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2015

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, June 24, 2015, at 7:30 PM

PLACE: The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

SPEAKER: Don DeBats, 2014-2016 Residential Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Professor and Head of American Studies at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

FREE LECTURE VIVA VOCE VOTING IN ALEXANDRIA



In the 1850s, Alexandria's elections were held out of doors at 4 locations around the city. The voters (only men could vote) cast votes for candidates "viva voce," speaking their choice aloud before spectators and other voters. Politics at the time was more communal and less individual; the system of casting one's vote in public (whether by voice or distinctively marked party ticket) had been used since colonial times. Votes were not secret as today, nor were elections subdued occasions. Elections coincided with festivals and were sometimes rowdy affairs accompanied by copious amounts of alcohol.

Don DeBats, 2014-2016 Residential Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Virginia and Professor and Head of American Studies at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, examines Alexandria's poll books—the official written record of the spoken declaration of every voter—to illuminate this small city's mid-19th-century politics and culture in a moment of great turmoil as the secession crisis loomed. What was the context of individual electoral decisions and the significance of these decisions? The database created by Professor DeBats to track voting patterns and to place voters in the context of the entire population of Alexandria has produced evidence-based answers to these and other questions. The website containing all this information will be available to the public and will be demonstrated during the talk.



Please arrive early—seating is limited

Above image: *The County Election, 1852*; George Caleb Bingham, *American, 1811–1879*; Saint Louis Art Museum

Nominations for the Alexandria Historical Society Board for 2015-2016

At the June 24th meeting, Alexandria Historical Society members will vote on the following slate of candidates for AHS officers and open Board of Director seats for the 2015-2016 terms. AHS members may also make nominations from the floor.

Officers:

President	Debra P. Ackerman
Vice President	Audrey Davis
Secretary	Catherine Weinraub*
Treasurer	Tal Day

Board of Directors:

Jamie Bosket*	Term to end 2018	
Katy Cannady*	Term to end 2018	(Alexandria Archaeology representative – annual)
Jackie Cohan	Term to end 2016	(Newsletter editor)
Sarah Coster	Term to end 2016	
Dennis Hensley	Term to end 2017	(HARC representative – annual)
Patrick Ladden*	Term to end 2018	
James Mackay	Term to end 2016	
Julie Randle	Term to end 2016	
Mark Whatford	Term to end 2017	
Helen Wirka	Term to end 2017	

Ex-Officio:

Linda Greenberg, editor of the *Alexandria Chronicle*

*Proposed members

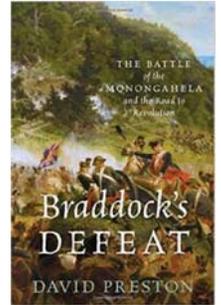
Upcoming Events

June 18th: “A Jazzy June!”: African-American Music Appreciation Month at Carlyle House. From 6:00 – 8:00 PM on Thursday, June 18th, the Carlyle House and Alexandria Black History Museum will co-host a concert in honor of African-American Music Appreciation Month. The concert takes place the day before “Juneteenth,” one of the oldest celebrations commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. DuPont Brass, a local group from Howard University that has gained popularity from playing at local Metro stations, the acclaimed DC Jazz Festival and throughout DC, will perform. For more information, call 703.549.2997 (www.novaparks.org). *Free to all.*

June 21st: Free Father’s Day Tours at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum and Apothecary Museum. On Father’s Day, celebrate with your favorite father at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, the place where the Father of our Country ate, drank and influenced history as well as at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum from 1:00 - 5:00 PM. Gadsby’s Tavern Museum is located at 134 N. Royal Street (www.gadsbystavern.org/) and the Apothecary Museum is on 105 – 107 S. Fairfax Street (www.apothecarymuseum.org/). *Each tour is free for all dads but \$5 for other adults and \$3 for children (ages 5 - 12).*

June 21st: Free Father's Day Open House at Friendship Firehouse. From 1:00 - 4:00 PM, the firehouse photographer will be on duty so dads can take home a complimentary family portrait alongside the historic equipment that was used to fight fires in early-19th-century Alexandria. See the locally-made hose reel and find out about artifacts like hose buckets and axes. Youngsters will receive their very own fire hat. Friendship Firehouse Museum is located at 107 S. Alfred Street (www.friendshipfirehouse.net). *Free to all.*

September 23rd: "Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution." The Alexandria Historical Society presents David L. Preston, Westvaco Professor of National Security Studies at the Citadel, who will offer a re-interpretation of General Edward Braddock's Expedition of 1755 and focus on a unique set of characters that includes George Washington and Benjamin Franklin as well as discussing three new manuscript discoveries. The disaster altered the balance of power in America and spawned ideas of American identity that culminated in the American Revolution. *Free to AHS members only.*



AHS Membership

Dues for the Alexandria Historical Society are due and payable on July 1st each year. There are 6 membership levels. Please contact us if you are interested in either a Gift or Student Membership.

- Gift
- Student -- \$10
- Individual -- \$20
- Couple (up to 2 members) -- \$30
- Sustaining (up to 2 members) -- \$50
- Patron (up to 2 members) -- \$100

President's Message—Debra P. Ackerman

This has been a notable year for the Alexandria Historical Society as we have expanded our technological capabilities and improved our website. Members are now offered the opportunity to join on-line in addition to our traditional manner. Our brochure has been updated to a first-class, glossy production with photos and drawings spanning the past three centuries. And we continue to offer engaging lectures delivered by notable historians with our concluding lecture of the season on voting practices in Virginia.

In keeping with our mission statement to offer lectures, preserve items of significance to Alexandria and support programs for grants, awards and publications, we will continue to offer our lectures at no cost to our membership. However, in September 2015, for those attendees who have not yet joined our Society, the admittance to one of our presentations will be five dollars—a minimal amount for an entertaining evening. We hope that the benefits which we offer our membership—our newsletter, the *Alexandria Chronicle*, a 10% discount on purchases at the Office of Historic Alexandria's museum stores and the knowledge that you are actively preserving the city's history—will encourage you to join us or to renew. We are also considering other intriguing opportunities to offer our membership this upcoming year. As always, please reach out to me or one of our board members with ideas, suggestions or just to introduce yourself. Enjoy your summer!

ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
NEWSLETTER

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The AHS Newsletter is published by the Alexandria Historical Society, Inc., and mailed free to members. To join the Society, 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