

November 10, 2009, Minutes as approved by the Board on March 9, 2010

**Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society
November 10, 2009, 6:30, Black History Museum**

The meeting was called to order by President Audrey Davis at 6:35 p.m. Members present were Bob Madison, Anne Paul, Ted Pulliam, Amy Breedlove, Katy Cannady, Mary Ruth Coleman, Henry Desmarais, Bill Dickinson, Peggy Gross, Laura Mae Sudder, and Karen Wilkins.

Minutes: The minutes of the October meeting were approved with amendments.

Treasurer's Report: Paul reported that there were several checks sent but not yet cashed, so there would be no treasurer's report. She also circulated a list of members who had not paid their dues (enclosed) and suggested that Board members who knew them might mention to them a hope they will continue their membership.

Paul suggested that T. Michael Miller be made a life-member. Wilkins so moved, Breedlove seconded, and the motion passed.

Paul circulated a biography (enclosed) of Effie Dunstan, a valued member of several Alexandria historical organizations and writer of local history, who died recently.

Old Business

April History Awards: Davis reported that a letter had been sent to Margaret Spellings, former Secretary of Education, inviting her to be the speaker at the awards ceremony, but there had not yet been a reply. Letters also had been sent to Whole Foods asking them to sponsor the event and to last year's awards recipients inviting them to this year's awards. She also reported that a proclamation is being developed for award recipients.

Chronicles on Website: Madison reported that Carrie Joyner has agreed to scan the back issues of the *Alexandria Chronicles* onto the website at the same hourly rate she receives at the Lyceum, although she could not start until January. Madison estimated that the cost for the project would not exceed \$400. There was general agreement to proceed along those lines.

Paul reported that former Board member, Bunny Jacob, will donate a complete set of the *Chronicles* to AHS, and the set might be used for the scanning project.

Civil War 150th Anniversary 2011: Pulliam reported on the public meeting held on October 24 at the Masonic Memorial, sponsored by HARC, OHA, and ACVA, to plan commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War. He reported that the meeting

was attended by around 35-45 people. The main speaker was Richard Lewis of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, who stressed that the purpose of the commemoration was not just to honor those in Alexandria who were affected by the war but also to bring people to Alexandria to see what happened here during the war. In this connection he asked for suggestions for a common theme or vision to express the central Civil War idea Alexandria should stress. A number of themes were suggested by members of the audience, such as Alexandria as a city of firsts – first city in Virginia to be captured by the Union, site of the first death of a Union officer and of a confederate sympathizer – and Alexandria as a Civil War hub where a person might stay, not only to see Alexandria’s Civil War sites, but also those in Fredericksburg, Manassas, Washington, and elsewhere. No final vision or theme was formulated at the meeting, although there was general agreement that Alexandria visitors and citizens should be encouraged to participate in the commemoration. Lance Mallamo distributed copies of lists of committees and urged attendees to email him about a committee or committees they were interested in joining. Davis reported that different offices within OHA had submitted plans for commemorating the 150th anniversary.

National Capital Region Conservation Act: Dickinson reported that hearings on the bills were being scheduled and efforts were being made to recruit more organizational supporters of the bills, particularly organizations outside the Washington region. He also reported that the Washington Board of Trade had agreed to support the bill. Davis reported that a letter of support from AHS had been sent to Senators Webb and Warner and Representative Moran.

New Business:

President Ford Memorial: Davis reported that a memorial to President Gerald R. Ford located at a corner of Quaker Lane and Janney’s Lane will be dedicated Thursday, November 12 at 4:00 p.m.

Fort Ward: Davis reported on the meeting held November 7 concerning the post-Civil War African-American community at Fort Ward. She reported that there were more community people in attendance than in earlier meetings and that they were joined by descendants of people who were buried on the grounds of the fort. She also reported that a decision had been made to dedicate in February the new pool at the Charles Houston Recreation Center to the children who died swimming in the Potomac during the racial integration struggles when Alexandria was without a public swimming pool.

Commemoration of the British Plundering of Alexandria in 1814: Dickinson mentioned the upcoming anniversary of the British plundering of Alexandria in 1814. The Board discussed local area authors who had written books on the subject, such as Anthony Pitch, Carole Herrick, and Patrick O’Neill, as possible speakers at a future lecture.

Committee Reports

Program Update: Madison reported that the recent lecture on *Marbury v. Madison* had a very good turnout. Desmarais reported there were approximately 110 attendees. Davis mentioned she had received numerous telephone calls praising the event. Madison reported the next lecture would be Thomas E. Crocker speaking on his book *Braddock's March* on March 24. It was mentioned that Crocker will be at a book signing at Carlyle House on November 21 at 2:00 p.m.

Newsletter: Madison reported that the next issue will come out in February.

Chronicle: Davis reported that the fall issue has been published and that material has been received for future issues.

Website Statistics: Breedlove circulated copies of statistics for the past month's use (enclosed). She reported that not much has changed, other than a slight drop off in the number of hits. She noted also the surprising number of hits from overseas.

Freedmen's Cemetery Sculpture Steering Committee: Wilkins reported that some descendants of people buried in the cemetery attended the most recent committee meeting. The committee is finalizing a document requesting sculptors to submit their qualifications, which should be finished in December. March 1st is the deadline for receiving qualifications, and the top three will be selected as finalists. She circulated current illustrations of the site.

Davis noted that currently sculptures are under development for three locations: Freedmen's Cemetery, Charles Houston Recreation Center, and the site of the Bruin Slave Prison.

Archaeology: Cannady reported that the City Council recently had awarded the annual Ben Brenman awards to Vivienne Mitchell for her long-time work in Alexandria archaeology, Joe Reeder for his stewardship of the 18th Century house at the northeast corner of Prince and St Asaph Streets, Elizabeth Henry Douglas for her oral history work, the Louis Berger Group for historical study and archaeological investigation of the Bruin Slave site, and Sarah Borgatti for raising funds for the preservation of archaeological artifacts.

HARC: Sudder reported that HARC had sent a letter to City Council concerning a permit to demolish the building at 224 North Fayette Street that once housed a Rosenwald School and an American Legion Post for African-Americans (enclosed). HARC membership was divided on whether the permit should be denied or granted, and the letter suggested that "more consideration be given before making an irreversible decision regarding the structure." The City Council later voted to delay the owner's demolition of the structure for six months to give time for someone to buy the property and preserve it.

Library Local History/Special Collections Budget: Paul reported that on November 21 the City Council will hold a public hearing on next year's budget. At a recent meeting of the Library Board, that board urged its members and supporters to attend the hearing and speak against possible cuts in the library budget. She said she will be receiving talking points that speakers may use. She also mentioned the possibility that the library would receive some federal stimulus money.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam
Secretary