

# The ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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## SPECIAL END OF YEAR ISSUE!



### ***Highlights from 2019***

The Alexandria Historical Society has had a busy year! We published two issues of the *Alexandria Chronicle*, welcomed several new board members, and hosted several engaging speakers who shared their work with our members and the larger community. Here's a look back at another great year!

In March, **Zachary M. Schrag**, professor of history at George Mason University and author of *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* described the political, cultural, and logistical contexts of creating a major subway system in a metropolitan area already dominated by the automobile. The talk was received with much interest and a spirited question and answer session in which Dr. Schrag revealed the real reason Georgetown has no Metro stop and speculated about Metro's future in Washington.



Zachary M. Schrag

In April, we hosted the **Alexandria Historical Society Awards Ceremony**. **Gretchen M. Bulova**, Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA), spoke about her career and current role at the Office of Historical Alexandria.



Paula Whitacre



Jay Roberts and Julia Randle,  
Co-Chair of the AHS History  
Awards Committee

**Paula Whitacre** and **Jay Roberts** were jointly honored with the T. Michael Miller Alexandria History Award, which recognizes a person or persons who have made noteworthy contributions to the preservation of the historic, cultural, and artistic heritage of Alexandria.

In addition, four high school students were recognized for their scholarly work and sustained enthusiasm for American history. **Kathryn Cheney** of Bishop Ireton High School, **Tallie Steiner** of Episcopal High School, **Sylvie Weiman** of St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, and **Aidan White** of T.C. Williams High School won the Alexandria High School History Awards. Congratulations to all of the honorees!



(From left) Tallie Steiner and her teacher, Caroline English, Kathryn Cheney and Debra Ackerman, Chair of the AHS History Awards Committee, and Sylvie Weiman and her teacher, Kate Hardwick.

In May, **Cindy Kierner**, professor of history at George Mason University, spoke to an enthusiastic audience in her talk “We Cannot Be Tame Spectators: Three Centuries of Virginia Women’s History.” Using Virginia and the American Revolutionary and Early Republican periods as case studies, she highlighted the ways that women’s history can add perspective to predominantly male histories and even change the shape and tone of the historical narrative itself.

In June, **Eleanor Breen**, City Archaeologist of Alexandria, spoke about new discoveries on the Alexandria waterfront. Block by block, project by project, the remains of wharves, warehouses, dwellings, industries, privies, and, of course, four ships have begun to emerge from the waterlogged depths at the river’s edge.



Even as individual features and artifact assemblages, these finds are highly significant, but when taken together along with a wealth of historical documentary data, a maritime cultural landscape is taking form. This presentation offered a tour of the archaeological evidence of the diverse neighborhoods, bustling wharves, and massive land making efforts that characterized the Alexandria seaport at the turn of the eighteenth century.



Images from waterfront excavations in Alexandria, a 50-foot ship (bottom) and 85-foot ship (top).



In September, **Char McCargo Bah**, CEO/Owner of FindingThingsforU (<https://findingthingsforu.com>), LLC, genealogist, freelance writer, and independent historian, spoke at the Lyceum about her work for the City of Alexandria on the Alexandria Freedmen and Contraband Cemetery.

Bah's lecture drew on research from her second book, *The Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery: A Legacy of Freedom*. Ms. Bah told the moving, surprising, and even humorous stories of African American families who have lived, worked, and prayed in Alexandria since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and before.



Char Bah



Douglas Sanford

In October, **Douglas Sanford** discussed research outcomes for the Virginia Slave Housing Project, a long-term effort to document, interpret, and preserve slave-related buildings across the State. While cabins and quarters represented white attempts to control aspects of enslaved African Americans' lives, these occupants altered the structures' interiors and yards to their own ends, finding ways to foster families and their own society. Drawing upon surviving buildings, period documents, and archaeological evidence, Sanford addressed types of slave housing, slave household composition, and ongoing interpretive efforts to increase public awareness of American slavery.

### ***Coming up in 2020***

We have lots of exciting programming coming in 2020. Please join us at the following events:

March 2020 Tom Foster's "Founding Fathers, Sexuality, and Public Memory"

May 2020 Ivy Hill Cemetery Tour AHS Members Only Event

Mark Livingston's "Jewish Immigration to Alexandria"

June 2020 Mark A. Tibbert's "A Short History of Shuter's Hill and the Construction of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial"

### **Society Membership Renewal**

Now is the time to renew your membership in the Alexandria Historical Society. We are dependent on your generous support and through your membership, donations, and endowment, AHS seeks to engage our members and the community at-large in our history. Go to the website to renew [alexandriahistorical.org](http://alexandriahistorical.org).

### **Volunteer for National History Day!**

George Washington Middle School is looking for historians, educators, and community members to judge student projects at this year's middle school level National History Day contests. [National History Day](#) is a competition for high school and middle school students in which students conduct extensive research on topics related to a theme. This year's theme is "Breaking Barriers in History."

The George Washington Middle School Competition will be held on Thursday, February 6, 2019, with the snow make-up day on Friday, February 7, 2019. Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade present their findings in a variety of presentation formats. Winners of school-based competitions will move on to the District 5 Regional National History Day Competition.

If you are interested in judging either competition, please complete [this](#) Google form.

## **End of Year Giving**

Don't forget to include the Alexandria Historical Society in your end of year giving! Your donations help us bring great programming to investigate and illuminate the history of Alexandria.

Donations are tax deductible and can be mailed to 201 South Washington Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3625. Checks should be made out to Alexandria Historical Society.

**Happy holidays!**

## **2018 – 2019 Officers and Directors**

### **Officers**

President – Krystyn Moon  
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Treasurer – Severiano Ortiz  
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## **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](http://www.alexandriahistorical.org)