



## WHAT'S NEW IN HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

February is Black History Month and although the Office of Historic Alexandria museums and local history partners celebrate African American heritage all year long, over the next four weeks a wide variety of programs, special lectures, and tours, will be offered to highlight the many contributions of African American people and culture to Alexandria's heritage. On each Saturday, from February 11 through February 25, the Alexandria Black History Museum, will host new special event activities including: a lecture on African American owned beaches in the Coastal South; the role of African Americans in sugar production and candy-making; a design workshop on African-American Diversity, Style and Identity, focusing on clothing and body adornment; a concert by the renowned Washington Revels vocal group featuring inspirational songs of struggle and perseverance, focused on the American Civil War. The Lee Fendall House will also offer special tours on the African American Experience at that historic site (see listing on February 4 below). These are just some of the many listings that THIS WEEK will be highlighting in the weeks ahead, so stay tuned!



## EVENTS

### **Thursday, February 2 – Birthnight Ball Dance Class**

*Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street*

In preparation for the Birthnight Ball on February 18, learn 18th-century English country dancing from expert dance instructors. Those not familiar with this style of dancing should complete at least one full class to become accustomed to the figures and language for the ball. [Tickets](#) are now available at \$12 per class or \$30 for the series (February 2,9,16). Reservations are recommended. For more information, please call 703.746.4242.

**Friday, February 3 – Heflebower’s Cobblers & Cocktails**

*Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street*

It is 1862, and the sale of alcohol has been prohibited by the Union Army due to the nightly mayhem in Civil War Alexandria. Local tavernkeeper Samuel Heflebower is running a bar where cocktails are “swallowed in the darkness.” Come taste 19th-century cocktails, learn a bit of history, and try to evade the Provost Marshall! [Tickets](#) are priced at \$50 per person (includes two drink tickets and period-inspired appetizers). Additional beverages available for purchase. Reservations are recommended. For more information, please call 703.746.4242.

**Saturday, February 4 – Special Tour: *This Tide of Wounded: The Lee-Fendall House as Civil War Hospital***

*Lee-Fendall House and Gardens, 614 Oronoco Street*

This special tour of the museum and grounds highlights the Lee-Fendall House’s role as a hospital during the Civil War. Highlights include themes addressed in the PBS series “Mercy Street,” including nursing, soldiers, civilians, medical practices, and free people of color. The tour lasts approximately 90 minutes. Tickets are \$8 in advance through the museum’s [Online Store](#), or \$10 the day of the program. Tour space is limited, so the purchase of tickets in advance is highly recommended. 10 a.m. For more information, please visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703.548.1789.



**Saturday, February 4 – Special Tour: *From Slavery to Freedom, The African-American Experience at Lee-Fendall House***

*Lee-Fendall House and Gardens, 614 Oronoco Street*

This special tour interprets the Lee-Fendall House from the perspective of its enslaved inhabitants, exploring the unique experiences of slavery in the city. Hear the true stories of “contrabands,” as seen in the PBS drama “Mercy Street.” The tour will include special access to areas which are not regularly open to the public. Admission to the program is \$8 in advance through the museum’s [Online Store](#), and \$10 the day of the program. 2 p.m. Tour space is limited. Tour length is 1.5 – 2 hours. For more information, please visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703.548.1789.

**Saturday, February 4 – Celebrate John Carlyle’s Birthday**

*Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 North Fairfax Street*

Step back in time to the 1770s at one of Alexandria’s finest and oldest houses! Join us as we wish a very happy birthday to Alexandria town founder, Col. John Carlyle. Celebrate with him, his family, and friends as well as members of the 1st Virginia Living History Regiment. Join us for a special birthday treat! Admission is free, but donations are welcome. 12 noon to 4 p.m. For further information, please visit [www.carlylehouse.org](http://www.carlylehouse.org) or call 703.549.2997.

**Sunday, February 5 – Winter Warmer Ladies Tea**

*Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street*

Enjoy the warmth and hospitality of the tavern this winter! Choose from a variety of 18th-century desserts while you sip John Gadsby's special blend of tea or take a cup of American Heritage Chocolate. Historic guest Martha Washington will catch you up on the latest Alexandria news during the tea. [Tickets](#) are priced at \$35 per person. Seatings at 3 and 3:15 p.m., arrive early for the 2:15 or 2:45 p.m. FREE tour before your tea. For more information, please call 703.746.4242.

**Monday, February 6 – Gary Stephans' Art of Ballroom Dance**

*The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street*

Fun classes to learn to dance or improve your dancing skills: fox trot, waltz, tango, swing, salsa, merengue, rumba, cha-cha, and samba. All level of dancers are welcome, with or without a partner. Discover little techniques that most people never learn about and become a relaxed and proficient social dancer in these small, personalized dance lessons! Class fee is \$15 per session, Basic or Advanced Techniques, attend both sessions for best results. To register for either or both sessions, [click here](#). Basic Techniques class is 7 to 7:45 p.m. Advanced Techniques is 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. Free practice session from 8:30 to 9 p.m. For more information, please visit [garystephans@me.com](mailto:garystephans@me.com) or call 703.505.5998.



**Now on Exhibit through February 19 – Surreal**

*The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street*

Marisa White and Julie Belton's photographs create magically surreal tableaux. Peter Stern's aerial photographs capture the graphic beauty of the landscape from above. Free! 4 p.m. Open Thursday through Sunday, 12 Noon to 4 p.m. For more information, please visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703.548.0035.

**Now on Exhibit – Shield of Earth: Defending the Heart of the Union**

*Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road*

This new exhibition that features objects, photographs and documents from the Fort Ward Museum collection related to the Defenses of Washington. The exhibition covers both the formidable task of building the defense system, which made the Federal capital one of the most protected cities in the world, and some of the men who were assigned to duty in the Washington area. Highlights of the exhibition include military passes issued by Provost Marshal's Office, construction tools, and original photographs of some of Washington's defenders, including a profile of Francis E. Brainerd, a soldier in the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery who was stationed at Fort O'Rourke, not far from the present-day site of the Huntington Metro Station. Items related to how the forts protected Washington's vital transportation resources are also featured, such as a ship's lantern, rail section from the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and colored lithograph of Soldier's Rest in Alexandria. Several original drawings of forts by soldiers stationed at those sites are on view, and a construction report dated February 1865 details work projects such as

completion of new officers' quarters at Fort Ward. Other unique items featured are a sketch showing where President Lincoln came under fire during the Battle of Fort Stevens, a field desk belonging to an officer in the 107th New York Infantry, and an 1862 map of the Defenses of Washington published by the engineer E.G. Arnold. The exhibition will continue through 2017. Free! Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, please call 703.746.4848 or visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org).

**Now on Exhibit – *Hotel vs. Hospital***

*Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street*

Learn the story of the fine hotel industry in Alexandria and how it quickly changed after the Civil War began. The City Hotel (today part of Gadsby's Tavern Museum at 134 North Royal Street) was the only major hotel in Alexandria to remain open during the entirety of the war. The two other fine hotels in town, Mansion House (transformed into a massive Civil War hospital) and Marshall House (site of the first Northern and Southern deaths due to violence in the Civil War), had closed. Guests will discover how tavern keeper Samuel Heflebower was able to remain in business as he catered to the new customers arriving in Alexandria.

For more information, please call 703.746.4242.

**Now on Exhibit – *Who These Wounded Are: The Extraordinary Stories of the Mansion House Hospital***

*Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 North Fairfax Street*

Come see the site that inspired *Mercy Street*, the new PBS' series inspired by real events that took place at Carlyle House. The six-episode program revolves around the doctors, nurses, and patients of Mansion House Hospital, a former luxury hotel owned by James Green, a prominent Alexandria businessman who resided in Carlyle House.

James Green purchased Carlyle House and the adjacent Bank of Alexandria in 1848. While living in Carlyle House with his family, he converted the Bank Building into the successful Mansion House Hotel. The hotel thrived, and Green expanded it in the 1850s. In November of 1861, the Union Army took over both the hotel and the mansion, turning the hotel into a hospital and the house into doctor and officer housing. The new exhibit recreates the days of Union occupation and tells the true stories of those who lived and worked here during the war. This is where *Mercy Street* really happened. Tuesday through Saturday 10 am to 4 p.m.; Sunday, 12 to 4 p.m. For further information please visit [www.carlylehouse.org](http://www.carlylehouse.org) or call 703.549.2997.

**Now on Exhibit – *The Lyceum: 175 Years of Local History***

*The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington Street*

This new exhibition highlights the history of The Lyceum, as well as its role today as a place for exploring Alexandria's past. On view in the museum's Coldsmith Gallery, the historical objects and images featured represent The Lyceum, the community at work, and commemorations and celebrations. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are invited to



“be the curator” and think about why the various artifacts are in museum’s collection, and about how these tangible representatives of the past help tell the story of Alexandria’s history.

Museum visitors can also explore artifacts relating to commemorating or celebrating something important in someone’s life, or that serve as a memento representing an organization, business, or event. For example, five World War II service medals from a local soldier are on view, as well as a china pitcher promoting William Henry Harrison’s campaign for the presidency, and a colorful hand-worked quilt commemorating the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976. *The Lyceum: 175 Years of Local History* includes a variety of items providing a glimpse into different types of work in Alexandria since the community was founded in the 18th century. Objects range from circa 1796 wares marked by Alexandria silversmith Adam Lynn, a circa 1880 dresser manufactured by James F. Muir and Brothers, to a collage of original photographs – circa 1970 -- documenting the Alexandria, Barcroft & Washington Rapid Transit Company.

Open Monday through Saturday 10 am to 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. For more information call 703.746.4994, or visit [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org).

**Now on Exhibit – *Before the Spirits are Swept Away: African American Historic Site Paintings***  
*Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street*

This exhibition, featuring 20 of Sherry Sanabria’s African American historic site paintings, is made possible by the Sanabria family, who generously donated 23 of her paintings to the Alexandria Black History Museum. Sherry, who had a studio at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, passed away in 2014. Her family has made it their mission to find homes for her paintings where they will be appreciated and preserved. This incredible donation permits museum staff to use the paintings to explore slavery, interpretation, and preservation of African American sites in Virginia. These paintings are part of Sanabria’s “Sites of Conscience” series, which has as its focus African American heritage, prisons, concentration camps, and mental hospitals. The Sites of Conscience series takes viewers to places of horror, places of pain and suffering, places we want to forget, but never should.

Robert Sanabria, Sherry’s husband, feels this series “... *demonstrates the widespread practice of bondage in the American South and the determination of the enslaved to survive and maintain their connection with their creator. It is especially fortuitous to have these works together where they will be valued and available for the appreciation of generations to come...*”

Tuesday to Saturday: 10 am to 4 p.m., Sunday and Monday: Closed. Free, but donations are appreciated. For more information, please call 703.746.4356.

**Now on Exhibit – *Their Fates Intertwined: The Lees of Alexandria in the War of 1812***

Lee-Fendall House and Gardens, 614 Oronoco Street

A new exhibit on the experiences of the Lee family in Alexandria during the War of 1812 examines the contributions of Alexandria’s citizens during the conflict that led to the writing of our national anthem through the lives of this iconic Virginia family. For more



information, please visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703.548.1789.

### THIS WEEK IN HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

On February 5, 1797, The Alexandria Gazette, first established in 1784, began publication on a daily basis. The paper is considered the oldest daily newspaper in the United States. Street. With this new trend starting to accelerate, officials determined it was now time to regulate signage.

### ON SALE NOW

The Office of Historic Alexandria is pleased to announce the recent publication of a beautiful, full color catalog associated with the new exhibit, *Before the Spirits are Swept Away: African American Historic Site Paintings*, now on view at the Alexandria Black History Museum (see entry below). The exhibition is made possible through a generous donation from the family of the late artist Sherry Z. Sanabria. The paintings included in the catalog are all African American sites relating to slavery, worship and education. The catalog, edited by Museum Director Audrey P. Davis, is now available for \$24.95 at all Historic Alexandria museum stores, or may be purchased online by clicking [here](#).

**BEFORE THE SPIRITS ARE SWEEP AWAY:**  
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITE PAINTINGS  
by Sherry Z. Sanabria  
Edited by Audrey P. Davis

