



# Arlington Historical Society

Fall 2007  
Newsletter  
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## In This Issue

Update on the Museum

Progress on Hume  
Grounds

New at the Museum  
Book Store

Digging Up History

News from the Board

Who is Pauline Smith  
Duncan?

Upcoming Events

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Arlington Historical  
Society  
P.O. Box 100402  
Arlington, VA 22210  
703 892-4204

## President's Column

*George W. Dodge, President*

The Arlington Historical Society is making great strides in improving our museum. We have recently hired Mark Benbow as curator. We are fortunate to have someone of his caliber as curator. Mark has already improved our museum exhibits. If you have not been to the museum lately then you should see the changes that have occurred. I encourage our membership to work with Mark as he would like to implement new exhibits and programs. However, to further upgrade our museum we need a commitment from our membership to help out on occasion. If you are part of the society then you should be willing to serve our organization in some capacity. It could be bringing refreshments to an event, researching a topic of local interest, helping with a new exhibit or making a donation - as many of you have done. It sounds commonplace but more persons need to be involved in order for us to more effectively fulfill our mission. This summer our committee base has increased. However, more members are needed. I encourage you to contact an officer or committee chair in your area of interest. Their email addresses and telephone numbers are in this newsletter and should always be listed in our publications. By the same token, our officers should reach out to our members and steer members to areas of our organization that are of interest. Talk to our members and find out what their concerns are regarding our society. If we don't ask the questions, we'll never have the answers.

## Welcome to Our New Curator

The Board is happy to welcome Mark Benbow as the new Curator of the Historical Society Museum. Mark, a long time Society volunteer, holds a BA in History from Hanover College, a Masters in History from Wright State University and a Ph.D. in American History from Ohio University. Mark has served as the Resident Historian at the Woodrow Wilson House in Washington, DC. In addition he has worked for the Central Intelligence Agency and as an instructor at the University of Virginia and Ohio University. He is currently an adjunct professor at Marymount University. Drop by the Museum and welcome Mark and share your ideas about our Museum.

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## Update on the AHS Museum Building, Hume School c. 1891

*Jennifer Sale*

As the new Chair of the Building Committee, I'm excited to lead the stewardship effort for the Arlington Historical Museum building, formerly the Hume School. During my historic preservation graduate studies at Goucher College, I've had the pleasure of working with several alumnae and other folks active in Arlington County preservation efforts. Joining me on the Building Committee are fellow board members Tom Dickinson, also on the board of the Arlington Heritage Alliance, Linda Gouaze, and new volunteer Meighan Foster. We are also fortunate to have board member Gerry Laporte, past Society president, on the Arlington County Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board. Chick Walters, Chair of the Hume School Grounds Committee, helps keep the surrounding landscape looking good through alliances with local civic groups.

The Hume School, constructed 1891-93, is a two-story brick Richardsonian Romanesque-style building. It was designed by noted Progressive Era architect, B. Stanley Simmons, better known for the stately Wyoming apartment building and other works in Washington, D.C. As the oldest remaining school building in Arlington County, the Hume School is a feather in the cap of the Arlington Historical Society and a tangible symbol of the civic pride, then and now, that Arlington County is known for. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a designated Arlington County historic district.

Like our homes, the Hume School requires ongoing maintenance, and suffers from the occasional unexpected - and expensive - "incident." In late June, some rascally raccoons broke into the upper floor (this also occurred back in 1996) and created quite a

mess, along with some unwanted presents.

Fortunately, no artifacts were affected. I am currently in the process of getting a second estimate for clean-up and repairs. Since this incident, the upper floor has been closed to the public. In the upcoming fiscal year, we plan to conduct a thorough conditional assessment of the building and apply for a state historic preservation grant to partially cover the costs of a new paint job, repair to the wrought iron entry gate and brick archway, and other necessary repairs. Periodic updates on this project will be forthcoming.

## Progress on Hume School Grounds

*Chick Walter*

The Friends of Hume School effort to restore the grounds around the Museum has grown from the original Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) organizers to include the Rotary Club, the local Mormon single adults group, and the local Garden Club. Enough clearing was accomplished last fall that the County contributed seven nice-sized trees for the back hill. ARCA neighbors along Ridge Road have worked to keep them alive through the drought with water bags and hoses from ARCA – two that died will be replaced by County Parks staff. A County Parks improvement grant was obtained through the effort of ARCA neighbor Bonnie Flynn to restore the asphalt path leading from the stairs behind Hume down to S. Lynn Street. Another ARCA resident, Nancy Kent, obtained a second grant for shrubs and trees behind the school, which should be installed this fall. Nancy and another neighbor, Deb Loftis of the Garden Club developed a planting plan for planting both behind and in front of the school, with County Parks assistance. The plan was presented to the Society Board and approved in August. At this writing the Fall Volunteer Day is scheduled for Saturday morning Sep. 22 and

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should leave the sloped area back of Hume ready for additional mulching, seeding and planting.

Another ARCA initiative on pedestrian safety has resulted in reduction of the speed limit along Ridge Road to 25 mph, and a commitment from the County to install a pedestrian crossing at Hume School. The Hume stairs are the only pedestrian route to the lower neighborhood between S. 20<sup>th</sup> Street and the northernmost end of South Ridge Road.

### New at the Museum Book Store Eleanor Pourron, Museum Sales Manager

Two new books lead off the new items for sale at the Arlington Historical Museum Book Store but all the items deal with history very local to Arlington.

*The Pentagon, a History* was written by Steve Vogel and offers an entertaining look at the fascinating history of the Pentagon. Who could imagine that the history of a five-story office building with 17.5 miles of corridors covering 29 acres, designed in the shape of a pentagon, and built in Arlington, Virginia would be so interesting? Steve Vogel's book is anything but dry history. Anything and everything you ever wanted to know about how the Pentagon was built is covered including the quick rebuilding of it after 9/11.

*The Pentagon, a History* by Steve Vogel. Random, 2007. Includes maps, illustrations and index. 626 pages. Price: \$32.95

The discovery of letters written by one of the South's famous sons, Robert E. Lee, prompted Elizabeth Brown Pryor to write: *Reading the Man, a Portrait of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters*. Working with these previously unknown and unpublished letters and documents, the author allows Lee's writings to

present a new picture of the highly revered southern general. Almost like a voice speaking from the past during a difficult time in our nation's history.

*Reading the Man* by Elizabeth Brown Pryor. Viking, 2007. Includes illustrations and index. 658 pages. Price: \$29.95

Aside from books there are other items of interest for sale at the book store. Worth a look are new note cards created by Dr. Richard D. Miller of Arlington. Dr. Miller works in pen and ink media and is fascinated by buildings: old historic buildings, churches, etc. The note cards for sale at the Museum include ten historic buildings and houses in Arlington. Included are: Arlington Historical Museum at Hume School, Ball-Sellers House, Glebe House, Alcova House and six other historic properties. Dr. Miller has a deft touch with his pen and the drawings are an artistic and charming representation of another aspect of Arlington's history.

Boxed set of 10 cards. Price: \$14.50

Remember the Museum Book Store when thinking about gifts for the holidays or other special occasions. Of note is the Bicentennial Arlington coverlet that is now back in stock. Members of the Arlington Historical Society receive a 10% discount on most items for sale at the Arlington Museum Book Store.

Please send items for future newsletters  
to [conchitamitchell@aol.com](mailto:conchitamitchell@aol.com) by

12/11/07 for publication on 1/1/08  
3/11/08 for publication on 4/1/08  
6/10/08 for publication on 7/1/08

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## Digging Up Local Or Family History (Without A Shovel)

*Sara Collins*

Did you know that you can uncover some powerful gems in your research on a local family, place or event without leaving your home? At the Arlington County Library website, click on "CATALOG" (called ACORN), select "Databases" at the top and a list of those databases appears. If you choose HeritageQuest and register your library card number and last name, you can search through census records 1790 - 1930 from all over the country, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Applications, data in the Freedman's Bank (1865-1874), PERSI, and the US Serial Set, as well as others. The library also has the Historical Washington Post Index, but that has to be used within the library.

Another helpful site is the Historical Newspaper Index in the Fairfax County Library website. It is available to all of us whether or not we are card carrying members of that library system. The data base that this indexes includes some of the issues of the Alexandria Gazette, the Arlington County Record (1932-33), the Rambler column of the Washington Evening Star, and a number of newspapers published in Fairfax County, some with articles about Alexandria (Arlington) County. You would need to visit the Virginia Room in Fairfax Regional Library to read the articles on microfilm, but being able to search ahead of your visit saves much time. This works best with a simple surname entry. One can search through the entries for specific names or places. After a search there, you can continue with a search in "County site", which brings up additional historical information from official files.

Another source for materials for those doing research on Arlington's built environment, especially public works projects, is the University of Maryland Library's

Archives. If you enter "Phi Mu Thesis at University of Maryland" in your search engine, you will find a listing of research projects that engineering students prepared as part of initiation into this honorary fraternity during the years 1923 - 1945. The range of subject matter covers the whole metropolitan area, but there are some Arlington topics, such as Memorial Bridge, History of the Construction of Fort Ethan Allen Virginia, a history and development of street lighting systems in the suburbs of Washington, History of the Development of the Water Supply of Arlington County, Virginia, etc. It might be worth a look if you are researching mills, highways, mines, bridges, the Washington Suburban Gas Company and other related engineering topics to see what research might have been done at an earlier time. (There is even a study of women drivers!).

There are many other such sources available to us and I hope others may let us know about them through our newsletter.

### Upcoming Local Genealogy Events

Tuesday, October 9, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. - "Military Records" An easily-overlooked goldmine of information to further your search for family! Find pension information, service records, unit records, post returns, correspondence files, honors and award files, enlistments and many other military records from 1776 through World War II. There will be three two-hour sessions. Cost is \$69 and the location of the course is Marshall High School. Contact Fairfax County Adult Education at 703-658-1201 or register on line at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses).

Wednesday, October 10, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. - "Court Records Weave Your Family Roots Together" Courthouses hold land, estate, chancery cases, and other valuable records. Discover how to find these records and use them to help weave your family history together in the absence of birth, marriage, and death records. There will be three two-hour sessions. Cost is \$65 and the location of the course is Edison High School.

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Contact Fairfax County Adult Education at 703-658-1201 or register on line at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses).

Saturday, October 13, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. - The monthly meeting of the Roots Users Group of Arlington will have a session on "Inputting Census Data" by Jon Reed. There will be a 10:30 a.m. session presentation on "Using Reference Fields, Watermarks, Printing to PDF Files, and Other Miscellaneous Items" by John Clark. RUG meetings are held at George C Marshall High School at 7731 Leesburg Pike in Falls Church, VA. Check the RUG's web site, [www.rootsusers.org](http://www.rootsusers.org) for a map and written directions.

Tuesday, October 16, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. - The Mount Vernon Genealogical Society will meet in room 112 of the Hollin Hall Senior Center in Alexandria, Virginia. The meeting will feature a presentation entitled "The History of the National Archives Library Information Center and American State Papers." The program will be presented by Jeffrey Hartley. Additional information about the meeting and MVGS can be found at <http://www.MVGenealogy.org/>.

Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. - "Solving Research Mysteries" Maximize your research options. Use and evaluate existing data more effectively. Broaden your search tools and sources to solve name, place, relationship "mysteries". There will be four two-hour sessions. Cost is \$85 and the location of the course is Fairfax High School. Contact Fairfax County Adult Education at 703-658-1201 or register on line at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses).

Thursday, October 25, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. - The Fairfax Genealogical Society will meet at the Lecture Hall of Kilmer Middle School, Vienna, Virginia. The title of the talk will be "Leaping to Erroneous Conclusions: What Did the Record REALLY Say?" The speaker will be Christine Rose. We often look at a document and quickly come to a conclusion as to what it means. But...does it really tell us that? Additional details can be found at <http://www.fxgs.org/>.

Saturday, October 27, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. - The Fairfax Genealogical Society will present its 4th Annual Genealogy Fair. Christine Rose will speak on "Find the Clues in What You Have." The cost of the Fair is \$20 (Walk-ins will not receive a lunch.) The Fair will be at the Dunn Loring VFD, 2148 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, VA. Additional details can be found at <http://www.fgs.org>.

Monday, November 5, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. - "Your Irish Ancestors" A difficult genealogy to research, you can nevertheless be successful with a good search strategy and an understanding of Irish history. The instructor will show you where to look for records in America and Ireland to further your search most effectively. There will be three two-hour sessions. The cost is \$65 and the location of the course is Fairfax High School. To enroll contact Fairfax County Adult Education at 703-658-1201 or register on line at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses).

Tuesday, November 6, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. - "Genealogical Gems" Having trouble locating that illusive ancestor? Learn how to use these records in your research: Passport applications, Road Orders, WWI Selective Service Cards, Early Tax Records, Social Security Death Index, Mortality Census, and much more. There will be two two-hour sessions. Cost is \$45 and the location of the course is Edison High School. Contact Fairfax County Adult Education at 703-658-1201 or register on line at [www.fcps.edu/aceclasses](http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses).

Saturday, November 10, 2007 The monthly meeting of the Roots Users Group of Arlington, Virginia will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a Citation workshop by Susan Molye. Handouts from presentations at the RUG meetings are available on RUG's web site. RUG meetings are held at George C Marshall High School at 7731 Leesburg Pike in Falls Church, VA. Check the RUG's web site, [www.rootsusers.org](http://www.rootsusers.org) for a map and written directions.

Thursday, November 15, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. - The Fairfax Genealogical Society will meet at the Lecture Hall of Kilmer Middle School, Vienna, Virginia. The title of the talk will be "It's Surprising What's Hidden....." The speaker will be Phyllis Legare. Find out how to locate State, Regional and County Historical Societies and the variety of information available – much of it on-line. Additional details can be found at <http://www.fxgs.org/>.

Tuesday, November 20, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. - The Mount Vernon Genealogical Society will meet in room 112 of the Hollin Hall Senior Center in Alexandria, Virginia. The meeting will feature a presentation entitled "Buried Births: Finding Birth Information in Federal Records." The program will be presented by Susannah Brooks. Additional information about the meeting and MVGS can be found at <http://www.MVGenealogy.org/>.

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**News from the Board**  
*Linda Gouaze, Recording Secretary*

In the three months since taking office in late May, the Arlington Historical Society Board of Directors has approved new chairs for some committees, committed to participation in new events, and voted to hire a new part-time Curator for the Museum.

Board members Conchita Mitchell and Jennifer Sale will both take on significant new responsibilities in addition to their Board duties: Conchita is the new Newsletter Editor (this is her first issue) and Jennifer is now Chair of the Museum Building Committee, a natural fit with her nearly-completed Historic Preservation graduate studies. And the volunteerism is not limited to Board members: the current Chair of the Museum Docents Committee, Michelle Lowe, will now also head the Program Committee.

Not content with chairing existing committees, the Board is also looking into new activities for AHS: Board member Tom Dempsey is organizing the Society's participation in Pioneer Day on 13 October at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, a new event for AHS, and other Board members will be working on the AHS event to be held at Arlington House 26 October.

The biggest recent action of the Board is the vote to hire a new part-time Curator for the AHS Museum. Dr. Mark Benbow has already improved the existing museum exhibits and has plans for new ones—more is reported on this exciting AHS development elsewhere in this issue.

The AHS Board of Directors meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at the Museum, 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road. Members are always welcome.

**Can you help?**  
**Pauline Smith Duncan, who is she?**  
*Dawn McCoy and Sara Collins*

Do you have any information on Pauline A. Haislip Smith Duncan? She was appointed deputy sheriff in Arlington by Sheriff Fields in 1924 and she served until 1944. She was evidently the first female deputy sheriff in Virginia, and the Library of Virginia has requested a written biography of her for inclusion in the "Dictionary of Virginia Biography".

Pauline was married to Charles F. Smith until the late 1930s and after that was married to Edward G. Duncan, an Arlington policeman. The Library of Virginia has furnished some substantial information and research has produced more. The "Community News", on microfilm in the Virginia Room and published 1934 -1953 about the Aurora Hills, Arlington Ridge, Oakcrest and Virginia Highlands neighborhood, has much about the civic activities of the very active Pauline. People in the neighborhood knew her as "Aunt Polly". The Fairfax Library's Virginia Room has provided information on the Haislip family, and the Community Archives collections at Arlington library's Virginia Room has collections with much information about Mrs. Pauline Smith, later Mrs. Pauline Duncan, but some gaps in the collection of information exist. If anyone remembers Pauline or has information about her, please contact Sara Collins at 703-521-0522 or [sarajcollins@gmail.com](mailto:sarajcollins@gmail.com).

**Visit the Society at**  
<http://www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/>  
for updates and items of interest.  
Be sure to renew your membership.  
A form is available on the website if  
you've misplaced the form  
that was mailed last month.

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## Mark Your Calendar

### Society Events

**October 13** “Make Your Own Scarecrow” at the Ball-Sellers House. 1:00-3:30. Children and young at heart are welcome. Bring long pants (jeans), long-sleeve shirt, & cap, tie, scarf, etc. to build your scarecrow.

**October 18** - Sponsored by the Arlington Historical Society and the Virginia Room, the October 18 Arlington Reunion will focus on Fort Myer. Kim Holien, who is the historian at Fort Myer and Fort McNair, will serve as moderator. The event will take place from 10 am to noon in the Auditorium of Central Library. This particular “Reunion” will capture local remembrances of events involving the base including baseball games with local teams, horse shows and cavalry units that rode through neighborhoods.

**October 26** - At press time, plans for an evening celebration at Arlington House were still being developed. Pencil in this date, but look for details later.

**November 8** - the November general membership meeting of the Society will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Central Library auditorium. The speaker will be Elizabeth Pryor, the author of *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters*.

### Other Dates of Interest

**October 11 - 14** - “They Fought for the Right to Be Free” Military and Civilians Fighting for Freedom Civil War Symposium in Washington, D.C. This event is sponsored by The Military Road School Preservation

Trust, The African American Civil War Museum, Three Dimensional Publishing and the Cultural Heritage Museum. For more information visit [www.mrspt.org](http://www.mrspt.org)

**October 13** The Pioneer Day Festival will be held at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, located at 3608 Military Rd. in Arlington from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. It is an outdoor event, which is cancelled in the event of inclement weather. There is no rain date. The festival is designed to be fun and educational, with lots of hands-on activities. The park charges a \$5 per person fee to help defray the cost of the festival. Activities planned for this year include: a visit inside the log house located on the grounds of the nature center to discuss home life in the 1800s; watching members of the Blacksmith’s Guild of the Potomac at work in the Gulf Branch forge; candle dipping; life of the Civil War soldier in the Defenses of Washington; butter churning; old fashioned games; women’s period clothing from the 1800s; money in the 1800s; schools in the 1800s; corn husk doll making; old-time bee keeping; quilting activity by Quilters Unlimited of Arlington and performances by the Old Dominion Cloggers and Andrew Acosta and the New Old Time String Band.

**November 19** at 7:30 p.m. in the Central Library auditorium the Virginia Room is sponsoring a preview of WETA’s upcoming documentary “Homefront: World War II in Washington.” WETA TV 26 is creating this hour-long film that will premiere in December. The production takes a nostalgic look at life in Greater Washington during the war, presenting interviews with local residents, insights from historians and intriguing local stories - including a segment on the secret interrogation of captured Third Reich scientists, submariners and soldiers at Fort Hunt in Alexandria.

## Arlington Historical Society Board of Directors



### Arlington Historical Museum

1805 S. Arlington Ridge Road  
Open Saturdays & Sundays  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Free  
Come visit our permanent exhibits on  
the 200+ year history of the county.



### Ball Sellers House

5620 South Third Street  
Open Saturdays, 1-4 p.m., April  
through October with special events  
scheduled during this time. There is no  
admission fee, but a donation is  
appreciated. You may also arrange a  
visit by calling 703-379-2123.

Arlington Historical Society  
PO Box 100402  
Arlington, VA 22210

### President, George W. Dodge

703-528-6422  
gdodge@georgedodgelaw.com

### Vice President, Tom Dempsey

703-807-5191  
tedempsey@yahoo.com

### Recording Secretary, Linda Gouaze

703-469-1803  
gouazely@verizon.net

### Corresponding Secretary, Joi Ionni

703-938-0433  
jionni@arlingtonva.us

### Treasurer, Kevin R. Appel

703-248-9450  
kraesq@comcast.net

### Immediate Past President

#### Gerald J. Laporte

703-527-6783  
g.laporte@verizon.net

### Directors

#### Tom Dickinson

703-841-4992  
annt.tomd@verizon.net

#### Richard Herbst

703-892-5290  
herbstgdad@aol.com

#### Conchita Mitchell

703-892-4780  
conchitamitchell@aol.com

#### Jennifer Sale

703-635-7899  
jen@slipt.com

#### Joan White

703-492-6065  
pastnpresent@aol.com

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