

# The ALEXANDRIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2014

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**DATE:** Wednesday, October 22, 2014  
**PLACE:** The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.  
**TIME:** 7:30 PM  
**SPEAKERS:** Catherine Miliaras and Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planners for the City of Alexandria

## FREE LECTURE on the Parker-Gray Historic District and Evolution of a Neighborhood

Thirty years ago, the area known as Parker-Gray, in the northwest quadrant of Old Town Alexandria, was designated as a local historic district. Bordered on the east by North Columbus Street, this forty-block area extends north to south from First Street to Cameron Street, west to North Patrick Street at its northern border and to Buchanan Street at its southern border.



Catherine Miliaras and Stephanie Sample, both Historic Preservation Planners for the City of Alexandria, will share their expertise on the Parker-Gray Historic District, originally called “Uptown.” Their presentation, **“Alexandria’s Parker-Gray District: Then and Now,”** will focus on how this area—and historic preservation in Alexandria—has evolved over the past thirty years. Cities across the country have faced great challenges in negotiating a balance between revitalization, neighborhood conservation and gentrification, and Alexandria’s Parker-Gray District highlights many of the challenges faced by historic preservation planners as well as opportunities.

Parker-Gray was lightly settled until the period following the Civil War. By the early twentieth century, it had become an established African-American neighborhood in Alexandria with a strong commercial core centered on Queen and North Henry Streets. The name Parker-Gray derives from the names of the principals of two African-American schools in Old Town: John Parker, principal of the Snowden School for Boys, and Sarah Gray, principal of the Hallowell School for Girls. By the 1970s and 1980s, concurrent with the planning and arrival of the Metro system, some members of the community recognized that the historic resources found in this area were in need of protection, while other residents



sought to conserve and stabilize the neighborhood by maintaining affordable housing. Ms. Miliaras and Ms. Sample will examine the way in which the controversy over these somewhat competing philosophies resulted in the ultimate establishment of the Park-Gray Historic District.



Catherine Miliaras is an architectural historian and urban planner who has worked for the City of Alexandria for the past six years. Most recently, she has researched and written about the creation of Parker-Gray, Alexandria's lesser-known historic district in comparison to the Old and Historic District to the east. She has examined the controversy surrounding the establishment of the district as well as considered how local historic designation can be used as a broader planning tool for communities.

Stephanie Sample has worked in both historic preservation and urban planning, and is a former member of the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review. She has worked on a number of special projects: managing the Modern & Sustainable Materials work group which resulted in new window, roofing and minor architectural elements policies for both of Alexandria's historic districts as well as staffing the Parker-Gray Ad Hoc Design Guidelines work group, which streamlined and re-wrote the Parker-Gray District standards in 2012 in response to the concerns of property owners residing in the district.



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*No reservations are needed but please arrive early as seating is limited.*

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **October 25: John Carlyle 1780 Funeral, Vault Visit and Historical Haunt Tour.**

During the American Revolution, Death visited Carlyle House in the fall of 1780 and claimed the life of town founder John Carlyle. On Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 9:00 PM, be a part of this historic funeral and learn about mourning practices in Revolutionary War America. Visit the candlelit Carlyle House to view the coffin and pay respects to surviving family members. Then, follow your guide into the rarely seen underground vaults to learn more about spirits and legends of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Return to Carlyle House at 9:00 PM to join a funeral procession to the Old Presbyterian Meeting House where a short 18<sup>th</sup>-century benediction and blessing will be held followed by a mock interment at John Carlyle's lantern-lit grave in the cemetery. Please call Alexandria's Footsteps to the Past at 703.683.3451 for information and fees. Reservations are recommended. Located at 121 N. Fairfax Street in Old Town Alexandria, visit our website for more information: [www.novaparks.com](http://www.novaparks.com).

### **October 30-31: Poe in Alexandria.**

The Lyceum will host Actor David Keltz portraying one of Edgar Allen Poe's 19<sup>th</sup>-century speaking engagements, including literary criticism, short stories, poetry, and musings. The event will take place from 8:00 to 9:15 PM at 201 S. Washington Street. Please call 703.746.4994 for more information and reserve by phone or online at The Lyceum's Gift Shop (<https://shop.alexandriava.gov/Events.aspx>). Seating capacity is 120.

### **November 8: [Walking Tour of Lee Family Homes.](#)**

The Lee-Fendall House will offer a guided walking tour of Lee family homes in Historic Old Town on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. The tour will begin at 2:00 PM at the Lee-Fendall House at 614 Oronoco Street. Members of the Lee family lived in almost two dozen homes over the years, including a cluster of buildings at the intersection of Washington and Oronoco streets – an area once known as “Lee Corner.” Although family members moved into and out of the city over the years, Alexandria remained their home town and lifelong friendships were forged with neighbors and business associates in the city. The tour will last 90 minutes, and will include stops outside the boyhood homes of Robert E. Lee, the Lee-Fendall House, the home of Charles Lee, and more. Tour space is limited, so please purchase tickets in advance online through our Museum Shop ([www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org)).

### **November 11: [The Great War: African American Men and Women during World War One.](#)**

The Alexandria Black History Museum and the Alexandria Chapter of the NAACP will present their 2014 Veterans Day Program on Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Alexandria Black History Museum at 902 Wythe Street. Join author, lecturer and historian of the African Diaspora, C.R. Gibbs, in a probing examination of African American men and women and their roles in the First World War, also known as the “Great War. He will chronicle their struggle to get the right to fight, their battlefield heroism, their matchless optimism in the face of blistering racism stateside and overseas as well as how their courage and resolve began an assault on the bastions of Jim Crow that ignited the modern civil rights movement. In addition, he will highlight the contributions of black Americans from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. With a host of rare maps, priceless photographs and a perspective honed by years of intense study, Gibbs will reveal new and little-known personalities and largely-forgotten events for African Americans and World War I. The event is free but reservations are encouraged. Light refreshments will be served. Please call 703.746.4356 for more information.



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### **Future AHS Lectures—Who Would You Like to Invite to Speak?**

We are busy setting up our schedule of speakers for 2015-2016, and would love to know what your interests are and who you would like us schedule. If you know of an interesting lecturer you would like us to feature, please do not hesitate to tell us. Contact Audrey P. Davis, vice president of AHS, at [audrey.davis@alexandriava.gov](mailto:audrey.davis@alexandriava.gov).

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### **Nominations for the Alexandria Historical Society 2015 History Awards**

It's not too early to be thinking about nominees for the Alexandria Historical Society's 2015 History Awards. The awards are presented to a person or persons who have made noteworthy contributions to the preservation of the historic, cultural and artistic heritage of Alexandria. the awards ceremony will not be held until April 2015, AHS will soon accept recommendations. Please refer to the AHS website at [www.alexandriahistorical.org](http://www.alexandriahistorical.org) for updates.

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, either go to [www.alexandriahistorical.org](http://www.alexandriahistorical.org) and follow the membership links, or 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)

