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# Celebrating Women's History Month in ALX

BY JULIA WALSH

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Office of Historic Alexandria presents two new specialty museum tours to learn more about the women in Alexandria's history.

"A Toast to the Ladies!" which will be held March 8 at 6 p.m. and March 9 at 10 a.m., is a tour and conversation about the women of Gadsby's Tavern Museum from its start in 1785 to the present day. For \$20, guests will enjoy light refreshments during their exploration of the tavern, and learn about the women who served, entertained and dined there.

The tour highlights a chronological spectrum, from women like Hannah Griffith, who operated the dining room as a coffee house from 1796 until 1800, to Rebecca Ramsay Reese, Old Town's pioneering preservationist who helped save Gadsby's Tavern from destruction in the 20th century. Along with the history, the tour encourages attendees to talk about how women's history interacts with modern life and compares historic challenges and successes to modern times.

If science is more your speed, check out the "Call the Midwife" tour at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum. On March 22 at 6 p.m. or March 23 at 10 a.m., guests



PHOTOS/HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

**Left:** Pioneering preservationist Rebecca Ramsay Reese in 1932, dressed for one of the historic balls at the tavern. **Right:** A glimpse at the Apothecary Museum: This is part of the retail shop where apothecaries dispensed medicines to the public, including to midwives.

will explore the Apothecary Museum through the lens of a midwife and their many roles beyond attending births.

Along with learning about the midwifing profession itself, discussions will include the complexities of women's health. With a focus on the herbal ingredients and the laws surrounding how midwives were allowed to practice, visitors will leave with a better idea about who midwives truly were and still are today. Since topics like abor-

tion, contraception and miscarriage are on the agenda, we recommend this tour for people 18 and older.

These two programs seek to highlight the history of women who are often lost to time and in the mainstream historical record. The women discussed on both tours made incredible contributions to the City of Alexandria, even if those contributions are a little more difficult to find in the historical record. This Women's History Month we highlight those

women, so they might shine a little brighter all year long.

If you are interested in attending our Women's History Programs or any of our other tours, check out our website at [shop.alexandriava.gov/events](http://shop.alexandriava.gov/events) to book your ticket, or give us a call at Gadsby's Tavern Museum at 703-746-4242 or the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum at 703-746-3852.

*Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.*