



## *This Week in Historic Alexandria*

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On February 2, 1848, Nicholas Philip Trist of Alexandria negotiated the controversial “Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo” in Mexico, ending the Mexican-American War. Despite a questionable past, the influential lawyer was appointed as the official representative of President James Polk in the negotiations with Mexico, with specific instructions to seek acquisition of the Baja California peninsula for the United States under the terms of the settlement. A pro-slavery advocate, Trist was no stranger to controversy for his previous corruption activities associated with the production of false documents to facilitate illegal slave trading. After

### **WHAT’S NEW IN HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA**

The City of Alexandria honors the memory and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with its annual Poster Exhibition and Program. Posters from Alexandria City Public School students in the Vola Lawson Lobby of City Hall are now on



view through February 29, 2016. The 2016 exhibition displays students’ illustrations of their own family’s struggles and journeys to reach Alexandria, perhaps from another country or situation. With the theme: “Journeys: Your Road to Alexandria,” students answered the question, “How did you come to Alexandria?” Were your ancestors settlers, brought here as slaves, immigrants looking for opportunity or freedom? The story of our city begins with journeys from all over the world. The struggle for freedom and equality begins with sharing our experiences and stories with each other. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life-long work for civil rights in America was a journey to freedom for justice and respect.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Poster Exhibition started as a contest in 1990. It was created by the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, Inc. (ASPBH), which highlighted the art work of Alexandria City Public School students. The ASPBH is the friends group for the Alexandria Black History Museum (formally known as the Alexandria Black History Resource Center). Under the leadership of two memorable society presidents, Harry Burke and Carlton A. Funn Sr., the contest grew from a small exhibit and program held at the Alexandria Black History Museum, to a larger exhibition held in the Vola Lawson Lobby of City Hall in January and February of each year. In addition to the exhibition, a formal program is held in City Hall honoring the legacy of Dr. King. In 2013, the contest became a Memorial Exhibition honoring the late ASPBH President Carlton A. Funn, Sr. In 2014, the exhibition and program returned to City Hall.

arriving in Mexico, his conduct did not meet Polk's expectations and he was soon recalled to Washington. But Trist disregarded Polk's instructions to return and continued to negotiate, signing an agreement that drew a westward line from Yuma, Arizona to an area between San Diego and Tijuana, without the coveted peninsula. Polk was furious with his representative, but the long distance between Mexico and Washington prevented new negotiations within an acceptable timeframe and he was forced to accept the result. But Trist was immediately fired for insubordination upon his return to America, and his personal expenses remained unpaid for decades. In later life he became Postmaster of Alexandria, and he died in the city in 1874.



## EVENTS

### **Thursday, February 4 – Birthnight Ball Dance Class**

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

In preparation for the Birthnight Ball on February 13, learn 18th-century English country dancing from expert dance instructors [Tickets](#) are priced per person at \$12 per class or \$30 for the series (January 28, February 4, 11). Reservations are recommended. 7:30 to 9:30. Please call 703.746.4242 for more information.

### **Wednesday, February 3 – Lecture: Medical Care during the Civil War**

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

To appreciate the historical background of the new PBS drama series, "Mercy Street," learn about medical practices of the Civil War era and military hospitals in urban settings like wartime Alexandria by attending a lecture entitled "We are not Butchers: Military Surgeons of the Civil War." A snow date is scheduled for February 24.

This illustrated lecture will be made by Civil War medical historian and interpreter, Von Barron. Mr. Barron will discuss general medical knowledge and care of the period, and military hospital facilities of the time, both in the field and towns like Alexandria. In addition to serving as a vital transportation and supply base for the Federal war effort, Alexandria became a major hospital center for the Union Army, a theme that is the backdrop for the "Mercy Street" series.

The lecture is co-sponsored by The Lyceum and Fort Ward Museum in the City of Alexandria. Both museums also have exhibits on view beginning which interpret medical care in Civil War Alexandria (see entries below.) [Tickets](#) are priced at \$5 per person. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. For further information, please call 703.746.4994.

### **Thursday, February 4 – Lecture: Heroines of Mercy Street Lecture**

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

"Heroines of Mercy Street," a new book by historian Pamela Toler, tells the true stories of some of the remarkable women who worked as nurses at the Mansion House Hospital, Alexandria's largest during the Civil War. Most of these women had little or no experience with nursing, but they wanted to serve their country and do something to help ease the enormous suffering from

## On Sale Now, Love is in the Air!



On Saturday, February 13 at 11 a.m., children attending a program at the Alexandria Black History Museum can tell a legend of love in your family by making a valentine for their loved one! Children and their adult family members are invited to reserve a place for this popular program led by artist, writer and educator "Sush" Mazumdar. Family Legends is an initiative of Living Legends of Alexandria, a photo documentary project celebrating Alexandria's recent history makers. The fee for this workshop is \$5 per person to cover the cost of materials. Please call 703.746.4356 for information and to reserve your spot.

Also, the Lee-Fendall House will be offering a special "Sweetheart Tea" at 1 p.m. on Valentine's Day! Enjoy Valentine's Day themed treats and parlor games with your special sweetheart! Space is strictly limited to 24 attendees; advance reservations are required. Tickets are priced at \$40 per person, \$30 for LFH members, and are available through the museum's [Online Store](#).



disease and battlefield wounds during the conflict. They often taught themselves nursing under adverse circumstances, including active hostility from the surgeons they worked with, and helped to create a profession that did not exist before the war.

"Heroines of Mercy Street" is a companion history to the new PBS drama "Mercy Street," which now airs at 10 p.m. each Sunday night. The book will not be available to the public until February 16, 2016, but The Lyceum and other Historic Alexandria museum stores will have it on the shelves after that date. While you're here, you can also view the new exhibition "The Real Mercy Street: Alexandria's Nurses & Hospitals during the Civil War" on view by The Lyceum Museum Store, and find many other books related to the war and nurses of the period.

Pamela D. Toler is the author of *The Everything Guide to Socialism, Mankind: The Story of All of Us and most recently, Heroines of Mercy Street: The Real Nurses of the Civil War*. Toler grew up in Springfield, Missouri, where she participated in living history programs at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, learned to shoot a muzzle-loading rifle, and read and re-read the biographies of women like Clara Barton, Julia Ward Howe, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Her life as a history buff took an abrupt turn when she fell in love with Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. It was the first step on the path to a Ph.D. in South Asia history and a lifelong fascination with the times and places where two cultures meet and change each other.

These days she focuses on historical figures that step outside the constraints of their time. With *Heroines of Mercy Street*, Toler has returned to her first historical love: the Civil War in general and its impact on women in particular.

Tickets are priced at \$10 per person. 7 to 9 p.m. For further information, please call 703.746.4994.

### **Thursday, February 4 – Birthnight Ball Dance Class**

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

In preparation for the Birthnight Ball on February 13, learn 18th-century English country dancing from expert dance instructors

[Tickets](#) are priced per person at \$12 per class.

Reservations are recommended. 7:30 to 9:30. Please call 703.746.4242 for more information.

## Commemorative Corner



Explore the Sites and Stories that Inspired PBS' new drama Mercy Street, inspired by real events in Civil War Alexandria, Virginia! Explore the real historic sites and stories in Alexandria, with more than two dozen new tours, exhibits and events featured [here](#).

Be one of the first to own the Mercy Street companion book and DVD now available at OHA museum shops.

### **Friday, February 5 – Opening Reception: Wings from Chains**

*The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street*

Join the opening reception for Wings from Chains, a new art exhibit with an open call competition inviting artists to consider women's roles and responsibilities in society – yesterday, today, and tomorrow – and to explore the transformation from oppression to liberation, shame to pride, and drudgery into art. Free! 6 p.m. For more information, please visit <http://www.nvfaa.org/> or call 703.548.0035.

### **Saturday, February 6 – RESCHEDULED EVENT: Preparing for a Ball**

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

Balls were a girl's favorite thing to do in the 18th century. Explore the tavern where famous balls like George Washington's Birthnight Ball were held and practice the tasks involved in preparing for a ball. Includes an 18th century dance lesson and a craft to take home! \$6 per person, ages 5 and up. Hour program begins at 10:30 a.m. with a new group starting every 45 minutes; last program begins at 3:15 p.m. Reservations are required. Please email [gadsbys.tavern@alexandriava.gov](mailto:gadsbys.tavern@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.4739 for more information.

### **Saturday, February 6 – Civil War Walking Tour: “Beyond the Battlefield”**

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

Enjoy a guided walking tour sponsored by the Lee-Fendall House museum of Civil War sites in Historic Old Town. Participants will see locations and stories associated with soldiers, citizens, and the enslaved, including the occupation of Alexandria and emancipation. Stops on the tour will include locations featured in the new PBS drama, Mercy Street. The tour will last approximately 2.5 hours and the tour route is approximately 1.75 miles. Tickets are priced at \$15 per person in advance through the museum's [Online Store](#), or \$20 each on the day of the program. FREE for LFH Members! 10 a.m. Please visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703.548.1789 for more information

### **Saturday, February 6 – Lecture: Harriet Jacobs and Julia Wilbur**

*Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street*

Harriet Jacobs and Julia Wilbur: Friends and Allies in the Civil War. Lecture by writer, editor and Civil War researcher Paula Whitacre. Harriet Jacobs was an African-American writer who escaped from slavery and was later freed. She became an

abolitionist speaker and reformer. She wrote an autobiographical novel, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl." Julia Wilbur, a relief worker from Rochester, NY, came to Alexandria during the Civil War. She kept a detailed diary from the 1840s through her death in 1895. Free! 11 a.m. For more information, please call 703.746.4356.

**Saturday, February 6 – Happy Birthday John Carlyle!**

*Carlyle House Historic Park, 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 and his family and friends as well as members of the Appin Living History Regiment. Festivities will include 18th-century dancing, live music and a birthday treat! Admission is free, but donations are welcome. 12 to 4 p.m. Please visit [www.carlylehouse.org](http://www.carlylehouse.org) or call 703.549.2997 for more information.

**Sunday, February 7 - 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 3:00 and 3:15 p.m., arrive early for the 2:15 or 2:45 p.m. FREE tour before your tea. 3 to 5 p.m., arrive early for the 2:15 or 2:45 p.m. FREE tour before your tea. Please call 703.746.4242 for more information.

**Monday, February 8 –Lecture: Women of Alexandria, from Antebellum to the 20th Century**

*The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street*

Alexandria spent four years as an occupied city during the American Civil War. During that time, daily life became quite different for residents who remained in the city, and in many cases, the war changed the course of women's lives. Women of Alexandria, from Antebellum to the 20th Century will illuminate an important side of the city's history that we feel has been under-investigated: the effect of the Civil War on the lives of Alexandria's women. This program generously supported by a grant from Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. Free, but donations gladly accepted. This program is generously supported by a grant from Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. 7 p.m. For more information, please visit [www.nvfaa.org/](http://www.nvfaa.org/) or call 703.548.0035.

**Now on Exhibit – Wings from Chains**

*The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street*

Wings from Chains is an open call competition inviting artists to consider women's roles and responsibilities in society – yesterday, today, and tomorrow – and to explore the transformation from oppression to liberation, shame to pride, and drudgery into art. Free! 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 – Journey to Be Free: Alexandria Freedmen's Cemetery**

*Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street*

A new exhibit tracing the 150-year history of the long-forgotten Freedmen's Cemetery, its rediscovery and how the new Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial was created at the site. Free, but donations are appreciated. Tuesday to Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday and Monday: Closed. 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.

**Now on Exhibit – Fifty Years of Collecting: An Anniversary Exhibit of Objects from the Fort Ward Collection**

*Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road*

In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the opening of Fort Ward Museum & Historic Park, this new exhibition offers a glimpse into the growth and holdings of the Museum's fine Civil War collection. The exhibit features some rare items related to the Defenses of Washington, such as an 1862 panoramic drawing of Fort Albany by the soldier-artist William Lydston, a folding camp chair that belonged to an officer in the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery, and a Lambley's portable copying machine used by an officer from the 57th Massachusetts Infantry. Objects that interpret the Union occupation of Alexandria, such as a proclamation declaring martial law in the city, are also featured. Examples of newly acquired objects are a field desk with personal belongings owned by a captain in the 107th New York Infantry, and a John Rogers statuary group, "Uncle Ned's School," which aimed to

portray the efforts of newly freed African Americans to better their lives through education in the postwar years.

Fort Ward is the best preserved of the extensive network of Union forts and batteries known as the Civil War Defenses of Washington. Free! Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. 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).