

Looking Back to Look Forward



Alexandria Black History Museum
Office of Historic Alexandria
September 21, 2019



Slavery in Alexandria

Alexandria, Sept. 4, 1762.
JUST IMPORTED,
In the Royal Charlotte, Capt. Bartholomew
Fabre,
A PARCEL of very healthy GAMBIA
SLAVES, to be Sold very reasonably for
Bills of Exchange or Cash. The Sale will begin
at ALEXANDRIA on Monday the 13th Instant,
and continue till all are Sold.
JOHN and THOMAS KIRKPATRICK.
N.B. Will be Sold to the Highest Bidder, at
ALEXANDRIA, on Tuesday the 21st Instant, A
SCHOONER that carries 2000 Bushels of Corn,
not a Twelvemonth Launch'd, compleatly Rigg'd,
and fitted for Sea. The particular Inventory may
be seen at any Time by applying to
J. and T. KIRKPATRICK:
A large Quantity of Rum and Molasses for Sale.



Benjamin Banneker, a Free Man of Color in Alexandria

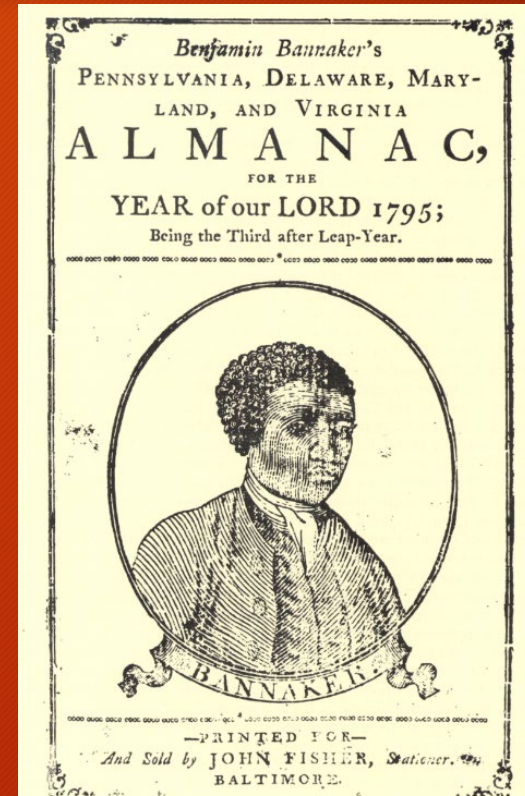
Maryland, Baltimore County, Near Ellicott's Lower Mills, August 19th 1791
Thomas Jefferson Secretary of State.

Sir

I am fully sensible of the greatness of that freedom which I take with you on the present occasion; a liberty which seems to me scarcely allowable, when I reflect on that distinguished, and dignified station in which you stand, and the almost general prejudice and prepossession which is so prevalent in the world against those of my complexion.

I suppose it is a truth too well attested to you, to need a proof here, that we are a race of beings who have long laboured under the abuse and censure of the world, that we have long been looked upon with an eye of contempt, and that we have long been considered rather as brutish than human, and scarcely capable of mental endowments.

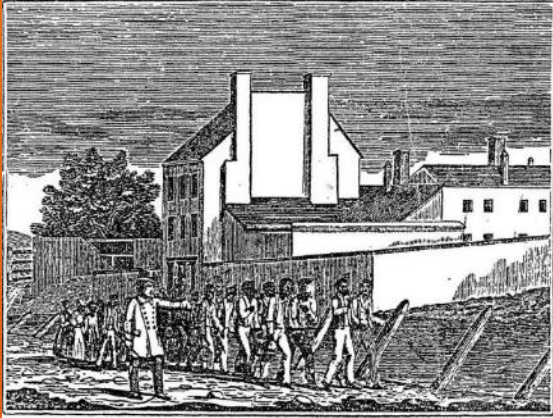
Benjamin Banneker, a gifted and educated free Black, was a federal surveyor during the planning of the new District of Columbia. He camped in Alexandria in 1791 at Jones Point during the project.



Smithsonian Institution Photograph
Portrait of Benjamin Banneker at the age of 64, from the issue of his *Almanac* for 1795, printed for John Fisher of Baltimore. Note the spelling here as Bannaker.

African American Sites along the Duke Street Corridor

Duke Street — site for hiring out slaves by some slave owners — would see coffles of slaves being marched to the waterfront or further south for sale



Franklin and Armfield slave coffle in Alexandria, VA, 1836
Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Bruin Slave Jail



Mary and Emily Edmonson



Alexandria African American Heritage Park



Fleeing slavery for sanctuary and freedom in Alexandria

When Virginia seceded in May of 1861, Union troops occupied Alexandria and turned the port town into a staging area and base for operations. It also became a haven for freedom seekers who took the opportunity that was provided to escape enslavement. Thousands of fleeing African Americans made the dangerous and difficult journey through Confederate territory, often traveling on foot, some coming from hundreds of miles away. They arrived in Alexandria hungry, tired, and with few resources, and began searching out food, clothing, medical treatment, and education.

"I traveled 65 miles and we had 42 in our number, the fore we cross the river... we fought, we would be taken city morning, the baby, we'd, and we could neither stay around of them, on the water, we lay all night. In the woods, and the next day we traveled, on and on, reached. Dug out the night, and we, just twenty, one of the number."

—Booker T. Washington, a freedman describing his flight to freedom in a compilation for Fort Union, Mass. Lucy Clark.

Alexandria's earliest organized civil rights action



National Cemetery on Wilkes Street
in Alexandria, VA

Courtesy of the National Archives, Brady Collection



United States Colored Troops
(USCT), c. 1864

Courtesy of Charles Joyce

Fighting Against Racial Injustice

These two Alexandria residents fought for African American rights at the local and national level



Freeman H.M. Murray (right)
with Niagara Movement
leaders at Harpers Ferry



Dr. Oswald Durant,
physician and NAACP
member

The Historic 1939 Library Sit-In



1939 sit-in arrest in
front of Alexandria
Library
717 Queen Street



Samuel Wilbert
Tucker



Robert Robinson
Library, c. 1940

Alexandria Civil Rights Leaders



The Secret Seven and the 42 Points

Front row (l-r): Ferdinand Day, Nelson Greene Sr., back row:
Connie Ring, Gwen Menefee-Smith, Patsy Ticer, Mayor Bill Euille
and Melvin Miller

Courtesy of Steven Halperson

Grassroots Activists in Alexandria



Annie B. Rose



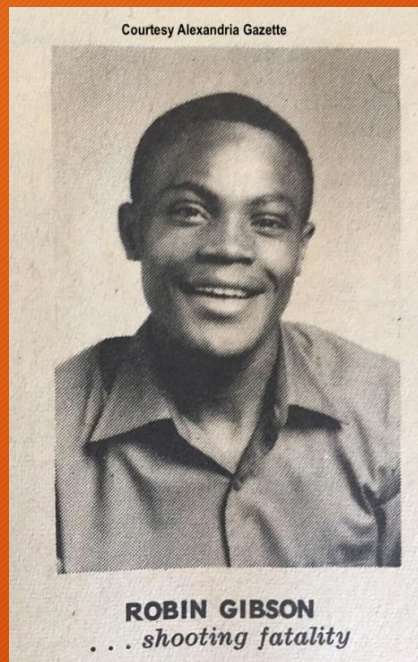
Lorraine Funn
Atkins



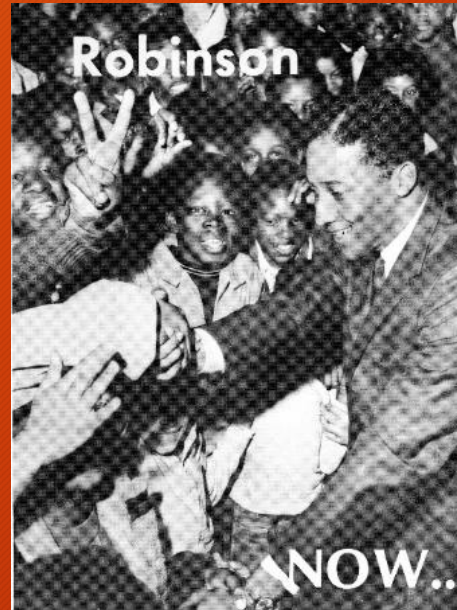
Eudora Lyles

Forgotten Moments in Alexandria Civil Rights History

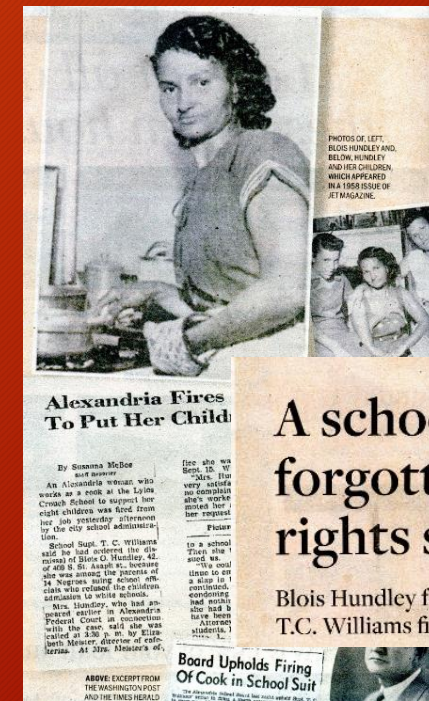
Robin Gibson, age 19, killed at 7-11 in 1970. His murder sparked 3 days of rioting with 14 arrests and 7 cases of arson.



Ira Robinson, activist and attorney, calmed rioters. He then became the first African American elected to City Council since Reconstruction



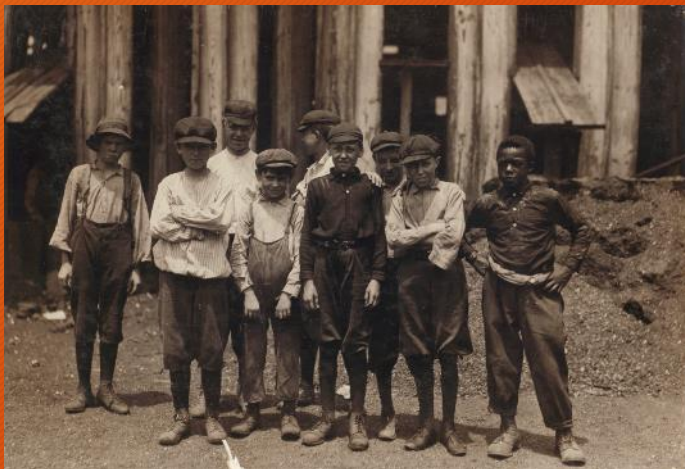
Blois Hundley, an ACPS cook fired by T.C. Williams in 1958 for suing to integrate Alexandria schools



New Spotlight on African American Heritage

African American Heritage Trail Committee

Committee is working to design heritage trails offering a comprehensive focus on African American history in all areas of the City



Fort Ward Interpretive Plan

An African American community developed on the grounds surrounding Fort Ward that endured for nearly a century. In the 1950s, the City of Alexandria began to acquire land from the residents to restore the historic fort and establish Fort Ward Park. The new interpretive plan seeks to unify the African American and Civil War experience into a cohesive narrative about freedom.



Upcoming Programming

Coming Fall 2019

In partnership with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC)

- *1619: Race, Gender, and the State*, a panel discussion about issues impacting race relations in Virginia
- *Gabriel's Revolt*, a short film produced by NVCC students
- Premier of the short film *Our Alexandria* by Robin Hamilton

Coming February 2020

- Screening of *The Rape of Recy Taylor*
- Lecture by Dr. Thomas Wallace of Howard University on his new book *Rethinking Rufus: Sexual Violations of Enslaved Men*