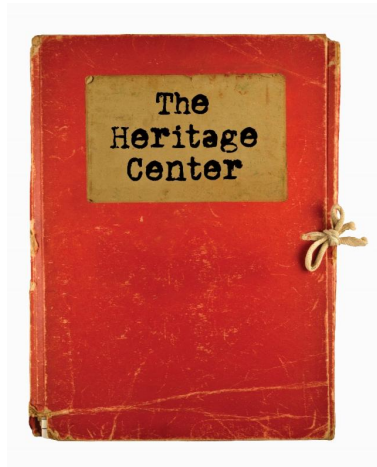


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*A Place that Loses its History Loses its Soul.*

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# Central Rappahannock Heritage Center Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 10

July 2024

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## Heritage Center plans to add more open hours

Are you interested in doing some genealogy research but can't work around the Heritage Center's limited hours of operation? The center's board of directors is eager to find a remedy.

Closure of the center during the pandemic severely affected our ability to serve the stated mission of its 1997 founders: To preserve historically valuable material of the region and make it available to the public for research.

During the pandemic, anyone willing to venture out to research or donate materials found doors locked and lights out.

Fortunately, we managed to achieve part of our mission thanks to the efforts of two longtime volunteers who went beyond the scope of their routine responsibilities to ensure the future of the Center. Diane Ballman and John Reifenberg never faltered in their vigilance to preserve our unique collection of important materials representing the grassroots history of the Fredericksburg region.

Diane and John took it upon themselves to prioritize the maintenance of the Center and its archives, and they improved our online functions and helped researchers from near and far. Their dedication and comprehensive knowledge of the collections continue to enhance the value of the center to the entire Fredericksburg region.

But in-person accessibility to the collections has been a challenge since reopening. We've struggled to return to our once robust setup of open hours manned by a multitude of volunteers, and John and Diane haven't had enough time to recruit and train new volunteers to assist with processing and cataloging collection materials and helping researchers on-site.

In order to advance our mission, we are pleased to add retired career librarian Roger Lawson to our core volunteer staff as operations coordinator. With Roger on board, adding more open hours will be at the top of the board's priority list, along with expanding the volunteer roster.

It will take some time, but we are confident that creating this important volunteer position will be a significant step towards our goal of making the center more discoverable and accessible, just as it was before the pandemic of 2020-21.

We believe Roger is uniquely qualified to help us rectify these issues and see us through this transition. He comes to us after a 44-year career at the National Gallery of Art Library in Washington, D.C., most recently as a senior level executive librarian overseeing all operations of the library division's 44 employees in four departments.

In addition to being a supervisory librarian since 1985, he brings extensive experience in cataloging, creating and editing bibliographic records, working with automated library systems, budget management, and personnel recruitment.

Originally from New Jersey, Roger moved to Fairfax County, Va., as a teenager, and he graduated from Oakton High School in 1970. He has a B.A. degree from the University of Virginia (Government and Foreign Affairs/Art History) and a master's in library science with an archives specialty from The Catholic University of America. He also holds a certificate in editorial practices from the USDA Graduate School in Washington, D.C.

Roger and his wife Jo Ann moved to Fredericksburg in 1977. His first job here was with the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, where he was head of circulation. In 1979 he began commuting to Washington to work at the National Gallery of Art Library, where he rose through the ranks for the next 44 years before retiring this past January.

Roger says his retirement plans have always included volunteering at the Heritage Center. Having lived in Fredericksburg for more than four decades, he came to appreciate the area's history and the work the Heritage Center does to preserve materials from the past. He thought he would enjoy being involved in that effort.

He'll be devoting nine to 12 hours a week at the center, and he has some great ideas to improve how we operate and serve our patrons. Overall, he hopes to enhance our image in the community and increase awareness of what we do, as well as improve the visitor experience and make the center more visible and welcoming.

Accessibility is a top goal, and the board is aiming to be able to open the center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. To make that happen, though, Roger has another priority – adding more volunteers to the dedicated group already in place.

Our volunteers handle a variety of jobs, including research services, cataloging, and data entry. Volunteers can sign up to work as little or as often as desired, and no advanced skills are necessary, just an interest in history. Training is provided. We hope you'll think about joining our team!

As the Heritage Center continues its 27<sup>th</sup> year of preserving local history, the board of directors remains committed to fulfilling our mission. Our primary goal for the past several years has been to put pandemic era problems behind us, and to think of new ways to move forward.

As always, we appreciate your support, whether it's through volunteering, entrusting us with family papers, or offering financial contributions. And we encourage you to visit the center to

explore the richness of our collections.

For more information on how to help, please go to our website:

[www.crhcarchives.org/support](http://www.crhcarchives.org/support)

or email us at

[contact@crhcarchives.org](mailto:contact@crhcarchives.org)

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## Annual meeting to feature presentation by author Jim Hall

The Heritage Center will hold its annual meeting at 7 p.m., September 17, at Old Walker-Grant School.

Following an update on Center business for the past year, we're pleased to welcome Jim Hall as our guest speaker.

Jim is a retired journalist whose career spanned 36 years at several Virginia newspapers, the last 26 of which were spent at The Free Lance-Star as an award-winning reporter and editor.

Jim earned his undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech and a master's degree in mass communications from VCU. In addition to working as a journalist, he's also taught journalism as an adjunct instructor at the University of Mary Washington.

Since retiring in 2013, Jim has continued to write, turning his talents to historical research and little known, uncomfortable stories about Virginia's past.

His first book, ***The Last Lynching in Northern Virginia***, was published in 2016 by The History Press and told the dark story of a black man hanged and set on fire by a vigilante mob. The events took place in 1932 on Rattlesnake Mountain in Fauquier County.

Jim's second book, ***Condemned for Love in Old Virginia: The Lynching of Arthur Jordan***, tells a tragic tale about forbidden love. Also set in Fauquier County, the book recounts the 1880 story of an interracial couple, their escape to Maryland to make a life together, and the dire consequences they faced in the end.

Jim is a meticulous reporter, and his retirement passion involves personal interviews and hours of historical research in courtrooms, libraries, museums, and archives, including the Heritage Center.

For his presentation at the annual meeting, he'll talk about his books and his research, with a focus on how the collections at the Heritage Center have aided his work.

The meeting is open to the public.

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## Message From The Chairperson

Florence Barnick

It's an exciting time at the Center! Have you been in to see us? We're now at a full year of being open to researchers on Wednesday afternoons, and we're coming up on a year of

being open certain Saturday mornings. (Don't forget we make appointments too.) And now there's more coming! There's more about it in this newsletter, but let me emphasize that we want to do MORE. In order to DO more, we need more from YOU.

We want to open more days and have a bigger presence in the community, but as an entirely volunteer-operated organization we are looking for more volunteers. Some of you might want to help occasionally while others might be able to step in on a regular schedule. Talk to us about how your talents might be best used.

We always want to add to our collections and that means we want YOUR family papers, photos, letters... what IS taking up space in your basement, attic or desk? A contribution might be files and boxes of items or it might just be that one piece you hold that would be appreciated by the community. Yearbooks, phone books, souvenir items or family photos... talk to us to see if what you have would enhance our archives.

And like any organization, we have expenses, and we always welcome financial support. We have some terrific sponsors and we've received several important grants, but memberships and general donations are critical to our success.

While our collections focus on the past, the organization is looking to the future. We want you on this journey with us.

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## **We're now taking our show on the road!**

Come join us for a presentation at 3 p.m., July 28, at the Caroline Historical Society in Bowling Green. Our chairperson Florence Barnick will be there to talk about the Heritage Center and show our newly created Power Point program.

We would be delighted to bring our presentation to your organization, either in person or by Zoom. We've already presented for meetings of the Stafford Historical Society and the Fredericksburg Regional Genealogy Society, and we'd like to add more engagements to our schedule to spread the word about the Heritage Center.

To arrange for a presentation, please contact the center:

[contact@crhcarchives.org](mailto:contact@crhcarchives.org)

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## **Mystery Photograph**



We can almost hear their beautiful voices but we don't know who they are! This photograph from the Heritage Center comes from the Gaye Todd Adegbolola collection, but it is undated and there is no information about their identities or where they were singing. The ladies' matching dresses suggest they were an established group, and we suppose they were performing at a special occasion of some sort. We hope someone will recognize them! If you can shed any light on this photograph, please reference photo file number 2011018P007-10 and contact the Heritage Center at [contact@crhcarchives.org](mailto:contact@crhcarchives.org).

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## **New board member - Dr. Gaila Sims**

Dr. Gaila Sims has been elected to the Center's Board of Directors, filling an unexpired term resulting from the resignation of John Hennessey. The term expires in 2025, and she will be eligible to be elected to an additional term.

Dr. Sims is the curator of African American History and Special Projects for the Fredericksburg Area Museum, having moved here from her home state of Texas following completion of her PhD. in American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

She also earned a master's degree from The University of Texas in 2018 and a bachelor's in 2011 from Oberlin College, with the majority of her academic work focused on museum and African American studies. Her PhD. thesis was a study of how American state history museums interpret the story of slavery.

Dr. Sims has an extensive resume of work in the museum field, as well as an impressive list of professional and academic presentations.

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A partial list of acquisitions in recent months shows the wide variety of materials in the Heritage Center's collection:

- Miscellaneous genealogy books, correspondence, billheads, receipts, deeds, and photographs.
- A genealogy of the Newton and Snellings families.
- A 1985 class reunion booklet of the 1935 class of Fredericksburg High School.
- Two books from the Images of America series:
  - 1. *African Americans In Culpeper, Orange, Madison, And Rappahannock Counties.*
  - 2. *Quantico.*
- From the estate of Doris Jean Darden, a collection of obituaries dating from the mid-1980's to 2019.
- Undated photographs of Ferry Farm, many showing the burned skeleton of a former residence.
- Four booklets:
  - 1. A Church On A Hill; Falmouth Baptist Church 125th Anniversary, 1821-2016.
  - 2. Intensive Architectural Survey of The Counting House At 103 Gordon Street in Falmouth.
  - 3. Historical Archaeological Preservation Management Plan; Falmouth, Stafford County, Virginia. February 2000.
  - 4. Homecoming Anniversary Celebration, Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church, 150 Years, 1868-2018.
- Records detailing the organization and operations of College Heights Pool, which opened in 1958.

**We're always looking for more materials to add to our collections, many of which are searchable on our website. Please don't go to the landfill; entrust your memorabilia to the Heritage Center.**

To inquire about donating materials, contact:

**John Reifenberg**

[jreifenberg@crhcarchives.org](mailto:jreifenberg@crhcarchives.org)

**540-373-3704**

**Processing and preserving valuable documents requires special care and archival storage materials. We're always in need of these products, so if you'd care to contribute to our supply, we have a wish list at Amazon that includes archival materials as well as publications we'd like to have for the center.**

**[CRHC Archival Supply Wish List](#)**

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## The Heritage Center's History and Mission

Virginia figures prominently in history books, but the founders of the Heritage Center believed that grassroots history was being lost - the stuff of basements and attics, old photo albums, tattered newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and boxes of letters and memorabilia.

In 1997 they founded the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center and began collecting all types of historical documents and photographs to archive and preserve the personal heritage of the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford.

Among the center's varied collections now are family and business histories; court, county, and church records; documents on slavery and Jim Crow era legislation; family correspondence and diaries; genealogy; birth, marriage and death records; local newspapers; maps; photographs; and postcards. The variety covers the gamut and reflects the stories of people from every walk of life in the Rappahannock River region.

The center's mission is a simple one: to preserve historically valuable materials of the region and make it available to the public for research.

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## Center Hours and Research Services

### Hours

Wednesday 1 to 4 p.m.

Second Saturday of each month 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Other days by appointment only.

### Location

900 Barton Street #111

Fredericksburg, VA

22401

(540) 373-3704

Our volunteers will gladly offer research services.

For requests, appointments, and rates:

[contact@crhcarchives.org](mailto:contact@crhcarchives.org)

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## Welcome New Members!

Adam Scher

Martha Newton

Judith Jobrack

Please go to online to join our membership to support  
the preservation of our region's unique history.

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and want to stay  
up to date on Heritage Center activities,  
please visit our website to sign up:

[www.crhcarchives.org](http://www.crhcarchives.org).

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**MANY THANKS  
TO OUR GENEROUS 2023 HERITAGE CENTER  
SPONSORS & CORPORATE MEMBERS**



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Jeanette and Nick Cadwallender  
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**Become a 2024 Sponsor and help save our history!**

For information on becoming a sponsor, contact:

Thena Jones

[tjones@crhcarchives.org](mailto:tjones@crhcarchives.org)

(540) 373-3704

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The Heritage Center is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization that relies on donations to fund its important mission of preserving the region's history. Your generosity helps pay for archival preservation materials, operational and maintenance costs for the library and facility, and other related expenses.

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# Central Rappahannock Heritage Center

Email: [contact@crhcarchives.org](mailto:contact@crhcarchives.org)

Call: 540.373.3704

[www.crhcarchives.org](http://www.crhcarchives.org)

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