



Bulletin

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Maplewood
Cemetery Tour,
Oct. 30, 2024. Photo
by Heather Adair



History Goes On

We are living in a historic moment. Over the past four years, we have persevered through a once-in-a-century global pandemic, the return of open warfare in Europe and the Middle East, historic inflation, increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters, and a presidential election that shattered all precedents. What will the next four years look like? What will happen to our economy, our healthcare, our education system, our national security, the rights of women, or the democratic process? Searching for some lesson from history to make sense of this moment, my thoughts turned to the American poet Robert Frost.

Seventy years ago, journalist Ray Josephs was interviewing Frost on his 80th birthday. Josephs asked, "In all your years and all your travels, what do you think is the most important thing you've learned about life?"

Frost paused and then responded, "In three words, I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on." That might seem too simplistic, or even glib, for this moment. But, recall that 1954 was the year that President Eisenhower warned against intervening in Vietnam, the first hydrogen bomb was tested, Hurricane Hazel devastated the east coast, a CIA-sponsored



University President John Newcomb introduces United States President Franklin Roosevelt in Memorial Gymnasium. Image from University of Virginia Alumni News, July-August 1940. <https://uvamagazine.org/articles/the-hand-that-held-the-dagger>

coup in Guatemala triggered a bloody 35-year civil war; and the year that special counsel for the US Army, Joseph N. Welch, lashed out at Senator Joseph McCarthy saying, "Have you, at long last, no decency?" Life went on. 1954 was also the year of *Brown v. Board*, the first mass vaccination of children for polio, and the first time the Dow Jones surpassed its pre-1929 peak, among many other significant events. Life goes on and history keeps happening.

And, that is in no way intended to take this moment lightly. I was also reminded of the speech that President Franklin D. Roosevelt

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History Goes on *continued from page 1*

gave here in Charlottesville in 1940. Speaking to a crowd at UVA, Roosevelt said,

“Every generation of young men and women in America has questions to ask the world. Most of the time they are the simple but nevertheless difficult questions, questions of work to do, opportunities to find, ambitions to satisfy. But every now and again in the history of the republic a different kind of question presents itself – a question that asks, not about the future of an individual or even a generation, but about the future of the country, the future of the American people... There is such a time again today.”

In 1940, Roosevelt was preparing Americans for the possibility of entering WWII. But, his words could just as well apply to now. As we approach the 250th anniversary of American Independence in 2026, this is a time for serious reflection and honest conversations about the history of our nation, the evolution and state of our democracy, and our place in it – as individuals and as a community. The task of defending our liberties and institutions

while trying to heal our divisions and return to one shared reality will be a Herculean trial, but one we must take on. And, among the heavy lifts that will be required will finally, at long last, be learning the lessons of history.

Remember the words FDR spoke here – “There is such a time again today.” History may not necessarily repeat itself, but it certainly does echo, and we need to be able to hear it, all of us. Only by understanding the lessons of the past can we make intelligent decisions in the present. And, that is why we at the ACHS do what we do. Your local historical society exists to be your historical resource, ensuring the collection, preservation, and critical interpretation of an accurate and comprehensive history for both you and future generations. So, before we once again repeat the mistakes of the past, please support local history! Support facts, support learning, support critical thinking. Life goes on and history will keep happening; but what, if anything, we learn from it, is up to you.

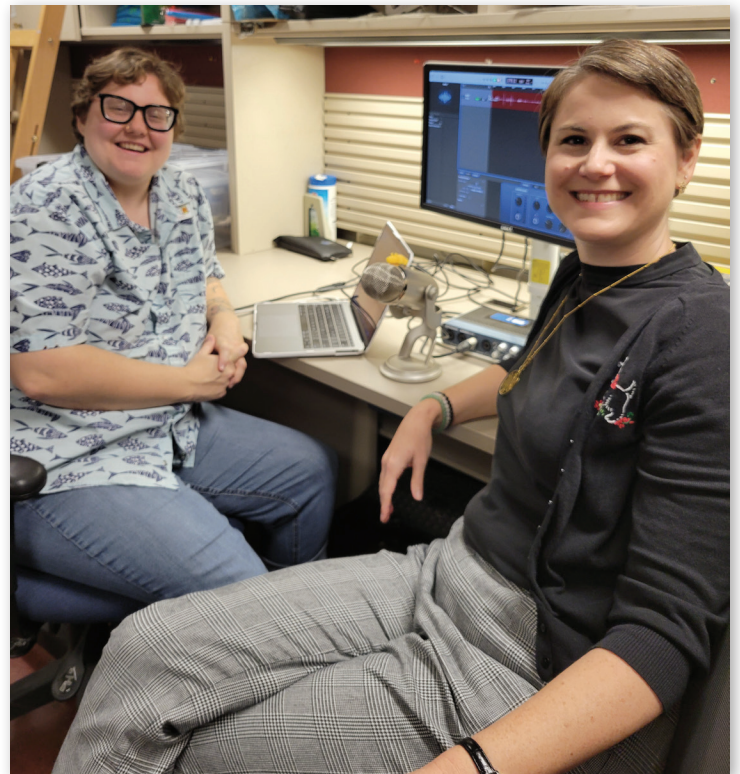
www.albemarlehhistory.org/support

The Sonic Librarians

When you think about learning some history, you probably imagine having to find some dusty old book in a labyrinth of shelves in a dark old building where some middle-aged, bun-wearing, bespectacled lady keeps shushing you. But, hey! That’s just a negative movie trope. History is much more than old books, and in the 21st century librarians are techy-cool!

The next time you want to delve into some local history, check out the sonic librarians and the On the Same Page podcast (<https://jmrl.org/aggregator/sources/2>) from the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library. Our own Miranda Burnett is the new co-host, along with fellow JMRL librarian Acacia Rodgers. Each episode shares library news and topics and in Miranda’s newest segment, Virginia Vignettes, she shares lesser known local history stories. You can learn about the two human flies who climbed Charlottesville’s earliest skyscrapers, or hear the Moon Ghost story.

Each episode will feature a new story from our area’s history. Visit JMRL.org to access this amazing podcast.



JMRL’s On the Same Page podcast co-hosts Acacia Rodgers and Miranda Burnett share book recommendations, JMRL programs, and local history.

From the Board

by Luke Roark

Growing up in rural Virginia with deep family roots in the area, joining the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society felt like a natural way to connect with and serve our local history when I moved to Albemarle. As a builder and historical renovator, my work benefits greatly from the resources and network the Society provides. It allows me to better understand the historical context of the projects I undertake and the communities I serve. My passion for preserving and understanding Virginia's history initially inspired me to get involved, and it continues to motivate my contributions as a member of the Board.

One of my favorite experiences has been volunteering at Hatton Ferry, one of the last remaining pole-driven ferries in the country. The site illustrates the evolution of trade and transportation in Virginia—from batteau boats carrying goods along the river to the rise of railroads, and



Luke Roark, ACHS Board of Directors

eventually, to modern infrastructure like highways and bridges. It's a powerful reminder of how history continues to shape our present.

Through the Society, I've been fortunate to contribute to meaningful events and collaborations. The "Painting History" exhibit featuring Frances Brand's collection, which inspired the "Firsts" publication, stands out as a particularly impactful project. Collaborations like Monticello's Founders Day event reflect the Society's broader community engagement, while the Alice Ivory exhibit with the Jefferson School demonstrates its commitment to fostering inclusivity and sharing diverse narratives. Initiatives such as supporting Pen Park's descendant groups and family reunions further emphasize the importance of preserving and including all voices in our local history.

It's deeply rewarding to be part of an organization dedicated to broadening connections and celebrating the rich, varied history of our region. Participating in these efforts has been both purposeful and fulfilling, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to this meaningful mission.

Learning from the Past, Connecting with the Present

by Grace Saunders

When I started interning with the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society this past spring, I never imagined that it could align so perfectly with my passions or that I'd meet so many incredible people. It just seemed like a cool opportunity when I was looking for something to do over the summer. As a fourth year archaeology and Classics major at UVA, my typical area of focus is the very distant past, thousands of years and miles away from my everyday life. But what I really care about is how people interact with the past, and I don't often get a chance to work with living people

with a personal connection when studying Bronze Age Greece or ancient Nubia. I have a family that was already into genealogy, so I came into the world not knowing how lucky I was to have such detailed knowledge of my family's history, even if it wasn't all positive. As an intern for the Pen Park Project, I got to meet some really interesting people and work with them on uncovering their families' history. It's been a great experience being able to help share that feeling of knowing where you came from. When I was still uncertain what I wanted to study, I struggled with fears that if I devoted my life to learning about the past I would lose touch with the present and live in an academic bubble, locked in a cycle of producing useless knowledge. It's nice to know that what you've been spending your time on is something that people are excited about.

To volunteer at ACHS, email: programs@albemarlehistory.org

Boundaries Broken

In our last Bulletin we featured the then upcoming special exhibition of Alice Ivory metal sculptures at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center (JSAAHC), “Beyond Boundaries.” The exhibit celebrates the legacy of a renowned and boundary breaking local artist who was also the first African American teacher to lead the Blue Ridge School’s art department. The exhibit opened with a reception on September 14th including some fine food and drinks and remarks by ACHS’s Tom Chapman and Phyllis Leffler, JSAAHC’s Andrea Douglas, and Michael R. Taylor, Artistic Director & Chief Curator at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, as well as a gallery talk by Katherine

Slaughter, Frank Walker, and Richard Crozier. We were thrilled to be joined by 110 community members. And, many visitors to JSAAHC have been enjoying the exhibit since. The exhibit ends on December 14, so see it while you can.

FIRSTS, vol. 1

Sticking with the art theme for a moment, have you ordered your copy of *FIRSTS*? Over the past few years, we have made a concerted effort to share the amazing portraits of local trailblazers painted by local artist Frances Brand. If you are unfamiliar with Brand and her work, you can learn about it here: https://cvillepedia.org/Frances_Brand. After our “Painting

History” panel discussion at the MLK Jr. Performing Arts Center in January 2024, we were approached by Amy Hill with the idea of publishing an art book about Brand’s “Gallery of Firsts.” And, thanks to the help of Amy Hill and Andi Cumbo, volume 1 is complete! You can get your copy and copies for your friends and family here: ShopACHS.myshopify.com.

Researching Brown’s Cove

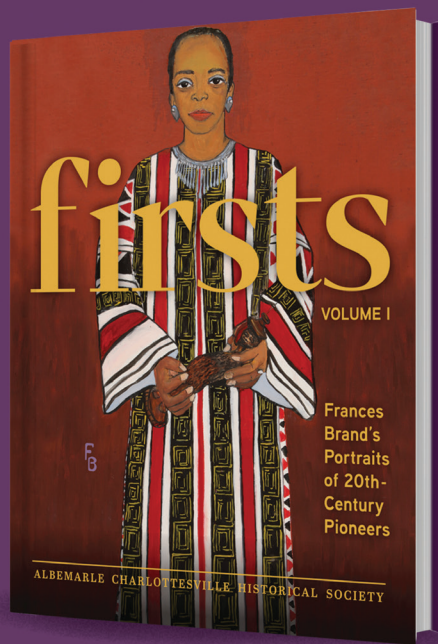
With the tremendous help of Jake Calhoun, PhD, the ACHS has been engaged in researching the history of Brown’s Cove, a region in western Albemarle County comprised of the former holdings of Benjamin Brown, Sr., and his descendants. Benjamin Brown, Sr., acquired the lands that would become the Cove in 1743, passing them onto his descendants who continued to expand their respective holdings over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Strikingly, some of the farms and plantations remained in the hands of Brown descendants up until the early twentieth century. ACHS researchers have been hard at work uncovering not only the history of the Brown family descendants but also the stories of the enslaved individuals that labored upon the Brown family plantations. Recently, the team produced a digital StoryMaps project pertaining to one particular site in Brown’s Cove: Mount Fair, and ACHS is now working toward expanding this focus to include the entirety of the Cove. In this endeavor, ACHS hopes to collaborate with numerous other local genealogists, historians, and descendants to produce a comprehensive study of Brown’s Cove and the diverse people who lived and worked in the region.

Own the Book.

Firsts:

Frances Brand’s Portraits of 20th- Century Pioneers, Volume I

51 paintings & profiles of remarkable subjects who have shaped the contemporary history of our region.



Available Exclusively at
ShopACHS.myshopify.com

Oral Histories for All

If you've been following us for a while then you know about our No Playbook oral history project (<https://noplaybook.albemarlehistry.org/>). And, if you read the Spring 2023 issue, you know about our extensive collection of oral histories on aging analog media in bad need of digitization. This collection includes audio recordings of Bernard Chamberlain's "Community History" series from the 1970's, recollections of World War II veterans, folk music performances, and ACHS presentations from the 1990's. We at the ACHS have the mission to collect and preserve local history, but we can only do so much with the time and resources we have. We would very much like to preserve these valuable stories forever and to continue to add to them. We would like to use the No Playbook project as a launching pad for a

broader oral history initiative that will collect and preserve stories from every corner and perspective of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. If you agree that this is a worthwhile goal, consider donating at www.albemarlehistry.org/support.

Tours, Trivia, and more Tours!

This year, we decided we needed to get out more. So, the first thing we did was to introduce four new tours: the Innovations Tour, the Black Barbers Tour, the Jewish History Tour, and the Between Slavery and Freedom Tour. We also offered the Friends of Lafayette who were visiting town to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Marquis de Lafayette's 1824 visit a special "Lafayette Returns to Charlottesville Tour." Between those we scheduled and those we gave by reservation, we had 609 tour-goers learn

something new about local history in 2024! But, we also wanted to try something completely different. So, with the help of new board member Olivia Brown we partnered with the Timberwood Grill to host ACHS's first "Are You Smarter than a Local Historian" trivia night. We were joined by 36 trivia players for some good food, good drinks, and a lot of fun testing our local history knowledge. Stay tuned for future Trivia Nights in 2025.

The Magazine

Volume 82 of the MACH is in the works! The Magazine represents an important and tangible part of our mission – to collect, preserve and interpret. Please consider a gift to support the Magazine of Albemarle Charlottesville History. Contact Tom Chapman at executivedirector@albemarlehistry.org or 540-222-9956.

I N M E M O R I A M

Shelah Kane Scott

1932-2024

Shelah was born in Richmond, the oldest of four daughters. She was raised in New York City and graduated from The Brearley School in 1950. Shelah then attended Smith College in Northampton, MA before marrying Jim Scott and finishing her undergraduate at Barnard College in NYC. After raising three children, she earned a Master of Education from UVA. She then taught reading at Venable (now Trailblazer) Elementary School and tutored adults.



Image from obituary on Legacy.com

Shelah loved attending sporting events, theater productions, and serving the community through her volunteer work and board membership for her church and many local organizations. Shelah is survived by many family and friends who are forever grateful to the staff at Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge (WCBR) who saw to her wellbeing for the last 21 years of her life. Shelah passed away on October 25th surrounded by loved ones at WCBR.

I N M E M O R I A M

White McKenzie Wallenborn, MD

1929-2024

Ken Wallenborn was born in Salisbury, NC on September 11, 1929, less than a month before the stock market crash that set off the Great Depression. His family moved to Charlottesville in 1938, and Ken attended local schools before going to college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1951). After graduation, Ken returned to Charlottesville to study medicine at UVA (1955). With his medical degree in hand, Ken was called to serve his country in the US Air Force and was stationed



Image from obituary on Legacy.com

in Homestead, FL. Upon his discharge, Ken completed his residency in Otolaryngology at UVA School of Medicine. He went on to join the clinical surgery staff at UVA and had a private practice out of Martha Jefferson Hospital. After 33 years of practice and countless patients cared for, Ken retired in 1994. He passed away on October 1st of this year, leaving behind Lucy, his wife of 70 years, two sons, a daughter, a grandson, two granddaughters, and a great-grand son. Ken was laid to rest at the UVA cemetery.

Bess Kane

1935-2024

Bessima Edna Bach was born on June 6, 1935 in Tel Aviv, Palestine. Bess's family returned to New York City in 1937 before moving to Greensboro, NC. Bess attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she met Alan Steven Kane on a blind date and they married on their final spring break before graduation. The following year, they welcomed their son, Nelson Jon, and then moved to Roanoke, VA where Alan co-ran Kane Furniture and they added daughter Jennifer to the family. The family finally settled in Charlottesville where Bess loved sharing art and history as a docent at the UVA art museum, a guide at Monticello, and a volunteer with the ACHS. Bess also



Image from obituary on Legacy.com

volunteered at The Haven, Summit Elementary School, helped to found Georgia's Friends residential home for women in recovery, and as a member of Congregation Beth Israel, she and Allan sponsored a Vietnamese boat family. When she wasn't busy doing good for the community, Bess enjoyed gardening, baking pies, reading, and taking miles-long walks. Bess passed on September 29th this year in a nursing home near Denver, CO and she was laid to rest at the Hebrew Cemetery in Charlottesville. She is survived by her two children, three grandchildren, and many other extended family and friends. The ACHS is honored to have been mentioned in her obituary as a beneficiary for tribute gifts in her memory.

On the Calendar

Sign up for virtual events on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/ACHistSoc or email us at info@albemarlehistory.org with questions and for additional information

- **Guided History Walking Tours** – By appointment, Court Square, Maplewood Cemetery, the Downtown Mall, and Special Themed tours offered all year round. Contact Sterling at programs@albemarlehistory.org or 434-296-1492.
 - **Seasonal Themed Tours** – Stay tuned for coming announcements.
 - **Wed. February 19, 6pm – Assembly and Petition – First Amendment Community Workshop #3** (of 3) at The Center at Belvedere. Join the Center for the Constitution (James Madison's Montpelier) and the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society for an enlightening conversation on the First Amendment rights to assembly and petition. This event will address historical and contemporary examples of peaceful assembly and petitioning, as well as the legal protections and challenges faced today. Space will be limited, registration required [ACHistSoc.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/ACHistSoc).
 - **Wed. March 19, 6pm – Thomas Jefferson & the Indian Burial Mound with Rick Britton** at The Center at Belvedere. Thomas Jefferson was, among many things, an amateur archaeologist, and in 1783, spurred on by a document sent him by the French government, Thomas Jefferson excavated a Monacan Indian burial mound six miles north of Charlottesville. It was both a great scientific achievement and a shocking desecration of an obviously sacred site. Come learn about it from award-winning journalist and historian, Rick Britton, who specializes in 18th- and 19th-century Virginia history.
 - **Wed. April 9, 6pm – A Presentation on the Swan Tavern Archaeological Dig by Ben Ford** at JMRL Central Library Swanson Room. More details to follow.
- HOLD THE DATE for these upcoming programs:**
- **Thur. January 16, 5pm – ACHS Annual Program – Harbingers with Timothy Heaphy** at the MLK Jr. Performing Arts Center. Tim Heaphy was the lead investigator into both the violence in Charlottesville in 2017 and at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. His new book shares what he saw and came to understand about what those events say about the state of American democracy. *Harbingers* examines how and why they took place with the hope that understanding the contexts of these events will be a crucial and helpful step toward avoiding similar episodes in the years ahead. Ian Solomon, Dean of the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, will query Heaphy about what he learned from these two historic investigations.

Volunteer Needs – Join us!

Email programs@albemarlehistory.org or call (434) 296-1492

- **Tour Guides** for our guided history walking tours.
- **Oral History enthusiasts** to help with our Going Digital project.
- **Cvillepedia.org** to help make it the go-to resource for local history.
- **Greeters** to provide ACHS hospitality to every guest that walks through our doors.



ALBEMARLE CHARLOTTESVILLE
Historical Society

200 SECOND STREET NE
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902-5245

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

The Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society believes that history matters.

Understanding our past determines our perspectives on the present and the decisions shaping our future. History should not be hidden, obscured, or sugar-coated. It must be critically interrogated to learn from it; otherwise, we risk repeating past mistakes. The ACHS is here to serve as your historical resource, ensuring the collection, preservation, and critical interpretation of an accurate and comprehensive history for both you and future generations.

**But YOUR historical society needs YOUR SUPPORT
to do this important work!**

As 2024 comes to a close, the ACHS Board of Directors is challenging you to ***GIVE—and DOUBLE*** the impact of your gift! They will match every dollar donated, up to \$30,000, between now and January 31, 2025. Your donation, no matter the size, will help us continue our mission.

Donate today by filling out the enclosed donation envelope with your credit card information, enclose a check, or give online at www.albemarlehistory.org/support.

Thank you for making history matter!

