



Huntley Headlines

Friends of Historic Huntley

Fall 2024

New, earlier date!

Fall Annual Meeting
Saturday, October 19, 2:00 p.m.
FREE

John Marshall Library
6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria

Presentation by Dr. Sheri Huerta
Finding Agness: Researching Slavery, Survival, and the Mason Family

FOHH's membership will gather at the **Annual Meeting** to elect board members, review FOHH's annual financial statement, and hear a presentation by Dr. Sheri Huerta on *Finding Agness: Researching Slavery, Survival, and the Mason Family*.

Dr. Huerta chronicles her efforts, over more than a decade, to unearth the life of Agness, an enslaved woman accused of killing Gerrard Mason, grandson of patriot George Mason, at Woodbridge plantation in 1849. Piecing together information from three generations of Agness's family, Dr. Huerta tells the compelling story of slavery and "justice" in antebellum Virginia. Join us to discover Agness's story and legacy.

For more information, call 703.768.6987 or email info@historichuntley.org. ❖



Historic Huntley is framed in part by the siren red and orange of fall foliage and the crisp blue of cooler skies in fall 2023. Photo by Todi Carnes.

FCPA Saved from Budget Cuts!

Almost every agency within Fairfax County absorbed a budget cut for FY (fiscal year) 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025). Happily, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) was not only spared from cuts, it gained a modest funding increase!

This was undoubtedly due to the pro-park advocacy by FOHH and other park Friends groups acting together and separately in support of the **Fair Parks Initiative** founded by FOHH. A coalition of non-Friends groups, the **Fairfax Parks Coalition**, also has been a powerful advocate for the parks. By rejecting any cuts to the FCPA's budget, the Fairfax County

Board of Supervisors (BOS) signaled that they've heard us and agree that the county's parks are a funding priority.

This is a far cry from how things were prior to FOHH's initiation of pro-park budget advocacy two years ago. Then, the FCPA was subject to consistently stagnant or decreasing budgets—despite the ever-increasing number of properties being acquired by the FCPA as the population of Fairfax County grew.

As a result of that period of "budgetary starvation," it will take years of funding increases to properly increase FCPA staff and resources to match with its ever-growing property management responsibilities.

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President's Column

by Todi Carnes

This spring found FOHH board members staffing an information table at Huntley Meadows Park's (HMP) Wetlands Awareness Day. A few weeks before that Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) board members were at Historic Huntley's Art & Architecture Day touring the site and meeting with FOHH board members. FOHH board members have acknowledged a need to learn more about Huntley's natural resources and FOHMP members have demonstrated a willingness to learn more about Huntley's cultural resources. This is news!

Despite the property comprising Historic Huntley and HMP having a long historical identity as a unified property under a single owner, there has been minimal overlap in the two boards' activities. FOHMP has long been a generous financial supporter of FOHH and on several occasions the boards' joint actions have been significant. The boards successfully

challenged Dominion Power's proposed transmission towers in 2016. There also is ongoing support of both boards for the efforts of the Fair Parks Initiative to obtain more county general funds for parks.

FOHH has pursued interests in the history and architecture of Historic Huntley, while FOHMP has pursued interests revolving around the flora and fauna at HMP. However, there have been some individual board members with interests in both Historic Huntley and HMP: Connie Carpender, Carolyn Gamble, Harry Glasgow, Norma Hoffman, and Robbie McNeil.

What has been largely missing is joint action of the boards that would have FOHH and FOHMP supporting nature projects at Historic Huntley and cultural resource projects at HMP. Bringing about such joint action will require creativity and commitment. Happily, the FOHH and FOHMP boards already display those qualities in their own spheres of activity—if we can get them operating on the same vector, the sky is the limit! ❖

Draft Huntley Historic Overlay District Guidelines Issued

This summer, Fairfax County's Department of Planning and Development issued new draft guidelines for the county's historic overlay districts, to include the Huntley Historic Overlay District.

The purpose of reissuing the guidelines is not to change them, but to better explain and illustrate them. As of this writing, the drafts are available for review at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/historic-overlay-districts/design-guidelines/rewrite>. The deadline for submitting feedback was August 14. Not to worry, Huntley fans, FOHH submitted more than seven pages of comments on August 9. ❖

Budget Cuts *continued ...*

Unfortunately, the county is facing an austere budgetary environment, especially in light of poor revenues from the commercial real estate sector. The budget picture for FY 2026 is shaping up as a repeat of the previous year, with all agencies directed to identify budget cuts for potential implementation by the BOS. In a bid to head off or mitigate future cuts, the BOS has ordered the county executive to review potential additional revenue sources, including meal and hotel taxes.

As it has over the past two years, FOHH will be following county budget developments closely, advocating to at least preserve, and hopefully increase, the share of the county's general funds devoted to our parks, including, of course, Historic Huntley. ❖



As part of Art & Architecture Day 2024, FOHH board members hosted a tour of Historic Huntley for FOHMP board members. Here the tour group checks out the ice well, with the tree canopy of HMP offering a wonderful background view. Afterwards, participating members of the FOHH and FOHMP boards enjoyed lunch together. There was a great exchange of information and ideas on how the two boards might work more closely together to develop and support shared interests in HMP and Historic Huntley. Photo courtesy of Jacqueline den Otter.

FOHH Used Book and CD Sale Celebrates Ten-Year Anniversary!

This September will mark the ten-year anniversary of FOHH's used book and CD sale at HMP's Norma Hoffman Visitor Center. Over the years, the sale has brought joy to non-fiction book and classical music fans thrilled to find good reads and great music at bargain prices, while supplying FOHH with funds to help preserve, maintain, and raise public awareness about Historic Huntley.

The book sale has traditionally focused on titles relating to local and Virginia history, historic lifeways, slavery, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, historic architecture, and Virginia cookbooks. Last year, that selection was expanded to include books on birds, trees, and other aspects of the natural world brought to mind by HMP.

The focus of the CD sale has been, and continues to be, on classical and historic music, historical narratives, and sounds of nature.

More than just a mercantile enterprise, the sale also serves as a FOHH vehicle of diplomacy with local historic sites and centers for scholarly historic study. In the interest of strengthening



FOHH board member Carolyn Gamble educates members of a scout troop about cultural resources within HMP as part of Wetlands Awareness Day on May 5. Fellow FOHH Board Members Patty Young and Todi Carnes also staffed FOHH's information table. Despite a rainy start to the day, close to 300 people stopped by the table, including FCPA Executive Director Jai Cole and Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk. Many thanks to Carolyn Gamble for preparing and obtaining exhibits about the cultural resources highlighted at FOHH's table and at another nearby location. Photo by Todi Carnes.

FOHH's relationships with such allies, all book donations to FOHH are screened for potential interest to them. Over the years, Mount Vernon's George Washington Presidential Library has expressed an interest in, and ultimately accessioned, multiple volumes proffered by FOHH. Some academic titles in history, which don't always sell well to the general public, have been donated by FOHH to history department students and faculty at George Mason University. Recently, in a bid to build a relationship with

the American Horticultural Society at their historic River Farm headquarters, FOHH donated books for their new Childrens' Nature Library and Reading Room.

The vast majority of donated books and CDs donated to FOHH are sold to raise funds for FOHH's work in support of Historic Huntley. If you'd like to help power the sale through the next ten years with a donation of non-fiction books or classical music CDs, please contact Todi Carnes at todicarnes@verizon.net. ❖



A homecoming for Huntley art! Generous owners and stewards of Huntley-related and -themed art graciously agreed to temporarily part with their art so that it could return to Huntley for the viewing pleasure of those attending spring 2024's Art & Architecture Day at Historic Huntley. Art displayed in the tenant house was borrowed from Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk, FOHH Board Members Charlotte Brown and Robbie McNeil, and the Fairfax County Park Authority. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay also permitted the display at Huntley of a painting (not pictured) by Yvette St. Laurent that normally hangs in his office at the Government Center. Many thanks to all for the art loans and to Charlotte Brown, Patty Young, and Gina Sando for arranging the display. Photo courtesy of Charlotte Brown.



Meet Historic Huntley's summer intern. "My name is Sagan Holbrook, and I've just graduated in August with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history, with a concentration in public history, from George Mason University. I also will be earning a double minor in art history and tourism and events management. I have been very eager to work at Huntley Meadows and Historic Huntley. I'm also excited to share my enthusiasm for learning about the world around us with the community and preserving historical information." Photo courtesy of Sagan Holbrook.

Upcoming FCPA Programs at Historic Huntley

For more information and to register, call 703.222.4664 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes, click on **Find a Program**, and search by **Historic Huntley**, **program name**, or **code**. Preregistration is required for many programs.

A tip for finding **ALL programs** at Historic Huntley. Enter the following: Search text: **hist**; Category of activity: **All Categories**; Place: **Historic Huntley**; Month: **All Months**; Day of the week: **7 Selected**; Age range: **All Ages**

Civil War at Huntley—Division and Endurance (16-Adult) • September 19, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Code 4NZ.048W; October 29, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Code: 4NZ.YBY5; November 17, 1:00-2:00 p.m., Code: 4NZ.DJTC

Fairfax was as divided as the nation in 1861. Yet these divisions help to explain how Huntley endured the war. This program will examine Huntley during the Civil War through the experiences of the Mason family, their neighbors, and an occupying army. Tour of Historic Huntley included. \$10

Mason Tea (Adults) • September 21, 1:00-2:30 p.m., Code: 87A.OBK4; October 5, 1:00-2:30 p.m., Code: 87A.5MZ1
Enjoy an afternoon tea circa 1830 much as Betsey Mason would have, with the gleam of polished silver and proper tea etiquette. Sample a menu of tasty treats appropriate to the period in an historic setting as you brush up on your tea history. Tour of Historic Huntley included. \$35

Epidemics of the Past (14-Adult) • October 9, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Code: ZGS.NH6Y

Disease has always shaped our history. Enjoy a healthy stroll up to a lovely view while we uncover why the Masons built a summer home upon a hill and how epidemics of the past shaped the society we live in today. \$10

Pumpkin Party on the Hill (2-12 years) • October 27, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Code: 099.9TNN

Bring a pumpkin to paint and decorate, make and taste some pumpkin ice cream, and make and bring home your own pumpkin play-dough. Learn about the history of pumpkins and enjoy a pumpkin story. \$9

Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge (10-18 years) • November 4, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Code: 38A.FOTF

This program satisfies most of the requirements to earn the badge. Scouts must complete all prework before the start of class. Pre-work and program details available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/scouts. Scouts unable to complete all requirements may receive partial credit from their merit badge counselor. \$48

Dutch Oven Brunch (6-Adult) • November 15, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Code: 269.86UH

Join us around the campfire for some corn pancakes and freshly made butter as we learn about the history of Thanksgiving foodways and how Thanksgiving might not have been celebrated by the Masons. \$15

Enslaved Lives and the Legacy of Slavery (Adults) • November 20, 1:00-2:00 p.m., Code: BF1.KSVR

Join a historian for a tour of Huntley that examines the relationship of the Mason family to slavery and recovers insights into the lives of the Humphreys family and other enslaved people whose labor maintained Mason wealth and social status. \$12

Join Friends of Historic Huntley today!

Support Historic Huntley by joining this group of history- and historic preservation-minded people. Members receive the newsletter, an invitation to a members-only event, and a 10% discount on FOHH merchandise. FOHH is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. With your volunteer efforts and financial support, we can make a difference!

Name _____ Tel _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Huntley Headlines and event notifications are emailed to members.

Current and past issues of the newsletter and event information can be found at www.historichuntley.org.

- \$15 Individual \$20 Family \$10 Student/Senior
 \$150 Lifetime Membership Additional donation _____
 New Member **Renewing Member** **Total enclosed** _____

I'm interested in volunteering in the following area(s):

HH (work with staff at HMP): Docent Greeter Special Events

FOHH: Fundraising Program Planning Public Relations Research

Send completed form with check payable to *Friends of Historic Huntley* to:

FOHH, P.O. Box 7241, Alexandria, VA 22307-0241

Questions? info@HistoricHuntley.org

Huntley Headlines is produced by Friends of Historic Huntley, a local citizens group formed to preserve Historic Huntley and related cultural resources through advocacy and education.

Board of Directors: Todi Carnes, President • Robbie McNeil, Vice President • Carolyn Gamble, Secretary • Jere Gibber, Treasurer • Erica Hershler, Publicity • Charlotte Brown • Peter Christensen • Charles O. Davis • Patty Young • Susan Escherich, Emeritus • Todi Carnes, HMHOA Representative

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Contact changes:

Please send your email or mailing address changes to info@HistoricHuntley.org or FOHH, P.O. Box 7241, Alexandria, VA 22307-0241.

Tour Historic Huntley: Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., spring through fall

Discover a view for all time during a tour of Historic Huntley, with its many vistas, voices, and stories, many reflecting the American quest for freedom. The tour includes the late Federal-style 1824 villa, farm outbuildings, stories from the Huntley community, and an unparalleled view of Hybla Valley. A Fairfax County Park Authority site, the property is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites.

The villa is a short walk up a steep hill and the grounds are open from dawn to dusk from April through the end of October.

For tours, advanced registration is recommended. Purchase tickets at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley/hours-tour.

\$10, adults; \$8, seniors, youth, students; free for children up to 4. Check in at the lower house adjacent to the parking lot at 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306. For more information or to schedule a private tour by appointment, call 703.768.2525. ❖

Huntley-Related Web Sites

www.historichuntley.org

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley/

www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC HUNTLEY

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