

Summer 2022

# Lee-Fendall House

## MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

### New Exhibit Explores Legacies of Freedom

On June 3rd, 2022, the Lee-Fendall House held the opening reception of its newest temporary exhibit, "Lives Worth Celebrating: Stories of Resilience, Rebellion and Freedom." Among the attendees were local museum professionals and descendants of African Americans connected to the house, including Judge Quander, the founder of the Quander Historical and Educational Society, as well as Robin Quander Whitmire and Marie Quander, the daughters of Canaria Quander who worked in the house in the 1960s.

The exhibit received praise for its refreshing point of view on how the stories of African Americans are shared and how the public is educated about their remarkable contributions beyond the context of slavery.

"Lives Worth Celebrating" is divided into three parts and will run from June to November from 2022 - 2024. The first part, "Freedom," features the free and enslaved African Americans connected to Lee-Fendall House and the journey to freedom of two individuals. It also honors the 51 enslaved people who built the house, which stands as a tribute to their talent and hard work. The exhibit also features an international figure, Thomas Alexandre Dumas, a formerly enslaved French Haitian who became a "superhero" of the 18th century; a national figure, legendary basketball player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and his outstanding achievements; and a local figure, Harriet Jacobs, who helped refugees from slavery in Alexandria during the Civil War transition to freedom.

Following the exhibit opening, Jeremy Ray, Director of Interpretation at George Washington's Mount Vernon, gave an insightful lecture about the history of interpreting enslavement at this iconic site, how it has evolved over the years, and what their future interpretive plans are for sharing the full story of the enslaved and free individuals that lived and worked there.



*Visitors reading about enslaved and free people who worked at Lee-Fendall House*



*Descendants of James Lewis, Jr. who worked at Lee-Fendall 1941-69*

On Saturday, June 4th the museum was honored to host the descendants of James Lewis, Jr. who worked as the chauffeur for Lee-Fendall's last resident owner, labor organizer John L. Lewis. The two Lewis men forged a close personal relationship over the years which James Lewis Jr.'s children were fond of sharing. Janice Winters, Ruth Shuler, and James III recalled their times at Lee-Fendall House and their closeness with John L. Lewis and his daughter.

**Part one of the exhibit, "Freedom," is on view through November 13, 2022.**

### Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden

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www.leefendallhouse.org

### Follow us on:

-  Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden
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### Museum Hours:

Wed-Sat: 10am - 4pm  
Sun: 1 - 4pm

Guided tours offered on the hour.

Self-guided tours available in English and Spanish.

# Lee-Fendall House Swings into the Twenties with the Return of Sips & Secrets: A Speakeasy Night

On a blistering hot evening, Lee-Fendall was thrilled to welcome more than a hundred friends back to our garden for the long-anticipated return of our annual speakeasy night.

Attendees danced to jazz music from Tony Gudell & The Foggy Bottom Whompstompers - with guidance from Fidgety Feet, D.C.'s premiere lindy hop troupe, who led a dance lesson and contest. Attendees also enjoyed conversing with three visitors from the house's past, Robert, Mai, and E.E. Downham, who joined us thanks to a partnership with the Little Theatre of Alexandria. And they cooled off with four signature 1920s cocktails, with the chance to sample a bourbon rickey, a bee's knees, Jack Rose, and a Shirley Temple.

The event netted more than \$10,000 to support critical preservation efforts at the museum, including our first Historic Structures Report, which will provide a professional working overview of the current state of this 237-year-old property and a roadmap for the next phase of our work. We are grateful for everyone who helped make this our most successful fundraiser yet!



## 2022 EVENT SPONSORS

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Kelly Newton Jeffers  
Rich & Gabby Sterba  
Laura Lieberman & Jeremy Skog  
Megan & Randall Judd



*Lee-Fendall receives a \$5,000 grant from the Historic Alexandria Foundation in support of the HSR project.*

## What is a Historic Structures Report?

As the Lee-Fendall House approaches its landmark 50th year as a museum in 2024, we are raising funds to commission our first Historic Structures Report (HSR). An HSR documents the physical information about a property's history and preserves the information through photos, digital scans, drawings, and text. An HSR also provides more detail about the building's existing condition and helps guide future preservation efforts.

If you would like to help us ensure the house continues to stand as a historic landmark and educational resource in Alexandria, you can donate at [www.leefendallhouse.org/support-us](http://www.leefendallhouse.org/support-us).



## OBJECT SPOTLIGHT

The parlor—from the French parler, “to speak”—found in many middle and upper-class American homes was set apart for more formal entertaining. The parlor showcased a family's gentility, culture, social status, and more. By the time Harriet and Louis Casenove moved into Lee-Fendall in 1850, American households were spending a lot of time and money on furnishing their parlors.

Earlier this spring we acquired a set of Victorian parlor furniture, graciously donated by Richard and Susan Farina, now on display in the front room downstairs. The wood and plush red velvet set includes a love seat with an elegant swooping back and his-and-her chairs with button backs. While modest compared to some of the more dramatic Gothic Revival styles of early Victorian furniture, a closer look reveals intricately carved woodwork on the set, subtly showcasing the craftsmanship found in this Rococo Revival set.



*Our recently acquired Victorian furniture set is on display in the house's north parlor*

## Meet our new staff!

**Jenny Waters** joined Lee-Fendall this summer as our Collections Management Intern. Jenny will be working to catalogue and research historic objects in our collection, including some of our more recent acquisitions. Jenny has already had the opportunity to familiarize herself with most of the objects in our collection as she organized object photographs and uploaded them into our collections database, Past Perfect.

"I am about a month into my internship and am absolutely loving it, from meeting all of the wonderful, hard-working volunteers to everything I have learned so far about running a museum. Everything I am learning this summer I have found extremely helpful since I am planning to start a career in museums beginning with graduate school at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts in the Fall of 2023."



**Dina Farouny-Webber** joined our staff as the new Program & Education Manager in March. Dina grew up in an environment that constantly encouraged curiosity and learning and was exposed to world history and culture from a young age. Among Dina's favorite memories of her childhood are trips with her mother to museums, archeological sites, and historic cities around the world. Visits to old Cairo and the pyramids of Giza first sparked her fascination with the past.

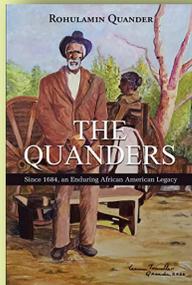
Dina brings a wealth of experience in a variety of fields, including education. Since moving to the United States in 2014, Dina expanded her knowledge of American history and gained experience in the museum field through volunteering and working at several Virginia museums, having most recently held a position at George Washington's Mount Vernon. Dina believes in the crucial role museums play in educating the public, particularly younger generations, about the past and its relevance.

## Summer Book Talks!

Saturday, July 9, 6:00 PM

***The Quanders: Since 1684, An Enduring African American Legacy***

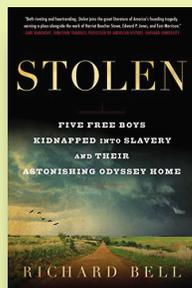
Author Rohulamin Quander will introduce stories of the Quander family, one of the oldest, consistently documented African American families in the United States.



Saturday, August 27, 2:00 PM

***Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery & Their Astonishing Odyssey Home***

Author Richard Bell will discuss his new book about kidnapping, enslavement, and human trafficking in 19th century America.



Books will be available for purchase and signing after each talk.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER



Join us for a story, a craft and a special tour of the museum designed for young learners every Friday morning at 10:30 AM throughout the summer!

Storytime is aimed at introducing young learners ages 3-6 to concepts of history, art and science, however children of all ages are welcome! The program will take place both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) and all craft materials are provided.

Tickets are \$10 per participating child (Parents/chaperones are free of charge). Advance registration is required. If you have questions, please call (703) 548-1789 or email us at [contact@leefendallhouse.org](mailto:contact@leefendallhouse.org).

### Book List:

July 1 - *We Came to America*, by Faith Ringgold  
July 8 - *Señorita Mariposa*, by Ben Gundersheimer  
July 15 - *Sewing Stories*, by Barbara Herkert  
July 22 - *The Tweedles Go Electric*, by Monica Kulling and Marie Lafrance  
July 29 - *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer*, by Shana Corey  
Aug 5 - *Brick by Brick*, by Charles R. Smith Jr  
Aug 12 - *The Street Beneath My Feet*, by Charlotte Guillain and Yuval Zommer  
Aug 19 - *The Little House*, by Virginia Lee Burton

# Mark Your Calendars!

★ = free event for Lee-Fendall House members!  
Learn more at [www.leefendallhouse.org/membership](http://www.leefendallhouse.org/membership)

Saturday, July 9, 6:00 PM  
**Book Talk with Judge Rohulamin Quander**  
*The Quanders: Since 1684, An Enduring African American Legacy* ★

Saturday, July 16, 10:00 AM  
**Civil War History in the Garden** ★  
Sit in the shade of the Lee-Fendall garden and learn how the American Civil War impacted soldiers and civilians in Alexandria. During the war, African American refugees from slavery sought freedom in the city while Confederate sympathizers fled. Alexandria served as a major supply and staging area for the Union Army as well as a medical center. At the Lee-Fendall House, which served as a Union hospital, learn about medical advancements and specifically the use of plants to treat sick and wounded soldiers.

Saturday, July 16, 2:00 PM  
Saturday, August 20, 2:00 PM  
**Under the Same Roof: Enslaved and Free Workers at Lee-Fendall** ★

Learn about the enslaved and free African Americans who lived and worked in the home, both before and after the Civil War. Hear about their experiences and their contributions to the site and its history.



Saturday, August 27, 2:00 PM  
**Book Talk with Richard Bell: *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery & Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*** ★

## Trivia Nights

Fridays, June 24, July 8 & 22, August 5 & 19 at 7:00 PM



Staff members at Carlyle House Historic Park and the Lee-Fendall House Museum combine their knowledge to create bi-weekly trivia nights throughout the summer in the beautiful gardens of the Lee-Fendall House. Test your knowledge on everything from pop culture to history.

Tickets are \$8 per person and include snacks and one complimentary drink. Additional drinks can be purchased at our bar. Teams are limited to 6 people, ages 21+ only.

Each trivia night will have a different theme (see below). There will be weekly prizes for the winning team as well as a grand prize for the team that wins the most points over the entire summer!

June 24 - 1970s Trivia  
July 8 - Alexandria History Trivia  
July 22 - Horror Trivia  
August 5 - Sports History Trivia  
August 19 - 1990s Trivia

Saturday, September 3, 2:00 PM  
**Blood and Strikes: American Labor in the 20th Century** ★  
From deadly mine explosions to wartime strikes, the history of the 20th century American labor movement is full of violence and controversy. This Labor Day weekend, learn about the struggle for workers' rights at the home of one of its most powerful spokesmen, John L. Lewis.

Saturday, September 10, 10:00 AM  
**Prohibition in Alexandria Walking Tour** ★  
Discover the forgotten stories of teetotalers and bootleggers on this walking tour of Prohibition-era Alexandria. Learn about the dramatic campaign to ban alcohol in Virginia which threatened a long tradition of local alcohol production and sale. The tour begins at the Lee-Fendall House, home to the Downham family, who were once one of the city's most prominent liquor dealers.

Visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) for the most up-to-date list of upcoming programs.

- Get full event details and purchase tickets for your favorite events at [LeeFendallHouse.eventbrite.com](http://LeeFendallHouse.eventbrite.com)

Program space is limited and fills quickly – advanced purchase of tickets is recommended.