



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Freedom House Museum to reopen

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Historic Alexandria continues its celebration of Historic Preservation Month by announcing that the Freedom House Museum at 1315 Duke St. will reopen on May 27 with three new exhibitions showcasing Alexandria's Black history and the Black experience in America. A grand opening event is scheduled for June 20, during the observation of the Juneteenth holiday.

The museum will be open to the public Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays and Mondays from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5 per adult, \$3 per child ages 5–12 and free for City of Alexandria residents. Due to high demand and limited capacity, it is recommended to reserve tickets in advance online.

The National Historic Landmark is what remains of a large complex dedicated to trafficking thousands of Black men, women and children between 1828 and 1861. The museum honors the lives and experiences of the enslaved and free Black people who lived in – and were trafficked through – Alexandria.

The exhibits depict the roles of the historic site and Alexandria in the domestic slave trade, and share inspiring stories of African Americans in our community on three floors of the museum:

1315 Duke St. highlights the stories of people brought from the Chesapeake Bay area, moved through 1315 Duke St., and forced into slave markets in the deep South. The exhibit includes archaeological artifacts, a model of the complex and stories of personal experiences of individuals trafficked through the domestic slave trade.

Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality, a traveling exhibition from the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, traces four centuries of Black history in Virginia through stories of extraordinary individuals who struggled for equality and, in the process, profoundly shaped the nature of American society and the meaning of our collective ideals. A companion exhibit: Determined in Alexandria features Black Alexandrians who built the foundations of our community while fighting for equality.

Before the Spirits Are Swept Away is a series of paintings of African American sites by the late Sherry Z. Sanabria. The third floor also includes a reflection space with a bronze model, or maquette, of Alexandria's well-known Edmonson Sisters sculpture by artist Erik Blome, a gift to the Office of Historic Alexandria from former City Manager Mark Jinks and his wife, Eileen Jinks.

Due to the pandemic, the Freedom House Museum closed on March 17, 2020. On March 24, 2020, the City of Alexandria purchased the building from the Urban League of Northern Virginia. During the pandemic, work continued to protect and interpret the building including completing the Historic Structures Report, research and the creation of three new exhibits. The Freedom House Museum site is integral to the understanding of Black history in Alexandria and the United States. It is part of Alexandria's large collection of historic sites, tours, markers and more that depict stories of the Colonial era through the Civil War and Civil Rights eras to today.

Visit alexandriava.gov/FreedomHouse for more information.



Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by staff of the Office of Historic Alexandria and invited guests.