

Alexandria Times

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Alexandria's 275th anniversary

This year, the City of Alexandria will commemorate its 275th anniversary. This milestone marks 275 years of the city's dynamic history and amplifies the shared experiences of the community and the collective achievements that have shaped Alexandria's identity.

As early as 1732, Hugh West had established a tobacco warehouse on high bluffs overlooking a small but deep bay at what is today the foot of Oronoco Street in Alexandria. In the fall of 1748, Scottish and English merchants who owned real estate at Cameron, a small hamlet four miles west of the Potomac River, petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to establish a town at Hugh West's Hunting Creek Warehouse. In the spring of 1749, this site was selected, and the new town was named Alexandria in honor of the early owner of much of the land, Scotsman John Alexander.

Fairfax County surveyor John West laid out 60 acres and lots were auctioned off in July 1749. Over the past 275 years, the city has played a significant role in our nation's narrative, from the 18th century as George Washington's hometown, to its dark past of being home to one of the nation's largest slave-trading operations prior to the Civil War, to its current-day



PHOTO/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The city is celebrating its 275th anniversary with dozens of events through September.

transformation into a highly sought-after location for tourism, residential living and economic opportunity.

From April through September, the city will mark the anniversary with immersive historical walks, civic celebrations, educational programming and other engaging events. The commemoration kicks off on Saturday in Old Town from King Street Park to Windmill Hill Park.

Mayor Justin Wilson will lead the festivities with an official proclamation followed by a performance from the City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums. Visitors can also learn about city services and resources, meet our public safety and works fleet and enjoy music from the Community Little Big Band. On King Street, a display of three classic Model T and Model A Fords will be on hand to mark Alexandria's

20th-century history, the Alexandria Branch of the Ford Motor Company that was once an iconic part of the waterfront.

At Robinson Landing, visitors can attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Alexandria Archaeology Museum's new window front exhibit "Buried Ships of Robinson Landing." Located at the corner of The Strand and Pioneer Mill Way, the exhibit will feature scale models of three 18th-century vessel remnants excavated by archaeologists in 2018 on the same block as the exhibit.

Following the ribbon cutting, visitors can enjoy music at the Robinson Landing stage by the Ricky Wise Trio. Additionally, the public is invited to join Wilson and members of City Council at Windmill Hill Park for the dedication of the first of 275 native trees to be planted in partnership with our City's Stream Corridor Restoration efforts.

The event kicks off a spring and summer of commemorative activities. Visit Alexandria va.gov/ALX275 for a calendar of the city's upcoming 275th anniversary activities. Here is everyone's chance to take part in history in the making!

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.