



- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA -

Entrusted With History's Future

Newsletter for the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the District of Columbia
VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2 WINTER 2024

President's Message

Happy new year! As I write, Washington is covered with a beautiful white blanket and the temperature is the lowest it has been this winter, but the days are getting longer, and we know spring is not too far away. The fall of 2023 brought us great events, which you can read about in this issue, and our spring program will also be very busy, despite the closure of Dumbarton House for repairs to its heating system.

NSCDA-DC membership is growing! We have increased by well over 50 percent in the past decade. We now have 327 active members, 56 courtesy members and 11 candidates. I attribute this rapid growth to the wonderful opportunities we offer and camaraderie and esprit de corps among the Dames. Whether it be volunteering to place wreaths on the graves at Mt. Zion cemetery, going on interesting trips both locally and across our great country, visiting local museums, or gathering at lectures at Dumbarton House, we try to offer something for everyone's interests and schedules. I am always open to suggestions for more activities to increase our knowledge of American History and expand our Patriotic Services. Please let me know if you have any ideas!

Do enjoy this newsletter filled with news of past and upcoming events. I look forward to seeing everyone at our events this Spring.

Eleanore H. Boyse
President of the DC Society: NSCDA



Historical Activities

Dames Honor DC's Black Ancestors at Wreath Laying

On December 9, at least 25 Dames in a group of about 50 from the local community stood on the hallowed ground of Mt. Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemetery to honor many of DC's Black ancestors by laying wreaths at their graves. The DC Dames raised \$3,250 this year for Mt. Zion/FUBS! This is the third year that the DC Dames have raised money for the cemetery's non-profit. Top goals are to continue preserving the physical grounds of the cemetery, which are at severe risk of erosion, and to expand the electronic database of the genealogy and history of its interred. A heartfelt thank you goes to those who came out on December 9 and everyone who was involved in or participated in the Wreath Sale this year! A special shout out goes to Sarah Demarest, Debbie Sams Sczudlo, Nina Randolph, Kristen Nunnally, and Betsy Nottingham for their significant support of the sale's logistics!



Upcoming Trip to Nashville!

The DC Historical Activities Committee would like to announce that we are planning a trip to Nashville, Tennessee April 25-28, 2024. We will visit the historic home of President Andrew Jackson, The Hermitage, as well as Carnton Plantation in Franklin, TN, where the Battle of Franklin took place. We will stay in Downtown Nashville and visit the only American replica of the famous Parthenon in Athens, Greece as well as the Egyptian Revival Presbyterian church built by American architect William Strickland. These are just a few of the highlights to show a very different side to the Country Music City of Nashville. To join the waitlist please contact Liza Chapman-Memery at lizamchapman@msn.com.

Historical Activities

Our Trip to Charleston, South Carolina

By Liza Chapman-Memery

The Historical Activities trip to Charleston, South Carolina took place November 1-3, 2023 with 14 DC Dames in attendance. We stayed at the pink Mills House Hotel, in downtown Charleston. On our first evening we were welcomed to cocktails & hors d'oeuvres at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Ridley Wills. Mr. Wills graciously gave a tour of their recently renovated 1740's stucco home on Tradd Street. After giving us a wonderful tour, Mr. Wills (first cousin to Liza Chapman-Memery) joined us for a delicious dinner at The Establishment Restaurant.

The following morning, we were met in the hotel lobby by SC Dame Mary Helen Dantzler of Two Sisters Tours. She and her sister are seventh generation, native Charlestonians, whose family first arrived in 1793. Mrs. Dantzler expertly guided us to the Powder Magazine Museum where the SC Dames have their headquarters. We learned of the early turbulent history of the walled city of Charles-



At the Battery of Charleston with Two Sisters Tours

ton. Along the tour we visited several important churches and saw the "Four Corners of Law," where you can "mail a letter, go to jail, post your bail and say a hail." We said goodbye at the Battery of Charleston and had a delicious lunch at the Carolina Yacht Club, starting with she-crab soup and ending with peppermint ice cream!

That afternoon we were graciously greeted by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Halliwell Pringle Duell, who are the first recipients of the NSCDA's Preservation History's Future Award, for Middleton Foundation, which includes Middleton Place and their home and museum The Edmondston-Alston House. We had a private tour of the museum and then were invited to come upstairs to see their private rooms. They could not have been more gracious and inviting. Next, we walked over to the Nathaniel Russell House Museum and were given a thorough tour by the Curator. That evening we went to cocktails and dinner at the home of Mr. & Mrs. John Winthrop (also our hosts for lunch at the Yacht Club) at their beautiful home. The company, conversations and food were fabulous!



DC Dames in front of the Middleton Oak Tree, at Middleton Place Plantation, estimated to be 1,000 years old.

Historical Activities, continued

The following day we visited the Ashley River Plantations, Drayton Hall and Middleton Place. We were greeted at Drayton Hall by CEO Carter Hudgins and given an excellent tour of the first Palladian mansion built in America. Next, we drove to Middleton Place and were astounded at the extensive gardens with blooming camelias and butterfly-shaped ponds along with abundant low country wildlife. We had an exemplary, private “Behind the Ropes Tour” by the House Museum Curator.

On our last evening together, we walked along the Battery to Lee Guerry’s cousin Mrs. Eleanore Parker’s home for cocktails before leaving for our dinner reservations at 82 Queen.

Thank you to Lee Guerry for helping to organize and personalize the Charleston trip with me, she made us all fall in “love” with her Charleston. Thank you to all the wonderful DC Dames who attended. Thank you to Anne Baldwin and Susanne Duvall, who wrote checks and took the monies for the trip. Thank you to Mary Calvert for pioneering the way. Leslie George for her guidance and announcements, and DC Dame President Eleanore Boyse for her unfailing support. Finally, a big thank you to my Co-Chair in Historical Activities, Sally Weibe for always having my back!



Anne Randolph, Lee Guerry, Susan Anthony, and Stephanie McCormick-Goodhart



Drayton Hall



Mr. John Winthrop, Lee Guerry, Eleanore Boyse, and Liza Chapman-Memery at the Carolina Yacht Club

Membership

Doris Dixon and Nan Whalen report that nominations for new candidates have slowed this fall and winter. They would like to remind members that the NSCDA’s National Membership Drive focusing on legacies will come to an end in November 2024 at the Biennial. The legacy program provides a streamlined, abbreviated process for legacies to join the NSCDA. A legacy candidate is defined as a member’s daughter, sister, mother, first cousin, aunt, granddaughter, and grandmother who are consanguineously related to the member. Please contact Doris Dixon at dorisdixon8@gmail.com or 202-285-0486 if you have any questions about the legacy initiative or on the membership proposal process in general.

Proposed candidates (legacy and non-legacy) will be considered at the March 13 Board Meeting and again at the June 5 meeting. Completed applications are due to Doris ten days prior to the Board Meeting. The process for nominating a candidate is not difficult. All that is required at the time of nomination are:

1. A completed application form with the name of the proposed candidate’s ancestor and personal information about the candidate and her parents, signed by the proposer.
2. A letter from the proposer, including details of how the proposer knows the candidate, how long they have been acquainted, the candidate’s interest in joining, and what she will bring to our Society.
3. A letter from the endorser, including details of how the proposer knows the candidate, how long they have been acquainted, and any other pertinent information about the candidate she wishes to share.
4. The proposed candidate’s CV or background statement.
5. The proposed candidate’s photograph.

On behalf of the Membership Committee, Doris is happy to provide an application form and candidate proposal checklist. If you need assistance in completing the process Doris and Nan are pleased to help.

Book Clubs

Learning about Woodrow and Edith Wilson

The History Hounds recently read *Untold Power*, by Rebecca Boggs Roberts. It is the fascinating story of first lady Edith Wilson, who had an unprecedented rise to power. Although she was born into Appalachian poverty, she rose to social and political prominence. In 1919, a time when women couldn’t vote, she effectively acted as the first woman president of the U.S. when her husband, Woodrow Wilson, became incapacitated.

In January the History Hounds visited the Woodrow Wilson House. Just off the beaten path of Embassy Row, it is where Woodrow Wilson and his wife Edith moved when he retired from the White House in 1921. The house is a historic treasure that provides a glimpse of life in 1924.



Members of the History Hounds book club with their tour guide at the Woodrow Wilson House.

The Archive Corner

In 2014, our president of the DC Dames, Betsy Nottingham, was asked by the NSCDA president if the DC Dames could take on a task at Dumbarton House. It seemed that Dumbarton House had a lot of cardboard boxes filled with Dames papers, but no one really knew what they were. Could the DC Dames please look through them and identify them? At the next Annual Meeting, Betsy asked if anyone was interested. Two Dames signed-up; Lea Uhre, a retired White House Chief Librarian, and Judy Stover, a retired high school history teacher.

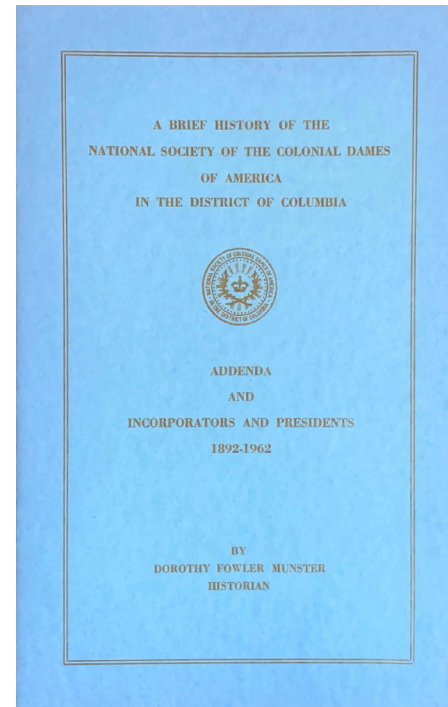
For the next five years Lea and Judy went to Dumbarton House every Tuesday. The staff would bring out a couple of boxes for them to go through. They read, identified, and catalogued each item. The contents of these boxes were the papers of the NSCDA, Dumbarton House, and the DC Dames. Since the office space for these three groups was so small, and at times nonexistent, the letters, documents and other odds-and-ends had been boxed and stored in any space available for over 100 years. Dumbarton staff pulled all of the boxes they could find from closets, under beds, in drawers, anywhere and everywhere. There were over 250 boxes in total!

Lea and Judy separated the three different groups of papers. The Dumbarton staff were given their papers. Lea and Judy read and organized the daily paperwork of the NSCDA and DC Dames. It was fascinating to learn about how a group of women were able to create an organization which would have as its goals to keep American history alive and appreciate this land and all its people from 1892 until today. Each paper told a different story. It was truly working with primary source history. Earlier, Jeanette Harper and Elena Millie had worked to archive the papers that DC had collected in a file cabinet. But the cardboard boxes gave the DC archive a bonanza of documents and were added to the first archive.

The papers and objects from these old cardboard boxes are now preserved and being used by Dames and historians for their work at collecting, writing, and discussing DC Dames' rich history of projects and contributions to the Washington DC area.

DC Dames archives are constantly growing as events and times pass, so an archive is never finished. There is always work to be done. It is work that is the definition of "detail," but many stories are found. So, the newsletter will have an Archive Corner from now on and these stories will be told.

Judy Stover
Archive Committee

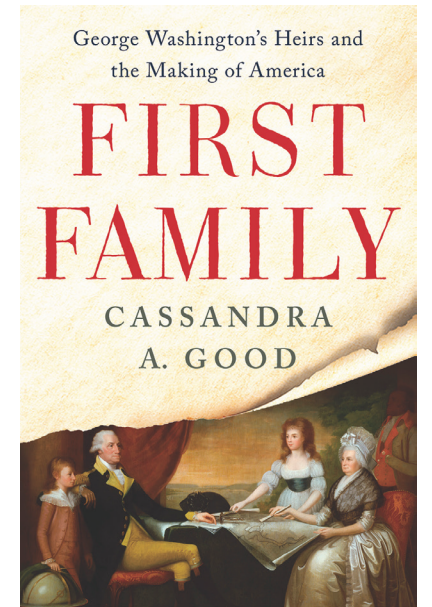


Judy Stover found this booklet on the history of the DC society. You can read it on our website!

Speakers and Programs

Upcoming Events

March 20, 6:30 p.m. – Historian Cassandra A. Good, PhD. will discuss her most recent book, *First Family: George Washington's Heirs and the Making of America*. The book tells the story of Washington's step-grandchildren, the Custises, who achieved fame as the nation's first "first family." While it is widely known that George and Martha Washington never had children of their own, fewer are aware that they raised children together. In *First Family*, we see Washington as a father figure and are introduced to the children he helped raise, tracing their complicated roles in American history. The Custis family story – long overlooked – parallels America's story in its first century: military triumph and tragedy; democracy and old aristocratic ties; visions of liberty alongside the reality of slavery. By tracing the lives of a family who lived not just through but at the center of America's early evolution, we get both an intimate and sweeping view of a young nation's growing pains. Dr. Good is an associate professor of history of politics and gender in early America at Marymount University and an award-winning author.

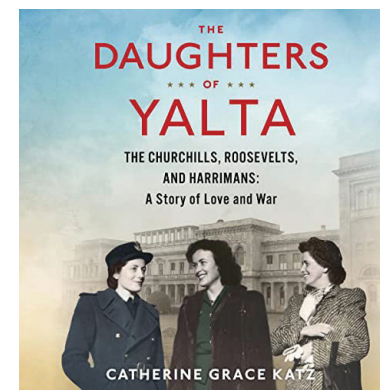


April 24, 6:30 p.m. – Exciting Evening with Author Catherine Grace Katz. A cocktail reception will be followed by a lecture and book signing.

Join your fellow Dames and guests for a fascinating evening with Catherine Katz, author of *Daughters of Yalta*, as she discusses her widely acclaimed book. She presents the untold story of three glamorous, intelligent, and politically savvy young women – Kathleen Harriman, Anna Roosevelt, and Sarah Churchill – who accompanied their famous fathers to the Yalta Conference in February 1945.

Ms. Katz masterfully lets the readers into the relationship of the women to each other and to their fathers, as well as into the relationships of the leaders of the Conference: Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Averell Harriman, and Joseph Stalin. The book reads like a novel and brings you into the dramas taking place during the Conference and its fateful reverberations in the waning days of World War II. In this, the author's first book, she has skillfully marshalled diaries, letters, oral histories, and memoirs to let us look with her into the lives of those involved in this story of the most pivotal of "the Big Three" Conferences during the war. So compelling is her story, that we may now be on the lookout for the movie version which will be coming. Ms. Katz will elaborate on this news at the lecture.

Catherine Grace Katz is a writer and historian from Chicago. She graduated from Harvard in 2013 with a BA in History, and received her MPhil in History from the University of Cambridge where she wrote her dissertation on the origins of modern counterintelligence practices. She received her law degree from Harvard in May 2023.



Excursions

The Excursions Committee has been very active since September when the DC Dames visited the Charles Town, West Virginia area to tour Happy Retreat, the historic property originally owned and developed by Charles Washington, the youngest brother of George Washington. After a guided tour of the 18th century mansion, the stone and brick kitchen/smokehouse, and an octagonal wooden schoolhouse, the group departed from Happy Retreat and drove to Harewood, the private home of Walter Washington, a direct descendant of Samuel Washington, another younger brother of George. Walter invited us into his grand home where we enjoyed our boxed lunches and then captivated us as he brought out rare family artifacts and explained their provenance. It was a splendid and memorable day. Because of the distance from Washington, DC to Charles Town, several Dames had spent the previous night at the nearby historic Hillbrook Inn and enjoyed dinner with Walter Washington and Adam Erby, the Curator of Fine and Decorative Arts at Mount Vernon and to whom we are indebted for arranging our visit to these two historic Washington family homes.

In November, a group of 11 Dames and three guests visited the Capital Jewish Museum in DC for a docent-led tour of this new museum and its special exhibit “Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg” followed by lunch at the nearby Japanese restaurant Love, Makoto.

The first of two excursions in December was on Saturday, December 2 when DC Dames and their families were invited to the lovely historic home of fellow dame Ruth Ryder to view the Scottish Christmas Walk in Old Town Alexandria.



Dames gathered following the Scottish Christmas Walk



DC Dames at Happy Retreat



DC Dames in front of Harewood

This annual parade pays homage to the Scots who founded Alexandria in 1749. Many Scottish clans and bag pipers entertained the crowds while the Scottish terriers and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels paraded their holiday best.

On Monday, December 11, a group of 35 DC Dames met at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America for an outstanding tour of the beautiful Monastery church where they saw full size replicas of the Mount Calvary and Holy Sepulche shrines in Jerusalem as well as a reproduction of the Roman catacombs. Following the tour, DC Dame Marguerite

Sullivan and her husband, Roger, gave the group a delightful presentation about their “Nativities of the World” collection on display at the Monastery for the Christmas season. While traveling to more than 100 countries for their respective jobs over the past 40 years, they collected creches which are as varied and unique as the cultures in which they found themselves immersed. Following the tour, lunch was enjoyed at Busboys and Poets in the Brookland neighborhood.

2024 began with a visit to the National Gallery of Art for a private tour, lunch, and lecture focusing on the exhibit “Mark Rothko: Paintings on Paper.” On February 7 Dames visited Planet Word, an immersive language-focused museum housed in the historic Franklin School.



DC Dames in the Chapel of St. Francis at the Franciscan Monastery. Roger and Marguerite Sullivan, collectors of the Nativity scenes, appear at the far left.



The Mexican Nativity Scene brought smiles to all viewers.

Upcoming Excursions

On Wednesday, February 28, we have the wonderful opportunity to tour the State Department’s newly refurbished **Diplomatic Rooms**.

On Monday, March 18, the Programs/Speakers Committee and the Excursions Committee are planning an event at the **House of the Temple**, the Masonic headquarters of the US in Washington DC. It will begin with speaker Chris Ruli, followed by a docent-led tour and then lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Tentatively planned for April is a Saturday excursion to the **American Visionary Art Museum** in Baltimore where we will meet the founder of the museum, Rebecca Hoffberger, followed by time to explore this unique museum. The AVAM has been described by CNN as “one of the most fantastic museums anywhere in America.”

Lastly, on Wednesday, May 1, there will be a tour of **Oak Spring**, Bunny Mellon’s home and garden, followed by lunch either on the Oak Spring farm or at a local tavern.

Patriotic Services

Fisher House Tour

On October 24, 2023 Michael Ybarra, Director of Fisher House Bethesda/Walter Reed Medical Center, led our tour and visit. 13 Colonial Dames attended. The tour included two of the five houses located at the military installation. Mr. Ybarra discussed the history and involvement of the Fisher Family and the Fisher House Foundation in building the homes since 1991. The homes presently are 70% occupied. Our members saw the interior of the homes: kitchen, dining room, living space, bedrooms and outside terraces. We learned of the clear dedication of the Fisher House staff to the military community and its close connections. We all departed with a very good understanding of the entire Fisher House project. Truly, our Patriotic Service Committee project is “a home away from home for families of wounded military.”



Belle Brent Duchin, Betty Thompson, Nina Randolph, Mary Kay Ruwe, Eleanore Boyse, Cynthia Toussaint, Ann Thompson, Hannah Sears, Shelley Ross-Larson, Virginia O’Hagan, Marta Dunetz, Sandy Webster.

Upcoming Events

NSCDA Congressional Essay Contest

Anastasia Hitzig, a student from DC has been awarded a scholarship as the winner of the Congressional Essay Contest. Anastasia is a senior at Benjamin Banneker High School and will attend the Washington Workshops Foundation’s seminar along with many other scholars from across the country. Dumbarton House sponsors a luncheon during the seminar for the students to meet with our members and discuss their essays as well as tour our historic headquarters. When the date and time of the luncheon is scheduled, a notice will be sent to enlist our Dames to sign up for the opportunity to welcome the scholars.

Military Women’s Memorial

The President of our Society presents a beautiful, patriotic wreath at the Military Women’s Memorial at Arlington Cemetery on Memorial Day on behalf of NSCDA. The Memorial Day tribute to women in our military will be celebrating its 27th year in May. The Patriotic Service Committee provides an annual donation in support of the Memorial.

Christmas Tea and Boutiques



Mary Johnson, Mary Bradshaw, and Marta Dunetz



Anne Randolph, Betsy Nottingham, Beth Roberts, and Danielle Kozlowski

2023

Co-Chairs Shelley Rodgers and Mary Ann Way hosted a successful Christmas Tea and Boutiques on Wednesday, December 6. Guests generously arrived with items to donate to Fisher House.

2024

The next Christmas Tea and Boutiques will take place at Dumbarton House on Wednesday, December 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Jennifer Spencer has agreed to chair this treasured event.



Bunny Muir and Mary Johnson in colorful red and green jackets adorned with Sulgrave Manor scarves at the Sulgrave Manor table.



2024 Calendar

February 28, 10:30 a.m.	Tour of the newly refurbished State Department Diplomatic Rooms
March 13, 10 a.m.	DC Dames Board Meeting
March 18, 10:30 a.m.	Excursion to House of the Temple, the US Masonic headquarters in DC
March 20, 6:30 p.m.	Evening lecture: Cassandra Goode will speak about her book <i>First Family: George Washington's Heirs and the Making of America</i> .
April 14, 11:00 a.m.	Hunt Brunch with the Society of Colonial Wars at the Chevy Chase Club
April 24, 6:30 p.m.	Cocktails followed by lecture by Catherine Grace Katz, author of <i>Daughters of Yalta</i> .
April 25-28	Historical Activities Tour of Nashville
May 1	All day excursion to Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring
May 15	DC Dames Annual Meeting
May 27	Wreath laying at Military Women's Memorial at Arlington Cemetery
June 5, 10 a.m.	DC Dames Board Meeting

Remember to visit our website at <https://www.nscdadc.org!>