

Alexandria/Arlington Women's History Bike Tour 2022

Overview

- This tour explores sites in Alexandria and Arlington associated with women's history and notable women.
- Please note that this is just a sampling of women's history in Alexandria and Arlington. There are many more stories worth celebrating.
- The route is about 6.2 miles long, with 4 stops.
- Go to <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40065866> for cuesheets or turn-by-turn directions.

Start your ride by heading south out of the Braddock Road metro station parking lot. Turn right onto Braddock Road, then turn right onto the Potomac Yard Trail. Continue on the Potomac Yard Trail until you get to the intersection with E. Custis Avenue.

1. Annie Rose Avenue and Potomac Yard

Stopping point: benches at the intersection of Potomac Avenue and E. Custis Avenue.

One block north of here is Annie Rose Avenue, named after **Annie Bailey Rose**. She was the daughter of the Rev. Lewis (Louis) Henry Bailey, who was sold from the Alexandria slave pen at 1315 Duke Street when he was a young boy. Bailey was taken from his mother, Ann, and sent to a new slave owner in Texas. He spent his childhood and his teenage years in slavery until he was emancipated in 1863. From Texas, he walked all the way back to Alexandria, where he found his mother living not too far from the slave pen where he was sold. For the rest of his life, Rev. Bailey devoted his time to his church and his family. In all, he founded five churches and two schools. He and his wife, Ella Dean, raised four children, with Annie being the oldest.

Rose married William Henry Rose of Alexandria, taught school in the area, and worked for many years at the U.S. Bureau of Printing and Engraving until she retired in 1945. She then devoted the rest of her long life to the Alexandria community, improving housing and home nursing for the elderly, educating Alexandria young people about Black history and slavery, and preserving Black history.

In the 1940s, Rose worked to encourage African Americans to register and vote and to take active roles in the community. At the height of the civil rights movement, she helped organize the 1963 March on Washington. With hundreds of others from Alexandria, she marched for jobs and freedom. She helped establish the Black History Resource Center, founded the City's Commission on Aging, was a founding member of the Senior Citizens Employment Services of Alexandria, served on the Urban League Board, played the organ for Ebenezer Baptist Church, and became the first Black president of the Alexandria Women's Civic Association.

Rose died in 1989. Her last act of kindness to her community was to have her property sold and have the proceeds go to several nonprofit organizations in the City of Alexandria. Rose received more than 30 awards from local and national groups in recognition of her life of activism and education.

Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/dchs/info/WomenTourWebsite.pdf>, <http://connectionarchives.com/PDF/2019/031319/Alexandria.pdf>, and <https://www.anniebrosehouse.com/anniebrose.aspx>

Look around you and admire the Potomac Yard Trail, the linear park, and the quiet residential neighborhood. Imagine what the area might have looked like if an NFL stadium had been built here.

Patsy Ticer was elected to the Alexandria City Council in 1982 and served three terms before being elected as the first female mayor of Alexandria in 1991. As mayor, Ticer was best known for standing up to then-Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke, who wanted to build a new stadium for the team in the Potomac Yard area of Alexandria. Ticer was reelected to a second term, then elected to the Virginia State Senate in 1996, and served four terms before her retirement in 2012.

Patricia Keyser Smith was born in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 1935 and moved to Alexandria with her parents in 1947, when she was in seventh grade. She graduated from George Washington High School. When she married Jack Ticer in 1956, he was in his first term on City Council. Patsy and Jack went on to have four children. Patsy was active in volunteer work and worked in real estate for 12 years before running for office.

As mayor, Ticer was a staunch advocate for women, children and families, especially the most vulnerable. She established an Alexandria Office of Early Childhood Program for at-risk children. She was devoted to historic preservation and affordable housing and was a passionate environmentalist. She oversaw the first extensive revision of the city's master plan. She championed the arts and created the city's Commission for the Arts. She started our city's annual birthday celebration along the waterfront.

When she died in 2017, people remembered her as a good listener, genuine, authentic, open-minded, and someone with very little patience for nonsense.

Sources:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/attic/2019/Attic20190314TicerLawson.pdf>, <https://alexandrialegends.org/patsy-ticer/>, <https://alextimes.com/2017/08/patsyticer/>.

Cross Potomac Avenue at the traffic light and head west on E. Custis Avenue. Cross Route 1 and continue for several blocks. Turn left onto Dewitt Avenue, then right onto E. Howell Avenue. Cross Mt Vernon Avenue, then turn right onto Commonwealth Avenue. Stop at the park at the southeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Del Ray Avenue.

2. Judy Lowe Neighborhood Park and Pat Miller Square

Stopping point: labyrinth area inside the park.

Judy Lowe was known as the "First Lady of Del Ray" because of her involvement in many civic activities. Her family moved to Alexandria after her childhood home in Washington, DC, was taken by the city using its eminent domain power and demolished. In the words of Del Ray resident Ruth Brannigan, "This act, in part, spurred Judy's interest in preserving community, a sense of connection, and a nurturing place for a family." Lowe lived in Del Ray for 53 years and was a longtime board member of the Del Ray Citizens Association. She nearly singlehandedly increased DRCA membership from just over 300 households to well over 500 in two years, just through friendly conversations on the street, punctuated at some point by a question: Are you a member of the DRCA?

She was named an honorary citizen of the city's George Washington Birthday Parade, and she served as a grand marshal in the Centennial Parade for the Town of Potomac in 2008. She was the longtime

personal aide to City Councilman Lonnie Rich, a campaign aide to Congressman Jim Moran, a federal government employee for 37 years, and a mother of three children.

While alive, Judy appreciated the fact that it was a grassroots effort by neighborhood activists who convinced the city to buy the land for the pocket park. After her death, the DRCA collected \$7,500 for a memorial to Judy. In 2013, the DRCA and the city agreed to a public-private partnership to pay for further construction of the community-supported park design, and the park was dedicated in 2015.

Sources: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=87547>;
http://legistar.granicus.com/alexandria/meetings/2015/5/1315_A_City_Council_Public_Hearing_15-05-16_Docket.pdf.

Two blocks east of here is **Pat Miller Square**. The square was dedicated in 2017, in recognition of Pat's tireless work for the neighborhood and the city. She has lived in Del Ray for over 35 years and has served as a president of the Del Ray Business Association. If you've ever attended events such as First Thursday, Taste of Del Ray, the Halloween Parade, Turkey Trot, Holiday Tree Lighting, the Del Ray Farmers Market, or Art on the Avenue, you have Pat to thank. Councilmember Del Pepper noted at the dedication ceremony that it's not often a dedication happens when a person is still alive. But "we didn't want to wait, for heaven's sake," said Pepper. "We wanted to honor her now."

Pat was born in Iowa and was the first in her family to attend college. Her work on political campaigns eventually brought her to the DC area, where she continued to be active in campaigns and communications – including youth get-out-the-vote initiatives that set records for national turnout. In addition to her work on behalf of Del Ray, she has volunteered to serve on the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, as well as the boards of the Alexandria Police Foundation, special needs nonprofit Kelly Cares Foundation, Community Partners for Children, and Alexandria Celebrates Women. She was named an Alexandria "Living Legend" in 2012.

Sources: <https://patch.com/virginia/delray/pat-miller-neighborhood-square-dedicated-del-ray-photos>;
<https://alexandrialegends.org/pat-miller/>.

Continue heading north on Commonwealth Avenue. After crossing Reed Avenue, turn right into the small parking lot.

3. Shirley Tyler Unity Park and Cora Kelly School

Stopping point: in the parking lot across the school.

Shirley Tyler was a community leader in Alexandria for over 40 years. She and her family were the first Black homeowners in their Arlandria neighborhood. She served on the Arlandria Civic Association, on the Alexandria School Board, and as teacher and headmistress of Grace Episcopal School until her retirement in 1989.

She became involved in her neighborhood association because of the problems of flooding from Four Mile Run, rat infestation, and drug dealing. She worked tirelessly to bring about the Four Mile Run Flood Control Project and make sure FEMA support was available for flooded neighborhoods. Her efforts to resolve the rat problem led to city rules requiring trash to be placed in cans with lids. Her efforts at curtailing drug traffic led to the establishment of a satellite police facility in the neighborhood. She also

fought against absentee landlords not keeping their property in good shape or illegally subdividing houses and apartments into multiple units.

The proposal for the Unity Park name was a reference to the 1970 murder of Robin Gibson at a 7-Eleven near the park. The murder sparked racial tension at the time. The proposal also suggested the word unity in recognition of the work that local residents put into the park construction. The site used to be an abandoned Dominion Power substation. Neighbors donated plants and cut down unhealthy trees to improve the park, and students from the school helped tend the gardens.

Sources: <https://thezebra.org/2020/01/24/which-name-do-you-like-best-for-the-commonwealth-avenue-park/>; <https://alexandrialegends.org/shirley-tyler/>; <http://www.arlandria.org/2018/01/a-plan-for-commonwealth-park.html>.

Cora Lee Webster Kelly (1869–1953) was the daughter of Alexandria police chief James Webster. Her salary when she first began teaching was \$250 per year. Kelly married but didn't have children, and she identified very strongly as a teacher. She believed in traditional teaching and encouraged her students to go to church and be good citizens. Her tombstone reads: "Beloved teacher who trained the hearts and minds of Alexandria youth through 53 years of dedicated service." When the new elementary school was built in 1955, it was named in her honor.

Source: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/womens-history-in-alexandria>.

Continue heading north on Commonwealth Avenue. Turn right onto Four Mile Run Trail. Turn left onto the westside sidewalk of the Route 1 bridge. Turn left onto the Four Mile Run Trail. Turn right onto S. Eads Street. Continue on S. Eads Street, then turn left onto 18th Street South, which becomes S. Hayes Street. Turn left onto S. Fern Street, then right onto 20th Street South, then right onto S. Joyce Street. Just before S. Joyce Street merges with 15th Street South, turn left onto the sidewalk and stop in Grace Hopper Park.

4. Grace Murray Hopper and The Little Tea House

Stopping point: inside Grace Murray Hopper Park.

Grace Murray Hopper was born in 1906, in New York City, at a time when most women were not expected to pursue careers. But she was raised in a family where education mattered. Murray attended Vassar College for her undergraduate degree, and she completed her master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics at Yale while continuing to teach at Vassar. She taught until 1943 when she enlisted in the military to support the war effort. After finishing her officer training, she received a commission that read "I do hereby appoint *him* a Lieutenant (junior grade) of the U.S. Naval Reserve."

While working on the Mark II computer in 1947, Hopper and her team found a moth inside the inner workings of the machine, which had prevented the relay from operating. Although at the time they did not use the term "debugging" to describe the incident, this anecdote has been widely credited as the source of the phrase. The remains of the moth are preserved inside the group's log book at the Smithsonian Institution.

In 1949, Hopper entered the private sector to work on the UNIVAC I commercial computer, but she remained in the Naval Reserve. She retired from the Naval Reserve twice, but kept being recalled to active duty. She was eventually promoted to "Rear Admiral (Lower Half)," making her one of very few

female admirals. Her many accolades included being named the first computer science “Man of the Year” in 1969 by the Data Processing Management Association. The largest gathering for women in computing is named in her honor, with more than 15,000 women attending each year.

Hopper had a passion for collecting, filling three apartments in RiverHouse in Pentagon City with objects from her extensive travels and career. Six years after her final retirement, Grace Murray Hopper died at her home in RiverHouse on New Year’s Day, 1992. She was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors and posthumously received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016. Arlington County maintains this park on the grounds of RiverHouse in her honor.

Source: <https://library.arlingtonva.us/2019/08/19/rediscover-grace-murray-hopper/>.

The **Little Tea House Restaurant** used to sit up the hill from here. Located on Arlington Ridge Road, it opened in 1920 and remained there until 1963 when it was demolished to make room for the Ridge House, a high-rise apartment building. Notable guests included President Harding, First Ladies Mrs. Harding, Mrs. Coolidge, and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt; Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes; and Amelia Earhart. Known for its lovely gardens and unobstructed view of the Capitol, it was also one of the first places in Arlington where racially mixed groups could meet. Arlington Public Library has one of the Little Tea House’s menus from the 1920s in its archives. Among other things, you could order a chicken sandwich with tea or coffee for 75 cents, or a four-course meal with filet mignon for \$2.

Gertrude Crocker, who started the restaurant, was active in women’s issues throughout her life and started the restaurant so she could be her own boss. Born in Milwaukee in 1884, she became active in the suffragist movement and by 1917 was the treasurer of the National Women’s Party. On January 10, 1917, Crocker was among the 12 women, known as “Silent Sentinels,” who participated in the first ever picket protest outside the White House. Crocker would be repeatedly arrested, tried, and convicted alongside her fellow suffragists (including her sister Ruth), ultimately serving three sentences in jail. Like other imprisoned suffragists, Crocker went on hunger strikes during each of her sentences. After a six-day hunger strike following her August 1918 arrest, The Suffragist reported that she was so ill after leaving the prison that she “was hardly able to walk from the taxi to the door of the [NWP] Headquarters.”

Crocker operated the Little Tea House until 1946. Although she started the business because she was strapped for money, by 1936 her tea-room business was valued at \$100,000. Crocker, who never married, adopted a little girl with her sister. A 1947 Washington Post article noted that they faced public approval for this unusual arrangement but also made it clear that such public disapproval had little effect, because Crocker, who was 5 foot 2 inches, had “the courage of a 6-footer and will dash in where angels fear to tread.” In addition to her entrepreneurial pursuits, Crocker remained a social activist and advocate for women’s political and economic rights until her death in 1969.

Sources: <https://library.arlingtonva.us/2007/01/02/back-pages-the-little-tea-house/>; <https://libraryarchives.arlingtonva.us/Detail/collections/60>; <https://suffragistmemorial.org/gertrude-lynde-crocker-1884-1969/>.

Cross S. Joyce Street at the traffic light and head north on S. Joyce Street. Turn right onto Army-Navy Drive, then turn right onto S. Hayes Street. Stop at the Pentagon City metro station, where you can hop on the metro and return to the Braddock Road metro station. If you’d like to extend your tour, the route

at <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40065961> starts at the Franconia-Springfield metro station and will take you to three more sites associated with women's history.

Bonus sites in Lorton, Virginia:

The **visitors' center at the Workhouse Arts Center** houses the *Equality For All* mural by Sunny Mullarkey. The mural depicts suffrage leaders Carrie Chapman Catt, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, and Alice Paul. The center panel shows a mythological woman, inspired by historic suffrage artwork, holding a banner with the words "Equality For All."

The Workhouse Arts Center also houses in the **Lucy Burns Museum**. In 1917, Lucy Burns was arrested along with 72 other members of the National Woman's Party and sent to the Occoquan Workhouse. Their treatment at the Workhouse along with their hunger strikes and continued pressure on lawmakers would play a pivotal role in the fight for women's suffrage. The museum examines the history of the former Lorton Prison Complex, including the events of 1917 which changed the course of the women's suffrage movement in the United States.

The **Turning Point Suffragist Memorial** honors the women who were imprisoned, as well as the millions of little-known women who engaged in the suffragist movement from 1848 through 1920. The memorial includes 19 information stations with dozens of pictures and graphics, three statues of prominent suffrage leaders, a rotunda featuring the six pillars of democracy, a 24' section of the actual White House fence in front of which suffragists picketed in 1917, and a memorial garden with native flowers and trees bursting in suffrage colors – purple, gold, and white.