

# Carlyle Connection

“It’s a fine beginning.”



## *Newly Discovered Letter Written by George Washington While at Carlyle House*

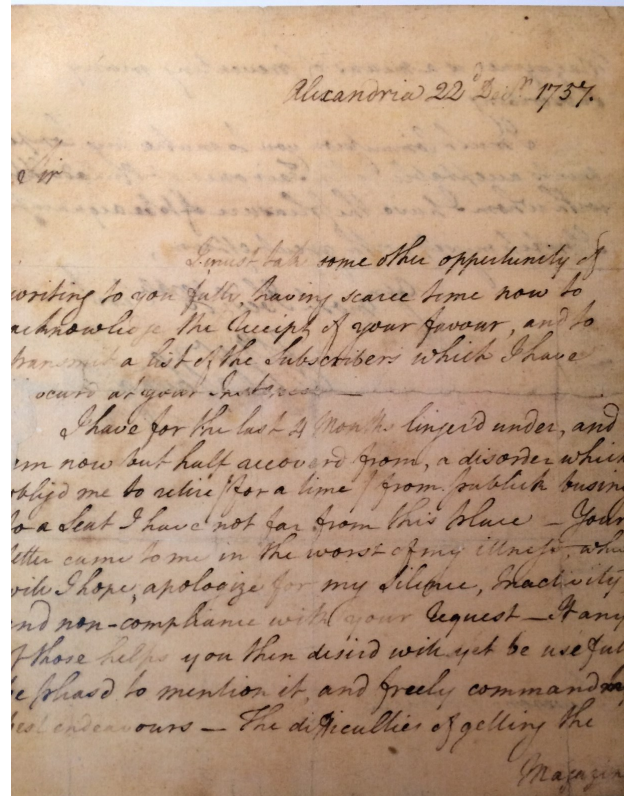
By Michele Lee

Michele Lee is a Special Collections Librarian at the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon. The following article was first published in the Winter 2015 issue of the *Mount Vernon News*. According to the Library staff, Washington wrote this letter while staying at John Carlyle’s house:

### Library Acquires New Letter

On the heels of his return from the French and Indian War and recovery from a life-threatening illness, George Washington wrote to Reverend William Smith on December 22, 1757, to join the list of subscribers to the *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies*. This unique, personal letter remained unknown to the public until its recent acquisition by the Washington Library for its special collections. Now available for public research, the letter demonstrates Washington’s youthful book-buying practices and his involvement in the dissemination of information. Moreover, few letters from Washington’s early life survive, making the Library fortunate to own several.

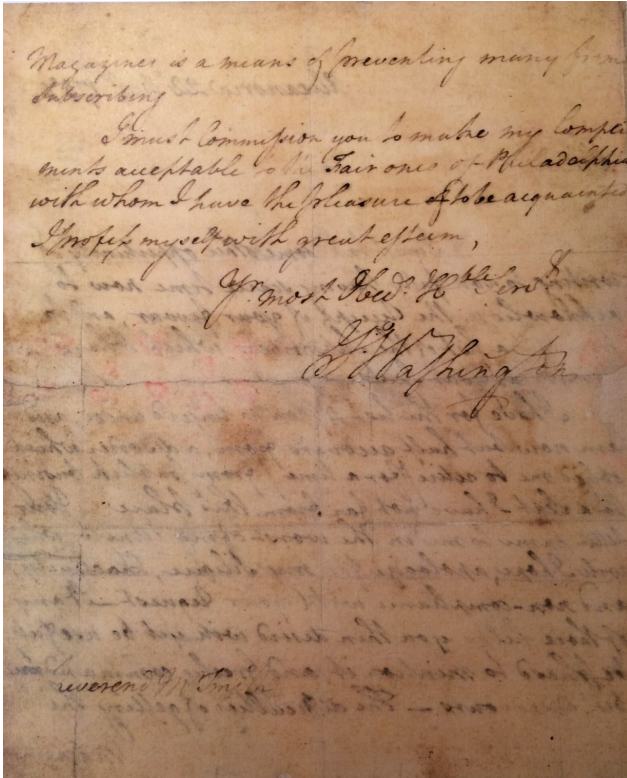
About a month prior to this missive, Smith had sent Washington the magazine’s inaugural edition (October 1757) in hopes that Washington would review it for accuracy in its coverage of Fort Necessity, the French and Indian War, Braddock’s defeat, and the Ohio Company, as well as commit to being a subscriber. Far different from the contemporary use of the term, in that era “subscribers” were those who contributed to a work before publication, indicating their approval of the project. Thus, Washington’s person subscription, along with those



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of three other Virginia landowners—Lord Fairfax, John Hope, and John Funk—he recruited, would have been a notable boon to Smith. Washington, perhaps as an apology for not securing more support, warned that the difficulty in obtaining copies of the magazine prevented recruiting additional subscribers.

This publication was one of only a few American magazines published during the French and Indian War. It



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discussed controversial topics and was known for being an outspoken voice on issues of politics and history, promising "equal justice to the affairs of every American." It featured one of the earliest American political cartoons: a Native American with an Englishman on his left offering a Bible and a roll of cloth and a Frenchman on his right offering a tomahawk and a purse of money. And, although it was published anonymously, William Smith made himself known to Washington as the magazine's editor.

By the time of his death in 1799, Washington's collection included this magazine, along with more than 30 other popular periodicals. The location of Washington's copy remains unknown, but in an effort to re-create his library at Mount Vernon and to help researchers gain a full understanding of this publication, the Library acquired duplicate editions of seven of the 13 issues of the *American Magazine*. Among these is a copy of the inaugural October 1757 edition, with a prefatory note about the project, and an issue with the woodcut engraving on the title page. Together these items paint a complete picture of Washington's contribution to the telling of the French and Indian War, as well as general book-buying practices in the 18th century.

## Text of the Washington letter

Alexandria 22d Decr 1757.

Sir

I must take some other opportunity of writing to you further, having scarce time now to acknowledge the receipt of your favour, and to transmit a list of the Subscribers which I have secured at your Instance.

I have for the last 4 months linger'd under, and am now but half recovered from, a disorder which oblig'd me to retire for a time from publick business to a Seat I have not far from this place. Your Letter came to me in the worst of my illness, which will I hope, apologize for my Silence, Inactivity, and non-compliance with your request. If any of those helps you then desired will yet be useful, be pleased to mention it, and freely command my best endeavours. The difficulties of getting the Magazines is a means of preventing many from Subscribing.

I must Commission you to make my Compliments acceptable to the Fair ones of Philadelphia with whom I have the pleasure of to be acquainted. I profess myself with great esteem,

Yr most Obed & Hble Servt  
G Washington

Reverend Wm. Smith

Note: "secured" and "Instance" in the first paragraph are possibly incorrect. The letter has a stain and a fold that make these two words difficult to decipher. "Profess" in the final sentence may also be inaccurately transcribed. SH





*DuPont Brass*



*Our special friends at Braddock Day*

## News from the Educator

The annual Hands-On-History Tent will be held Saturday, June 11th from noon-3pm. This year's theme is Hospital Adventures of the Civil War. Visitors will have the chance to meet a Union Army surgeon and learn about medical tools and equipment from the era. One brave volunteer will have the opportunity to have an operation performed on them! This event is designed for children ages 3-12 but all are welcome.

Our summer concert series will be returning in June! We have renamed it the Doug Thurman Summer Concert Series in honor of the late Doug Thurman, former Friend of Carlyle House, who advocated for the support of education programs at Carlyle House. He was also a music fan, so we are thrilled to dedicate the concerts to him.

Finally, we are getting closer to our first session of Camp Carlyle. The July 11-15 and July 25-29 session are nearly full with only a few spaces left. However, there is still space available in the July 18-22 half day Mini Camp Carlyle and August 8-12 sessions. You can register through this link: <https://www.novaparks.com/things-to-do/camps/camp-carlyle>

~Vanessa Herndon

## News from the Site Specialist

It has been a very exciting and busy spring! We had two special first time programs which both sold out and excellent visitation at a Civil War lecture and at Braddock Day, Garden Day and our Mother's Day Tea. At the end of February, we had our first curatorial tour of the Civil War exhibit, "Who These Wounded Are," and some of the Stringfellow descendants were in attendance. In March, Susan gave an architectural history tour of the house and both tours actually sold out. We hope to repeat them this summer/fall.

Also in March, we co-sponsored a lecture at The Lyceum with the Office of Historic Alexandria. Chris Foard, a major lender for the "Who These Wounded Are" exhibit, gave a fantastic lecture where he discussed Civil War nursing and how many of the advancements in the field of nursing began during this conflict. His lecture, "Beyond the Call of Duty: The Roles and Responsibilities of Civil War Nurses" was given to a great crowd of 52 local Alexandrians, including several of Carlyle House's docents.

Braddock Day had over 500 attendees in spite of the chilly weather. General Braddock held court in the Dining Room with the governors and Commodore Augustus Keppel, and Mr. Carlyle was as gracious a host as ever. There was also

a small but mighty group of French diplomats in attendance, who were able to discuss the French perspective during the French and Indian War, also known as the Seven Years' War.

On Garden Day we hosted 1,461 visitors on the grounds entering through the front gate, and 515 of them came into the museum, where visitors had the chance to see the reproduction dresses on display in the Dining Room and the exhibit on the second floor.

Our Mother's Day Tea was also a smashing success with two sold out seatings which resulted in 99 attendees. Families came with their little ones who were very well-behaved, and they enjoyed our "Colonial Kids Corner" in between eating the delicious tea sandwiches, cakes and pastries. Calling Card Events, the caterer, also provided a fun "First Ladies Firsts" quiz with books for prizes!

In collections news, all of the deaccessioned objects were disposed of this spring. In the museum field, deaccessioning and disposal are defined as follows:

**"Deaccessioning** is the formal process of removal of an object from the collection register, catalogue or database."

**"Disposal** is the physical removal of the object from the organization by the process decided upon by the collections or acquisition committee."

Some of the objects were transferred to other museums, and the rest will be auctioned off at The Potomack Company in June. Just a reminder, since you are affiliated with Carlyle House as a supporter of the museum, you may not purchase any of the Carlyle House items up for sale. This is so that we can continue to fall in line with being a museum that follows the code of ethics and maintain our status to be eligible for re-accreditation.

~Helen Wirka

## Upcoming Events



### Attics & Alleys

#### Every Saturday morning in May

What mysteries lie behind closed doors or in the attics of Alexandria's historic sites? Attics and Alleys is a three-hour walking tour featuring the rarely seen spaces of the Lee-Fendall House, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, and Carlyle House. Reservations are required. For information and tickets, please contact Gadsby's Tavern Museum at 703.746.4242. \$35

### Hands on History Tent

#### Saturday, June 11; 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Step through the doors of the Mansion House Hospital for our annual Hands on History Tent! Explore the history that inspired Mercy Street through various crafts and hands-on activities. Visitors will meet a Union Army surgeon and learn about medical tools from the era. One brave volunteer will have an operation performed on them!

### Friends Annual Meeting

#### Friday, June 10; 6:00 p.m.

Join us on the Magnolia Terrace for refreshments followed by the annual business meeting. Please call the office to RSVP.

### Doug Thurman Summer Concert Series

#### Saturdays, June 11, July 23, and August 20; 7:00 p.m.

Join Carlyle House Historic Park for our annual summer concert series! Purchase a special Carlyle House picnic basket from Society Fair and join us on the lawn for an evening of music. This is a co-sponsored event by Carlyle House and Alexandria's Black History Museum.

### A Magnolia Tea at Mansion House

#### Sunday, June 12; 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Enjoy the beautiful historic setting of Carlyle House's Magnolia Terrace for an elegant summer's day tea. History buffs, tea lovers, and fans of the PBS series, "Mercy Street" will be welcomed with true southern hospitality at this

Civil War themed tea, worthy of the finest patrons of the Mansion House Hotel. \$40.

### **Carlyle House 40th anniversary open house**

**Saturday, July 9; 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Come help us celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1976 completed renovation of Carlyle House and the its new life as a NOVA Parks museum.

### **Camp Carlyle**

There are still a few openings available for our fun and popular summer camp. Please call or check our website for full information.

### **Curator's Tour: Who These Wounded Are**

**Sunday, July 31; 10:00 a.m.**

Join curator Helen Wirka for a special tour and program on the exhibit "Who These Wounded Are," the true stories of the individuals who lived and worked at the Mansion House Hospital. Attendees will also learn about how the real life individuals relate to characters on the PBS hit series "Mercy Street." \$10.

### **Housewarming Open House**

**Saturday, August 6; 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

In celebration of John and Sarah Carlyle moving into their new house in Alexandria on August 1, 1753, we are hosting a housewarming . Come experience life at the Carlyle House as you welcome the family. Free.

### **Carlyle Crafts and Games Day**

**Saturday, August 27; 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for our a day of 18th century crafts and games! Decorate a 18th century fan, paint a selfie (self-portrait), make a necklace, and much more. You will also have the chance to play some colonial games. This event is designed for children ages 3-12, but all are welcome!

**Please call or check our website for more details on our happenings. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!**

Please note that your membership may show up as "ACT registration" on your credit card bill. Thanks to Deb Rudolph who alerted us to this. Unfortunately, NOVA Parks is unable to change that payment link to something more obvious.

## ***What's going on with our archaeology collection?***

I am thrilled and relieved to report that we signed an agreement with the Office of Historic Alexandria that will safeguard our priceless archaeology collection. As of March 23, the Carlyle House collection now resides in the Alexandria Archaeology Storage Facility, which adheres to the highest museum standards. The facility was created to provide the environmental conditions necessary for long-term preservation of these important collections. Special care was taken to use stable materials that do not "off-gas," or give off harmful fumes, and to provide a very stable temperature and humidity. The storeroom is equipped with smoke detectors, a sprinkler system, and a separate security alarm. An HVAC system maintains a constant temperature and humidity, avoiding fluctuations that would hasten the artifacts' deterioration. An instrument called a data-logger measures temperature and humidity, and records this information on a computer. Carlyle House staff may access the collection at any time, and remove items as needed. ~Susan



*The first load of the archaeology collection on its way to the Alexandria Archaeology Storage Facility.*

## Friends Board

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*Vanessa Herndon*  
Educator

*Carlyle House Historic Park is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.*



## News from the Site Manager

I hope that you all found time to visit Carlyle House since we installed our new exhibit "Who These Wounded Are: Extraordinary Stories of the Mansion House Hospital."

The exhibit brought new attention and far more visitors than usual to Carlyle House. Visitation numbers have been up an average of 120% since the exhibit opened in January, with a 159% increase in February alone! Our docents deserve special thanks for working so hard to keep up

with demand. They are real troopers! Some days, tours are non-stop and the docents get no breaks. The next time you see a docent, please give him/her a hug and/or a pat on the back. Our supervisors have also really stepped up to the challenge. They are absolutely slammed with visitors, but continue to provide their usual superior customer service.

Could you believe the rain the morning of Garden Day? Fortunately, the skies cleared for the afternoon. Despite the awful weather, the Friends cleared over \$2800 profit! Huzzah and thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make it possible! I hope that those of you who were here have dried out your shoes and recovered from carrying tables and that incredibly heavy stage.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting on June 10. I'd like to extend a special thanks to the outgoing officers, especially Shelly Miller, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of Carlyle House.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you and farewell to Sarah Coster, who is moving out of the area for a couple of years. We will miss her terribly. She has been a wonderful resource since she stepped down from her role as Site Manager. She left some big shoes to fill! Sarah very graciously agreed to come out of "retirement" and serve as the Friends Administrative Assistant early last year, which has been a huge help. She recently passed the Friends baton to Christine Mereand. Bon voyage, Sarah, and we hope you will return to Carlyle House some day!

~Susan Hellman



*Mercy Street Producer Lisa Wolfinger with Sarah Coster at the Alexandria Film Festival.*