Jennie Dean is Back Home

Despite being born into slavery in 1848 and without the benefit of a formal education, Jennie Dean changed the lives of countless African Americans in Manassas, Prince William County and the region.

When the Civil War ended, it left the county desolate. Jennie Dean sought work as a domestic in Washington, D.C., hoping to build a new life for herself, but never forgot the African American community she left behind. She travelled home by train on weekends to train “her people” in life skills, to establish churches, and finally, to establish the Manassas Industrial School.

After almost a decade of fundraising, the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth was chartered on October 7, 1893. With funds donated from the Manassas area and from philanthropists in Boston, New York, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. that she personally lobbied for, Dean purchased 100 acres and began construction on a school for African American children of Northern Virginia. The school was designed as a private residential institution providing both academic and vocational training within a Christian setting.

The first school building, Howland Hall, was completed in time for the dedication ceremonies led by Frederick Douglass on September 3, 1894. Over the next four decades, despite numerous setbacks from catastrophic fires, the school grew. Influential donors such as Miss Emily Howland, a suffragette from New York; Mrs. C. B. Hackley of Tarrytown, New York; Mr. Everett Edward Hale of Washington, D.C.; and Mr. Andrew Carnegie all contributed significant funds towards buildings, land and operational needs of the school.

By 1900, over 150 students attended the school’s three-term academic year, October through May. Academic instruction included mathematics, natural sciences, geography, physiology, music, literature and English. Vocational instruction included carpentry, blacksmithing, wheelwrighting, mattress making, painting, mechanical drawing, agriculture, cobblering, shoemaking and animal husbandry for boys; and sewing, cooking, domestic arts, household arts, sewing and laundry methods for girls.

The school offset its operating expenses and allowed the students to earn their tuition and board through its industries. Excess products from these industries were sold to support the school’s needs. Despite these diligent efforts, expenses usually exceeded income and the school often suffered periods of debt, operating for 44 years under difficult economic, political and social conditions. Despite these challenges, the school survived as a private institution even after Dean’s death in 1913 and up until the 1930s.

In 1937, the public school systems of Fairfax, Fauquier and Prince William counties formed a joint board of control and purchased the land and all the buildings from the Manassas Industrial School for a regional high school for African American students. This three-county partnership remained until the 1950s when Fairfax and Fauquier built their own segregated schools. In 1954, Prince William County consolidated its African American students from Brown Elementary School of Manassas with the Regional High School and the school became known as the Regional High and Elementary School.

In 1957, the regional board of control was dissolved and the land was released to Prince William County for the construction of a new high and elementary school. The cornerstone for this $800,000 building was laid on October 1958 and opened in September 1959 and was named to honor Miss Jennie Dean, the charismatic former slave and Baptist missionary who dedicated her life to advancing educational opportunities for African Americans. When the county’s public schools were integrated in 1966, Jennie Dean became a junior high school. It remained so until it was incorporated into the City of Manassas public school system in 1977 as Jennie Dean Middle School, and finally in 1991, as Jennie Dean Elementary School.

The four-acre Manassas Industrial School/Jennie Dean Memorial, 9601 Wellington Road, that commemorates Dean and her school, was dedicated in 1995. The statue of Jennie Dean was dedicated on Oct. 24, 2020. The statue of Jennie Dean reaches down to lift others up.
One of the encouraging things that has come out of the past year has been an increased community awareness about equity and inclusion issues. This is not an easy topic for a community to address. It is, however, a vital conversation if our community wants to ensure that every person has the ability to fully partake in the American pursuit of life, liberty and justice.

To facilitate this effort, City Council has appointed an Equity and Inclusion Task Force to engage all segments of the community in an open and honest discussion about race, racism and diversity. The purpose of these discussions is to seek to identify barriers that keep members of our community from fully participating in the City’s economic and community vitality; and then propose concrete solutions and paths of action to City Council that can be taken to promote racial reconciliation, economic justice and equity. City staff is also participating in a national network of government agencies working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all people.

While creating an equity and inclusion discussion process will not be unique to our community, our community is unique and the dialogue and discussions that occur in Manassas will not be a replica of anything that happens in any other community. We want to build on the unique strengths and character of Manassas in our effort to create a more inclusive community where everyone can feel comfortable, welcome and respected.

This will take a dedicated commitment to a unified vision of an equitable city along with the identification of strategic outcomes to achieve this vision. We will need broad participation in open and frank discussions throughout the community. I hope that you will consider being a part of this dialogue.

I am also pleased to make the community aware of two awards that the City received last month, the “Commonwealth Plan of the Year” for the Manassas 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the “Old Dominion Innovative Approaches” award for the Manassas Community Conversations process. Both of these awards recognized the City for the outstanding level of community engagement and transparency that went into the inclusive and interactive process of understanding what the community valued and what was needed to make Manassas a better place to live, work and play.

These efforts involved over two years of community engagement with the simple notion of “Share your voice. Shape your City.” These efforts went far beyond the typical traditional public meetings and town halls to engage with a more diverse audience throughout the community. Staff hosted booths at local events, held meetings at churches, coffee shops, youth centers, and breweries, offered an online platform, and partnered with City boards and commissions. This process allowed 1,300 community members to be engaged in a meaningful and forward-thinking dialogue about the future of Manassas.

These efforts will now influence all types of future strategic decisions regarding community growth and services, budget allocations, and capital investments. I am proud of the recognition that our staff has received for being in the forefront of developing comprehensive and strategic plans that recognize the impact of citizen engagement and investment in making Manassas a better place.

As we move into fall, please do not be complacent about COVID-19. I encourage you to get a flu shot, wash your hands frequently, wear your face covering in public places and maintain physical distance from others whenever possible. Doing these things will help minimize the spread of COVID-19 to ourselves and our families.

Stay safe and healthy.

W. Patrick Pate
Three Awards for Manassas Plans

The City of Manassas Long Range Planning Division has received two prestigious awards recognizing the excellence of the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and of the Community Conversations public engagement initiative by the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA).

The APA Virginia Commonwealth Plan of the Year Award honors Virginia’s best planning document of the year that demonstrates outstanding planning processes, vision, implementation strategies and innovative approaches. Award judges stated that the 2040 Manassas Comprehensive Plan looks ahead to the year 2040, and sketches out both big-picture issues and neighborhood-specific plans that guide future land use, development, recreation, preservation and transportation policy decisions. The Old Dominion Innovative Approaches Award honors the City’s Community Conversations engagement initiative that was essential in guiding the 2040 Plan, and recognizes pioneering planning efforts including innovative planning processes, plans, programs, initiatives or site developments that will have real results.

The City of Manassas Department of Economic Development won a Bronze Rank for its City of Manassas Economic Development 2019 Annual Report, a project in the Annual Report category of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC)’s 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program. The honor was presented virtually at an awards ceremony during the IEDC Annual Conference in October.

The 2019 Annual Report highlights the Department of Economic Development’s achievements for the year including major projects, notable business expansions/relocations and trends in the commercial market. It serves not only as a reporting tool but as an opportunity to showcase the City as a thriving community in which to do business. Of course, this document in and of itself does not create or retain jobs, tax base enhancement or necessarily improve overall quality of life; rather, it tells the story of how we are doing as an organization to address those factors. It also serves as an attraction tool for prospects which indirectly may create jobs and expand the tax base.

Trash & Recycling Note

Trash and Recycling Service Issues

Residents may have noticed changes to service in trash and recycling since the beginning of the pandemic. The best word to describe it is “hectic.” Since March, the impact of COVID-19 has not escaped trash and recycling. Due to COVID restrictions, many people are working from home. This has caused a 40% increase in the volume of trash set out at the curb and over 100% increase in the amount of yard waste.

In spite of numerous advisories, excess volumes of trash and recycling are still being set out at the curb for collection. To give you an idea - between April and June, bulk waste collection was suspended throughout most of Northern Virginia. During that time, more than 50 tons of material was set out just in the City of Manassas. Fortunately, we were able to contract with a private hauler to help remove the materials and keep our streets safe and clean.

As collection crews work, they come in contact with materials that are contaminated with the virus. In July, 30% of the collection crew were affected by COVID-19 either through direct infection or quarantined due to infections of family members and co-workers. Our contractor has been drawing in crews and senior managers to help with collections and running smaller crews to ensure that services within the City are not disrupted - at no additional cost to the City or residents.

For these reasons, there have been earlier start times, longer collection days and adjustments in services such as bulk waste collections and yard waste.

The City appreciates your patience during this challenging time and looks forward to a return to normal life - and a normal service schedule when this is all over.

In the meantime, please call to schedule anything that does not fit into your trash container, keep your yard waste set-out to no more than 10 yard waste bags, and call the Trashline at (703) 257-8252 if you have any questions or concerns. Visit www.manassascity.org/trash for more information.

America Recycles Day

America Recycles Day is Nov. 15. This year, Keep Manassas Beautiful would like to thank all of the residents, businesses and wonderful Adopt-a-volunteers who have been recycling at home and at drop-off days, picking up litter on our streets and in our parks – and keeping up our spirits by sending us their messages that they are all still recycling like they mean it! Thank you all – you are AWESOME! Find out more about Keep Manassas Beautiful by visiting our website: www.manassascity.org/kmb.
The City of Manassas Happenings

Find these events and more in the City of Manassas, Virginia. For more information go to www.visitmanassas.org.

Now - Nov. 15 - Manassas Museum exhibit, Consider the Source: Interpreting Manassas History on Paper, open to public when Museum opens – manassasmuseum.org

Now - Dec. 11 - “Un Poco de Todo Amoroso” Art Exhibit at the ARTfactory featuring the work of David Amoroso

Wednesdays at Noon - Spotlight on History Virtual Talks - Tune into www.facebook.com/cityofmanassasleisure for an interesting look at local history.

Nov. 8, 1 - 5 p.m. - Matting and Framing Workshop at the ARTfactory

Nov. 9 - 18, Mon, Wed. & Fridays, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. - Studio Art at the ARTfactory for ages 13 - 18

Nov. 10 - 19, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. - Calligraphy class at the ARTfactory - for ages 15 - adult

Nov. 10 - 19, Tues./Thurs. 6:30 - 8 p.m. - Charcoal Drawing class at the ARTfactory

Nov. 14 at 8 p.m. - Celebrating Veterans and the Arts: Hylton at Home - A Virtual Concert

Nov. 16, 18, 20 (Mon/Wed/Fri), 7:30-8:30 p.m. - Latin Line Dancing Class at the ARTfactory

Nov. 18 at 3 p.m. - Stories of Preservation and Progress at the Manassas Museum

Nov. 21 at 10:30 a.m. - Hylton at Home Story Corner: “Because” Virtual Event

Nov. 22 at 7 p.m. - Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center: featuring David Shifrin, clarinet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center - Virtual Event

Nov. 28 at 8 p.m. - A Chanticleer Christmas at the Hylton Performing Arts Center – Virtual Event

Nov. 28 - Dec. 20, Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. - Story Telling with Mrs. Claus – Christmas Stories from Seuss to Disney at the ARTfactory

Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. - Artist-Activist: Centering Black Voices with Theresa Ruth Howard and Nicole Brewer - Hylton Performing Arts Center Virtual Event

Dec. 4 at 6 p.m. - Santa Lights the Tree - a live-streamed event to start the holiday season - more details to come

Dec. 5 at 10 a.m. - Santa Spreads Cheer - Santa and his friends will spread cheer throughout the City by visiting neighborhoods. You will be able to track Santa through a live tracker map. Visit https://gmchristmasparade.org/ for more information.

Dec. 5 at 2 p.m. – Front Porch Talk with the founder of the Slave Dwelling Project at Liberia House

Manassas Ballet Streaming Performances - enjoy classic ballet performances from the comfort of your home while maintaining social distance guidelines. These shows are either available now or coming soon to https://manassasballet.org

Don Quixote
The Nutcracker

Speaking at Council Meetings
The Residents’ Time portion of the agenda is set aside for those who wish to address the Council and is limited to three minutes per speaker. In order to accommodate all who wish to address Council, speakers must sign up in advance. For health reasons, at this time speakers are encouraged to use the telephone to address Council from the safety of a remote location or submit their written comments via email or the U.S. postal service. To sign up to speak, contact the City Clerk’s office at 703-257-8211. Requests must be received by 4 p.m. on the date of the meeting.

Get Social!
Visit the City at www.manassascity.org.

www.facebook.com/cityofmanassas
www.twitter.com/cityofmanassas
www.flickr.com/photos/cityofmanassas
www.instagram.com/cityofmanassas
www.youtube.com/user/manassascityva

To contact the City of Manassas Connection newsletter, email pp.prince@manassasva.gov