

From: AMGA <amga@amga.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2023 4:18 PM
To: Christian Sacdalan
Subject: DE&I Digest - July Edition



July 2021 Edition: *From the Desk of John Kennedy*

This month we celebrate Independence Day in Alexandria, commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the U.S. Colonies from British rule in 1776. Back in the mid 1800s however, many of our fellow Alexandria residents marked a very different celebration of independence—an escape from slavery. During the Civil War on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation declared all slaves were to be freed. As many of us learned when Juneteenth became a Federal Holiday, this proclamation did not result in immediate emancipation for all slaves.



Alexandria marked the southernmost outpost of the Union Army and was often the first town encountered by newly freed men and women as they made their trip north. This excerpt from the [Alexandra Contrabands & Freedman's Cemetery Memorial website](#) documents the difficult conditions awaiting those escaping slavery on their journey north:

“Those escaping from slavery found a safe haven in Alexandria because of the Union occupation, but their large numbers resulted in a refugee crisis. While many found employment, other contrabands, as the freedmen were officially known, were destitute after fleeing slavery, and arrived hungry and in ill health. Many were housed in barracks, and disease was rampant. In

1864, after hundreds had perished, the Superintendent of Contrabands ordered that a property on the southern edge of town, across from the Catholic cemetery, be confiscated for use as a cemetery.

In the first year, burials included those of black soldiers, but African American troops recuperating in Alexandria's hospitals demanded that blacks be given the honor of burial in the Soldiers' Cemetery, now Alexandria National Cemetery. The soldiers' graves were disinterred and moved to the military cemetery in January 1865. The last burial in Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery took place in January 1869."

There's a good chance you have driven past this cemetery located at 1001 S. Washington St in Alexandria, just at the entrance of the walking path on the Virginia side of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. I've done so many times before I ever noticed it was there. It wasn't until I was out on a walk with my wife, Julie, that we stopped in to admire the amazing memorial and sculpture, and pay our respects to the graves of men, women, and children, many of which have since been paved over, ironically, by Washington Street. For a history and virtual tour, [see this video](#).

As we return to office and consider our renewed independence, please take a moment to reflect upon the key themes of oppression, struggle, sacrifice, loss, compassion, and hope captured in this memorial. These values were manifest in the lives of all those who tread this hallowed ground before us and in the lives of those who are permanently enshrined in the history of my hometown, our beloved city of Alexandria.

John W. Kennedy M.D.

Resources of the Month

DE&I Committee July Picks:

- Link: [USA/Alexandria Birthday Celebration](#)
- Link: [Alexandria History](#)

Raise Your Cultural IQ!

Did You Know?

The American Revolution was an unmitigated disaster for Native Americans. Native American Tribes such as the Iroquois, which represented an alliance of six different native groups, had responded to the dramatic changes of the colonial era more successfully than most other

- Link: [Fourth of July – Independence Day](#)

Do you have a resource you want to see in the next edition of the *DE&I Digest*? Next month, we will be recognizing **National Immunization Month**! Send resources to DEICommittee@amga.org for review by the DE&I Committee. Please ensure resources submitted are from reputable sources.

tribes in the eastern third of North America. In spite of significant Native American aid to the British, the European treaty negotiations concluded the war in 1783 had no indigenous representatives. Although Ohio and Iroquois tribes had not surrendered or suffered a final military defeat, the United States claimed that its victory over the British meant a victory over “Indians” as well. Not surprisingly, due to their lack of representation during treaty negotiations, Native Americans received very poor treatment in the diplomatic arrangements. Although the outcome of the Revolution for most Native American groups was disastrous, their continued struggle for autonomy, independence, and full legal treatment resulted in partial victories at a much later date. In some ways, their struggle demonstrated a more thorough commitment to certain principles and aspirations of the American Revolution than that demonstrated by the Patriots, themselves.

Links to learn more:

- [Roles of Native American during the Revolution](#)
- [13f. Revolutionary Limits: Native Americans](#)

Something to Celebrate!

- [Alexandria’s Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery added to the Civil Rights Network](#)

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? We'd love to hear from you! Email the DE&I Committee at DEICommittee@amga.org. To see previous editions of the *DE&I Digest*, click [here](#).

AMGA
One Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.838.0033 | Fax: 703.548.1890
[Visit our website](#)

If you no longer wish to receive this email, please [unsubscribe here](#).