

Alexandria Times

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Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

The City of Alexandria is proud to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month through October 15. For more on Alexandria's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, please visit: alexandriava.gov/HispanicHeritage.

Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from September 15 to October 15 every year as a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures and extensive histories of the American Latino community.

The month-long celebration begins on September 15 because it is the anniversary of independence for several Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

Alexandria has a long history of residents who moved here from Central and South America. Beginning in the 1980s, a large community



PHOTO/ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH GROUP

A cover of the booklet "A Cultural History of Arlandria-Chirilagua."

from El Salvador settled in the neighborhood we now call "Chirilagua," after the city in El Salvador of the same name.

This month, Historic Alexandria invites you to read transcripts of oral history interviews from members of our Hispanic community. Some of the interviews were with the following community members.

Evelin Urrutia

Evelin Urrutia is the executive director of Tenants and Workers United, a not-for-profit organization in Arlandria-Chirilagua that advocates and organizes the local community. She was born in 1977 in El Salvador and her mother immigrated to the U.S. in 1988

during the country's civil war. Evelin grew up in Alexandria and reflects on her experiences in the city.

Priscilla Izar

Priscila Izar was born in São Paulo, Brazil. She has lived for several years in Alexandria with her husband and daughters. She reflects on growing up in Brazil, receiving her degrees in urban planning and living in Alexandria.

Nora Partlow

Nora Partlow is the former owner of St. Elmo's Coffee Pub in Del Ray. She was born in 1949 in Cuba and has lived in Alexandria since 1985. She recalls growing up on her

grandfather's farm outside of Holguín, Cuba, before moving to New Jersey, attending school in the United States, getting married and coming to Virginia to live her dream: Running her own business, St. Elmo's Coffee Pub.

Miguel Blancas

Miguel Blancas came to Northern Virginia after meeting his wife in a study abroad program in Spain. Blancas started working for the City of Alexandria in the Court Service Unit. In February 2020 at the start of the pandemic, Blancas began working for the Emergency Operations Center where he developed a tracker for recording the continuance of operations plans for the city.

You can read the full transcripts of these and other interviews at: alexandriava.gov/cultural-history/hispanic-heritage-in-alexandria.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.