

Alexandria Times

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Join us for historic happy hours

Join us April 9 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Vola's Dockside Grill featuring Liz Williams as she presents "1814: A Tale of Two Cities, Two Men and One Song." Williams will give a brief history of the connection between Gadsby's Tavern Museum and the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and 10% of proceeds from the evening will go toward supporting the 250th commemorations.

Williams' presentation includes a history of John Gadsby, famous in Alexandria for his operation of the City Tavern and Hotel. In 1808, Gadsby moved to Baltimore and managed the India Queen Hotel. Much like his time in Alexandria, Gadsby relied on a workforce of more than 40 enslaved people to run his hospitality business, which The Baltimore Gazette later complimented by claiming it "introduced the proper style and taste for public entertainments in this city."

Some of the highlights of Gadsby's tenure at the In-



PHOTO/CODY MELLO-KLEIN

An upcoming event will explore the connection between Gadsby's Tavern and the writing of 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'

dia Queen included introducing mechanically turned spits for roasting meat and using a mechanically powered coffee roaster, which allowed his enslaved staff to roast 20 to 30 pounds at a time.

The presentation at Vola's Dockside Grill also features the role of Francis Scott Key, now

known to us for penning our national anthem, but during his lifetime, perhaps more famous for a legal career that included an eight-year stint as the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

Key's time with the British fleet that attacked Fort McHenry was partially due to

part of the flotilla arriving late from the British occupation of Alexandria, which spanned five days, starting Aug. 29, 1814. After the British released him and his group, Key checked into the India Queen Hotel and wrote out the first draft of "The Star-Spangled Banner." The hotel was still run by John Gadsby.

Join Historic Happy Hours for the next three months on the second Thursday of each month. The program combines local history, engaging research and neighborhood gathering places!

Unwind in Old Town at Historic Happy Hours while connecting with the work of Historic Alexandria as we mark the nation's 250th. For more information on how Alexandria is celebrating America's 250th birthday, please visit alexandria.gov/america250.

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