

Alexandria Times

Denise Dunbar

Publisher & Executive Editor
ddunbar@alextimes.com

Margaret Stevens

Director of Sales & Marketing
mstevens@alextimes.com

Caitlyn Meisner

Editor
cmeisner@alextimes.com

Sydney Kodama

Reporter/Photographer
skodama@alextimes.com

Mathylda Dulian

Photo Intern
mdulian@alextimes.com

Ella Mitchell

Reporting Intern
emitchell@alextimes.com

SALES & MARKETING

Margaret Stevens

mstevens@alextimes.com

Marty DeVine

mdevine@alextimes.com

Patrice V. Culligan

pculligan@alextimes.com

Stephanie Santiago

ssantiago@alextimes.com

Tina Franco

Business Operations Manager
tfranco@alextimes.com

DIRECTOR OF ART & DESIGN

Jessica Kim

graphics@alextimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Gayle Converse

Kim Davis

Mark Eaton

Mark Edelman

Thompson Eskew

Kim Gilliam

Jim McGrath

Erin Shackelford

Hannah Shibliq

Kathryn Ziemer

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can be mailed to:
Alexandria Times
908 King Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314

Alexandria
COMMUNITY MEDIA

Easter in Alexandria’s history

Easter, with its roving date in the calendar year, has always held a special place in the history of Alexandria. Given its many houses of worship, that’s not a surprise. A look back at centuries-old newspapers reveals to readers the historic confluence of religious and consumer traditions so many years ago.

Just as Alexandria’s founders came to accept the relationship between religion and commerce, later Alexandrians did not find those two traditions contradictory.

In keeping with these traditions, Easter egg decoration was the featured topic of the Alexandria Gazette’s March 30, 1896, edition. The article championed inscrib-

ing “an Easter wish or verse on a delicately-tinted egg. This is done with metallic applied with a fine camel’s-hair brush. It may be more quickly done with a stub pen and India ink, but the result will not be so effective.”

Similarly, the April 1, 1895, edition of the Alexandria Gazette included an advertisement for “Easter Goods at French’s Bookstore.” The ad encouraged readers to view “the beautiful display of Easter Books and Booklets.” It also advertised “Ducks, Chickens, Geese and Beautifully Colored Eggs.”

Almost 20 years later, The Sunday Star, on April 5, 1914, told its readers that “A bunny party is an inexpensive, but

very jolly way of entertaining the boys and girls home for the Easter vacation.”

The Star continued: “The first game is to be an egg hunt. As the guests arrive the girls will take a colored candy egg from one basket and the boys one from another basket. The boy and girl choosing the same color become partners...”

The religious tradition was also celebrated in Alexandria. A couple of years after the Star article, the April 22, 1916, Gazette wrote an article on “Easter Music at Churches.”

While some churches promoted their Easter sermons, all of the churches featured in the article, including First Baptist Church, the Chapel of the Good

Shepherd and Second Presbyterian, publicized their musical program for their Easter services. First Baptist Church announced its program included “Spring Song,” “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” and “Now is Christ Risen.”

Much like previous residents of Alexandria, current Alexandrians do not need to choose between the religious and commercial traditions of Easter. Given Alexandria’s historical diversity, many residents did not celebrate the holiday at all. For those of you who do, we wish you a Happy Easter!

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