



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Annie B. Rose served where needed

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Image: Annie B. Rose, courtesy, Alexandria Black History Museum.

As Alexandria celebrates Women's History Month, we highlight one of Alexandria's foremost residents of the 20th century: Annie B. Rose, whose life began and ended in Alexandria.

The life that extended between those two points for 94 years impacted many of our residents – and in a way continues to do so.

Rose's father was the Rev. Henry Bailey, famous in our town for being sold by the owners of the notorious slave jail at 1315 Duke St., and then walking back to Virginia to find his mother, who was living on the intersection of Queen and Alfred streets.

Rose later would marvel at her father's quest to learn to read after returning to Alexandria, while working to lay track for the railroad between Washington and Richmond. Years later, she commended his pride at graduating from Whalen Seminary with a degree in education, "in one boot and one shoe."

But Rose's legacy is one that she carved for herself. From her first move to Alexandria in the 1940s until her death in 1989, the number of organizations that she was involved with, mainly on a volunteer basis, was staggering. She was a founding member of the Alexandria Commission on Aging and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Project.

Rose served on the boards of the Alexandria Red Cross and the Urban League, the council of Church Women United and Hopkins House, and was the first black president of the Alexandria Women's Civic Association. She also played the organ weekly at Ebenezer Baptist Church. In 1987, she was honored by the National Caucus and Center on Black Aging Inc., for her efforts to register voters, obtain housing for the poor and improve services for the elderly.

Of all of her organizations and causes, the designation of 1315 Duke St. as a National Historic Landmark in 1985 held a special place in her heart. In a 1987 Washington Post interview, Rose stated: "It is precious that in this day those dear people saw the importance of saving that (slave pen) Building and dedicating it. That they would recognize that all those who were slaves... made such a great contribution to this country."





Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia

Rose's contributions to Alexandria were noted by its residents. Soon after her death the former Pendleton House, a housing facility that helps meet the needs of elderly and physically challenged residents, as well as those with disabilities, was renamed in her honor.

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by staff of the Office of Historic Alexandria.