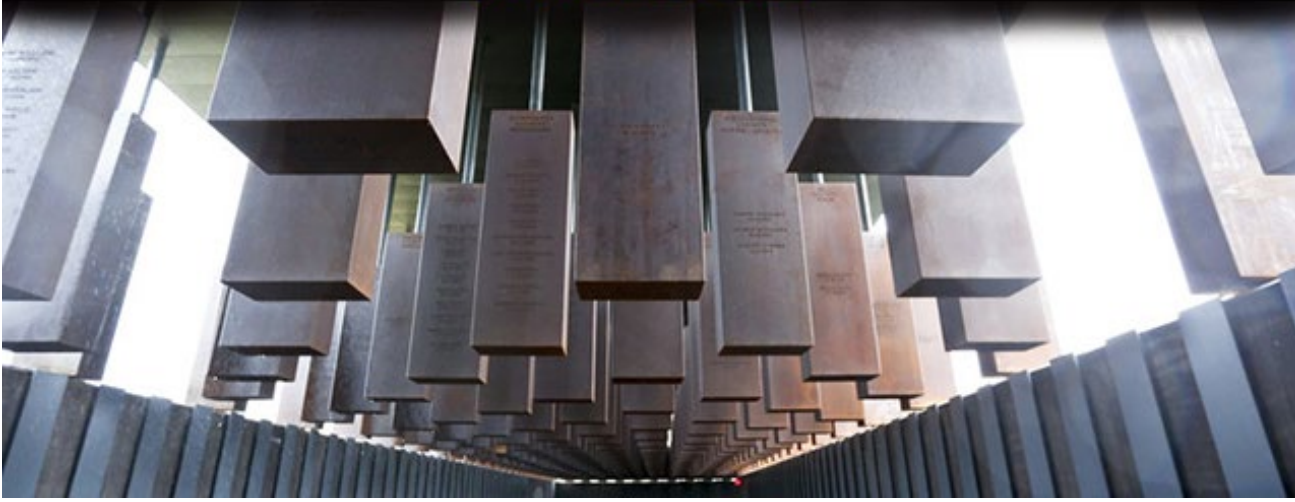


ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER



September 2023 Edition

They Called Her A “Race Traitor”

She grew up white in Northern Virginia at the height of Massive Resistance with a mother who was a keen segregationist from Georgia. Little Joan Trumpauer Mulholland didn't dare tell her parents that she attended an integrated Bible study on the sly. As high school graduation neared, Mulholland's mother insisted she go to then-segregated Duke University to learn to become a proper lady. But after Mulholland was arrested for participating in the Durham, N.C. sit-ins and they sent her away for psychological evaluation, it became clear she wasn't going to fit in.

Mulholland gave up on Duke, joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and soon found herself at the center of the nation's nonviolent struggle for civil rights. Seeing integration as a two-way street, Mulholland matriculated at the historically Black Tougaloo College in Mississippi. Now, Mulholland was in the minority and she said it made her see the world through a different lense - one that was not dominated by whiteness.

“Attending Tougaloo made me who I am today. Being a minority in college and gaining the acceptance of my fellow students really forced me to view the world differently,” [she said](#). While at Tougaloo, Mulholland joined Delta Sigma Theta, becoming one of the first white members. Years later, her son, Loki Mulholland joined Omega Psi Phi.

During the epic struggle for social justice, Mulholland participated in more than 50 sit-ins and demonstrations including the Freedom Rides, the Jackson Woolworth's sit-in, the March on Washington, the Meredith March, and the March from Selma to Montgomery. Being white, she was often photographed. In July 2020, Mulholland told NPR, "A white person really stood out, which was part of my role."

In 1964, the Ku Klux Klan confronted the veteran activist as she and several other civil rights workers left Canton, Mississippi. The Klan beat her driver, but Mulholland managed to escape. Later she learned the Klansmen had planned to kill her and the other activists, and after failing they murdered Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman instead.

Mulholland will speak at ACRP's fall meeting on Sept. 23 at The Lyceum at 1:30 p.m. Don't miss this chance to hear about her experiences at the epicenter of the fight for justice. Space is limited so please register for this [free event](#) as soon as possible. Her latest books will be available for purchase and she will hold a book

signing after her presentation.

Joseph McCoy Update

ACRP employed Genealogist Char McCargo Bah to further research the parentage of Joseph McCoy. Her recently completed report reveals a painful story of abandonment. We have learned that Joseph McCoy (b. 1879) had a younger brother named John (b. 1882) and both were the children of Harriet Chase (Alx) and George McCoy (D.C.). In 1983, Harriet left the boys with their great grandmother, Cecelia McCoy, married Jarred Green and left the state. Joseph was just four and John was one. George, who continued to live in the District, eventually married Amanda Pindell. Neither parent appears to have acknowledged Joseph or John as their children.

Harriet was the oldest of the four children born to Samuel Chase and Ann McCoy Chase. Her siblings Charles, Rachel and Samuel were living with Grandma Cecelia by 1870, making it likely Ann passed away sometime after 1866 when Samuel Jr. was born. Samuel Sr. continued to live near Cecelia for ten more years, according to City Directories. He remarried in 1885, but as early as the 1880 Census Samuel Sr. was living with Sarah Lee and their one-year-old baby who was born the same year as his grandson, Joseph McCoy. Chase doesn't appear to have been involved in his grandbabies' lives.

In 1895, when Joseph was 16 and John was 14, Cecelia died. The two boys were on their own. If Joseph was not already employed by Richard Lacy at this point, he likely started working for him after his Grandma passed away. Lacy accused Joseph of assaulting his children which led to his lynching.

Two years after Cecelia died, in February of 1897, Harriet's sister Rachel Chase married a railroad worker named Samuel Gray and moved into his house on Muires Alley off Franklin Street. It's possible the boys lived with her - the Washington Times reported that McCoy was arrested at his Aunt's house, "He [Liuett. Smith] found McCoy at the home of his aunt in Muires Alley."

Another newspaper account indicates that Rachel was involved in Joseph's life and cared for him - it reported that when McCoy's aunt saw him at Domaine's Funeral Home after the lynching, she said, "As the people killed him, they will have to bury him."

Just as the Thomas family left Alexandria after the lynching of Benjamin, Rachel, Samuel and John McCoy moved to Washington, D.C. Rachel's brother Charles and his wife Mary lived on Lowes Alley and the trio from Alexandria rented the house next door. John, who could read and write, worked as a porter at a drugstore.

George McCoy, the father of both boys, was living less than five miles away with his future wife, Amanda Pindell and their newborn son George D. McCoy. On the 1900 Census, George McCoy changed his race from Mulatto to White.

In The News

Benjamin Thomas Remembrance and Marker Unveiling

On Tuesday, Aug. 8, approximately 300 Alexandrians witnessed the unveiling of a new historic marker located at the Old City Jail at 401 N. St. Asaph Street. The marker tells more of Benjamin Thomas' story and will eventually sync with the marker at Fairfax and King Streets. After the unveiling, ACHS student Mahmoud Koroma shared Benjamin Thomas' story before participants joined in a half-mile remembrance walk to the site of the lynching. A wreath laying followed as well as an acknowledgement statement read by those who identified as white.

[Read more about the event and view some pictures.](#)

Read Jeanne Theismann's take on the event, "[Steeped in Racial Oppression in Alexandria: Ceremony Unveils Marker in Honor of Lynching Victim Benjamin Thomas.](#)" *Alexandria Gazette Packet*, Aug. 10, 2023.

Upcoming Events

ACRP Fall Meeting Featuring Freedom Rider Joan Mulholland

September 23

Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum

1-3:30 p.m.

Free Register [here](#)

Freedom Rider Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, who also played a role in integrating Glen Echo Park, will speak to the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project at The Lyceum. The event is free and begins with a social at 1 p.m., the program starts at 1:30 and includes a book signing. Mulholland will be joined by her son and documentarian Loki Mulholland for the presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Her most recent book, "Get Back to the Counter," as well as some children's books about nonviolent protests will be available for purchase. Registration is needed due to the limited space – this event is first come first serve.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project Marker Committee will meet virtually on September 28 at 7 p.m. for an update on the EJL Marker Process and to review and write text. Register [here](#).

The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project Steering Committee will meet in person October 2 at the Black History Museum at 5 p.m.

Committee Reports

The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project Steering Committee met in person on August 1 and September 5 and discussed plans for the Thomas Remembrance, a possible scholarship in partnership with the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, and fundraising strategies for awards in each lynching victim's names, as well as the relaunch of the Remembrance Students at ACHS for the 2023-24 academic year.

Remembrance Students met on August 30 at ACHS Black Box Theater after school. The student-led club viewed an orientation presentation. They have been asked to form committees to plan a one-day regional social justice inspired pilgrimage.

[Joseph McCoy](#) [Benjamin Thomas](#).

[For more information](#)

[Donate to the Project](#)

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The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) is a city-wide initiative dedicated to helping Alexandria understand its history of racial terror hate crimes and to work toward creating a welcoming community bound by equity and inclusion.

**Office of Historic Alexandria
City of Alexandria, Virginia**



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