

Manassas at 150 Years and Counting

On April 2, 1873, the Town of Manassas was officially chartered. April 1, 2023 was the day selected to observe and celebrate the 150th anniversary of Manassas, its growth and success.

The day was filled with events, activities, and programs. The city ran a free shuttle from the Manassas depot to and from the Boys and Girls Club, but if you weren't able to attend, the following article will give you an idea of some of the day's happenings.

Kickoff

Manassas celebrated its 150th Anniversary at the Boys and Girls Club at Jennie Dean Park on Saturday, April 1, 2023. The Boys and Girls Club was abuzz with activity. It began in the lobby that presented the main exhibit of a Manassas Timeline from 1873 to 2023.

The gymnasiums on the first floor housed tables with various giveaway items. The main gymnasium held the reviewing stand where the poetry contest winners were honored, audiences were treated to a live performance by Pershing's Own Quartet, and the Time Capsule was presented.

The basketball gymnasium felt like a convention center with the number of tables where various groups advertised their services. Tables held brochures and samplers from groups like Historic Manassas, Inc., the Hylton Performing Arts Center, the Freedom Museum, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Rotary Club.



Visitors investigating what services local businesses have to offer



The Manassas Timeline at the Boys and Girls Club lobby

Manassas Timeline Exhibit

The Manassas Timeline Exhibit was displayed in the front lobby of the Boys and Girls Club so residents could get an over view of Manassas history, from its incorporation as a Town in 1873 to its status as a City in 2023.

Poetry Contest Winners

The City of Manassas and Neighborhoods of Manassas-Best Version Media hosted a poetry contest where the winners read their poems at the 150th Anniversary



Poetry contest judges and winners

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celebration and had their poems added to the Time Capsule. Katherine Gotthardt's winning poem "Now Entering Manassas" was a splendid overview of a day in the city. The winner for the student poetry category was Nevaeh Williams. Bianca Menendez, a member of the Poetry Society of Virginia, recited the winning poems in Spanish for the Latino audience members.



U.S. Army's Pershing's Own Quartet

Pershing's Own Quartet

"Serving the nation through music"

As the Army's website states, "The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" provides musical support for the leadership of the United States, to include all branches of government, and to a wide spectrum of national and international events in order to connect the Army to the American people."

The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" was formed on January 25, 1922 by order of General John J. Pershing. Pershing's Own wowed the audience with a flawless recital of "The Star Spangled Banner," followed by an impressive rendition of "Raiders' March," the theme from *Indiana Jones*, "Malice Toward None" from *Lincoln*, and "Bolivar."



City of Manassas Police Color Guard

150th Ceremony

Ceremonies opened with the City of Manassas Police Color Guard.

Time Capsule

The 150th Anniversary Celebration included a specially designated Time Capsule slated to be opened fifty years from now, in the year 2073. Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger officiated the ceremony and presented the first item for preservation, a letter of proclamation for



Mayor Davis-Younger and Council holding the Time Capsule ceremony

Manassas' 150th Anniversary. The rest of City Council had their own items for inclusion. Vice Mayor Sebesky put in an origami box that included charms shaped like a truck, a train, a house, the Earth, a fireworks burst, and the number 2023. Councilmember Vega included a copy of a bilingual newsletter. Councilmember Osina included a business card with a note, a heart charm, and seeds. Councilmember Ellis included a copy of a book titled "Pollinated," and City Manager Pate included a copy of the City of Manassas newsletter *Connections* highlighting the 150th Anniversary. Other items included were a Commemorative 150th Anniversary Badge from the

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USPS postcard with 150th Commemorative stamp

City of Manassas Police Department, a special bottle of whiskey from K.O. Distillery, and a case of five Tesla computer chips.

Commemorative Cancellation

The United States Postal Service offered a special postal cancellation stamp in honor of the 150th Anniversary. Attendees could either bring in their own envelopes and postcards, or purchase postcards from the Manassas Museum gift shop, Echoes.

Jennie Dean

Jane Serepta Dean (April 15, 1848 – May 3, 1913), nicknamed “Jennie” or “Miss Jennie,” a born slave freed after the Civil War, dedicated the rest of her life to betterment through education. To that end, she founded the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth, a secondary/trade school for members of the black community, in 1893.

Manassas Industrial School

The tour of the Manassas Industrial School introduced attendees to the City Park’s namesake, Jennie Dean, and provided a detailed overview of her life and accomplishments.



Memorial statue to Jennie Dean at Dean Park



Model of the original Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth founded by Jennie Dean

One of her most daring undertakings, Jennie Dean secured the charter and funding for a secondary/trade school for black youth. The Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth was founded in 1893, and offered classes in farming, masonry, and carpentry as well as classes in literature and math and sciences. For many years, the Manassas Industrial School was the only school where black people could receive higher education, as it serviced Prince William, Fairfax, Loudon, and Fauquier counties. The school remained occupied and in business until 1966, the last year segregation was legal in Virginia.

Among the sponsors for this institution were New York philanthropist and New York Times editor Andrew Carnegie, Emily Howland, a philanthropist and fellow educator, and Edward Everett Hale, noted author, historian, Unitarian minister, and great-nephew of Nathan Hale. Frederick Douglas was among the keynote speakers at the school’s opening ceremony.

And Other Fun

The 150th Anniversary had other activities for kids and families to enjoy. There were trucks with food provided by Foster’s Grille and La Jorochita Restaurant. The children’s gymnasium had moon bounces and a booth where kids could receive balloon animals, throw axes, and get their faces painted.

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The parking lot was very active with foot traffic as Manassas residents sought to experience the rock-climbing wall and strap on a harness and try the Extreme Air Jumper bungee jumping platform.

The City of Manassas Police Department and the City of Manassas Fire Department also hosted a “Touch a Truck” event, where girls, boys, moms, and dads were allowed to understand the interior of police vehicles and fire trucks first hand by sitting in the driver’s seat and experiencing the command console.



Food trucks offered snacks, beverages, and treats for event goers



Youngsters could enjoy a bounce or an axe throw



The rock climbing tower waits for action

The day’s events concluded with a fireworks display before event goers headed home.