

# TIMELINE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2024

## Alligators: The Invasion of the Jefferson Hotel

Learn more about how the Jefferson Hotel became a reptilian paradise at the turn of the 20th century.

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## Too Damn High!

This season, *Controversy/History* takes on the city's most pressing issues and asks: why is the cost of thriving in Richmond so damn high?

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## Edmund Archer: Perspectives on Black Dignity

Explore stunning portraits of Black Richmonders by artist Edmund Archer in our newest exhibition.

5



the  
Valentine

# Start Your Story with Us!

The Valentine Garden is the perfect downtown oasis for your wedding, graduation celebration, milestone birthday party, business gathering or other special event! And now is the perfect time to book for Spring 2025 when the weather warms and our garden blooms.

The Valentine is conveniently located in the heart of downtown, with indoor and outdoor accommodations suitable for any occasion. Whether you're marking a special anniversary or celebrating a recent accomplishment, there's nothing more magical than a night under the stars and a walk through our exhibition galleries to cap off a uniquely Richmond experience.

**For more information about facility rentals, please contact:**

Events on Leigh  
eventsonleigh.com  
experiences@eventsonleigh.com  
(804) 944-9299



Turner wedding in the Valentine Garden, 2016.

## Life, Liberty & Happiness



January 16, 2025  
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Join the Valentine on Religious Freedom Day, January 16, 2025, for the return of *Life, Liberty & Happiness*. This lecture series explores the evolution and contemporary relevance of America's founding philosophies.

Our featured lecturer will be Jeffrey Rosen, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia and host of the *We the People* podcast. In his new book, *The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America*, Rosen profiles six of the most influential founders of America and shows how they understood the pursuit of happiness as a quest of lifelong virtue.

Learn more at: [thevalentine.org](http://thevalentine.org)

## Visit the Valentine & the First Freedom Center

### The Valentine

Monday, Closed

Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

(free admission and extended hours until 7 p.m. on Thursdays)

Free parking is available for visitors to the Valentine in the lot located at 407 N. 10th Street.

### The Valentine First Freedom Center

Monday, Closed

Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

# Alligators: The Invasion of the Jefferson Hotel

By Denne Arteaga, Cristo Rey High School Intern

When Lewis Ginter opened the Jefferson Hotel in 1895, it immediately became popular with tourists traveling up and down the East Coast. The hotel had all the modern luxuries such as billiard rooms, a library, a grill room, Turkish and Russian baths and a salon. With more than 300 guest rooms, it became known as "The Belle of the '90s."

Around this time, a successful marketing campaign lured thousands of tourists to visit Florida, initially by train from New England and the mid-Atlantic and later by car as automobiles became mainstream and highways were constructed. Tourism advertisements often highlighted the state's tropical flora and fauna, and images of alligators graced postcards, billboards and tourist souvenirs. The sale of live baby alligators, often purchased as a tourist souvenir, was common before 1967 (when they were protected as an endangered species). It is estimated that more than 8,000 baby alligators were taken from Florida as pets.

When these tourists eventually realized that alligators grow into gigantic pets, their owners would find a way to dispose of them, often donating them to zoos or abandoning them in ponds or rivers.

The Jefferson Hotel served as a pit stop for travelers heading north on their way home from Florida, and it was not unusual for owners of a baby alligator to leave them behind when they checked out. Baby alligators would reside in the hotel's Palm Court fountain. Sometimes these alligators would climb out of the fountain and head into the lobby to lounge and sleep. Over time, hotel guests donated more alligators to add to the growing reptile family.



Alligators in the center of the Jefferson Hotel's Palm Court, Cook Collection, the Valentine.

Alligators continued to roam the hotel for years after they first arrived, up until Old Pompey, the last alligator, died in 1948. To remember Old Pompey, a bronze statue of the alligator was put outside the valet stand, along with other alligator references around the hotel.

In 1964, the Lambda Chi fraternity at the University of Richmond donated a trio of live alligators to the hotel to bring back the alligator collection. According to an article in the *Richmond News Leader*, hotel officials and managers were delighted to receive these alligators, along with a later donation of two more alligators. There is no word on when these newest alligators checked out of the Jefferson.

In the mid-1980s, the Jefferson Hotel completed a \$30 million renovation. New York sculptor Paul Jeffries was commissioned to make three bronze alligators as part of the refresh. After completion, the sculptures were installed in the fountain in front of the Jefferson for the public to enjoy. The largest of the three alligators was then named Jefferson.

**Discover more Richmond Stories online at:**  
[thevalentine.org/richmond-stories](http://thevalentine.org/richmond-stories)

*Denne Arteaga is currently a junior at Cristo Rey Richmond High School. The Valentine has partnered with Cristo Rey as part of their corporate work study program where students gain hands-on, professional work experience and gain exposure to a wide range of career opportunities.*



Old Pompey statue, Jefferson Hotel, 2024.

# Too Damn High!

*Controversy/History* takes on the city's most pressing issues.

The 2024–2025 *Controversy/History* series invites Richmonders to ask: why is the cost of thriving in Richmond so damn high?

Each conversation features a diverse panel of experts in a forum that explores the challenges facing the Richmond community with a deep dive into historical context, quantitative data and solution-oriented thinking with co-hosts Kelli Lemon and Josh Epperson. Everyone in the room is encouraged to get involved in shaping the region's future.

In partnership with PlanRVA, the 2024–2025 season will align with the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework, using the framework's five pillars to explore upward mobility in ways that impact every Richmond citizen with an emphasis on our everyday experiences.

This series is sponsored in part by Altria. In partnership with the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and Virginia Video Network.



*Controversy/History*, 2023.



## Upcoming Conversations:

**January 14, 2025**  
5:30–7:15 p.m.  
Too Damn High! The Price of Foregoing the Traditional 9–5

**February 11, 2025**  
5:30–7:15 p.m.  
Too Damn High! The Pressure of Childcare in the First Five Years

**March 11, 2025**  
5:30–7:15 p.m.  
Too Damn High! Violence in Richmond & the Path to Safer Communities



Rent 2 High graffiti in Richmond, 2024.

# History Makers

For 20 years, the Valentine's Richmond History Makers program has honored everyday individuals and organizations that are making significant contributions to the Greater Richmond Region at that moment in time. This year, the Valentine has aligned the categories for recognition with the Urban Institute's pillars to improve upward mobility.

While nominations are now closed, you can still be a part of the celebrations! Save the date to join us on April 10, 2025, at the Valentine as we recognize our Richmond History Makers. Winners will be announced in early 2025.

New this year, the Valentine will include an award specifically for students, aimed at celebrating a young Richmonder serving their community and making history in their own unique way. Young Richmond History Maker nominations are still open until November 30, 2024.

Learn more at: [richmondhistorymakers.com](http://richmondhistorymakers.com)



# Winter Wander

Sunday, December 8, 2024  
12-4 p.m.

Celebrate the winter holidays with the Valentine on our picturesque block of East Clay Street! Enjoy rides in a horse-drawn carriage, performances on Clay Street and inside the museum, plus crafts, tours and more family fun!

Tour the historic Court End neighborhood and then hop on a free shuttle to visit nearby cultural sites for open houses and even more activities. This year's shuttle stops include The American Civil War Museum's White House of the Confederacy, the John Marshall House, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Valentine First Freedom Center, the Capitol Building, the Poe Museum, Masons' Hall and Monumental Church.

This event is free and open to the public!

Learn more at: [thevalentine.org/events](http://thevalentine.org/events)



(A) Virginia Opera performing at Winter Wander, 2023, photo by Duane Berger. (B) Winter Wander, 2022, photos by Keshia Eugene.

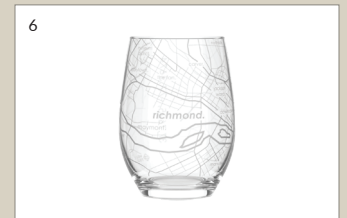
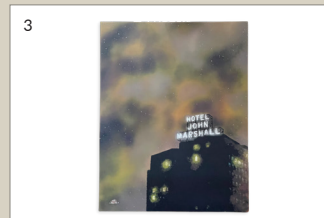
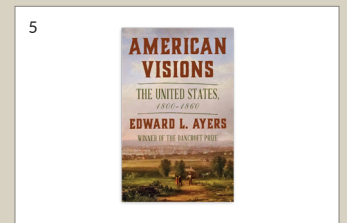
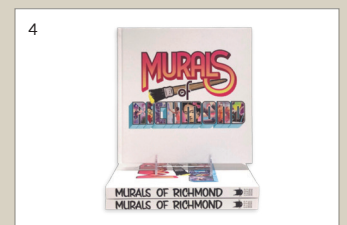
# Museum Store Sunday

Sunday, December 1, 2024  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Check everyone off your holiday shopping list this season by shopping at the Valentine on Museum Store Sunday! The Valentine's store features local handmade goods, a curated book selection and our popular Valentine's Meat Juice Bloody Mary Mix. Plus, enjoy 20% off your purchase when you shop on Museum Store Sunday.

Check out some of our favorites:

1. Valentine's Meat Juice Bloody Mary Mix
2. Maven Theory Candles
3. RVA Coffee Stain prints featuring Richmond icons
4. *Murals of Richmond* by Mickael Broth
5. *American Visions: The United States 1800-1860* by Edward L. Ayers
6. Well Told Richmond Map Glassware



# Edmund Archer: Perspectives on Black Dignity

September 26, 2024–September 1, 2025

Edmund Archer (1904–1986) was born in Richmond and lived and painted in Richmond, Paris, New York and Washington, D.C. For a period of time he was an assistant curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and taught at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C.

Beginning in 1926, Edmund Archer rented the studio of Edward Valentine, the Valentine Museum's first president. In the studio, Archer almost exclusively created portraits of Black Richmonders. *Edmund Archer: Perspectives on Black Dignity* features ten works that exhibit his faithful rendering of the physical details of his subjects, devoid of any larger context or commentary. Archer's dramatic break with preceding and contemporary stereotypes was profound and gave a sense of dignity to all of his sitters.

Edmund Archer's legacy permeates much of Richmond's artistic culture. In 1962, Archer helped establish The Hand Workshop in Church Hill, which operated there and later on West Main Street as an artists' hub, education space and gallery. In 2005, the workshop rebranded as the Visual Arts Center of Richmond.

Learn more about this exhibition and Edmund Archer's life at:  
[thevalentine.org/exhibitions](https://thevalentine.org/exhibitions)



Woman in Red by Edmund Archer, 1930s.  
Courtesy of Guy Archer.

# FANCY: Costumes, Characters and the Richmond Masque

May 10, 2025–January 25, 2026

From the dazzling splendor of 19th-century fancy dress balls to the shadowed streets on Halloween, dressing up in costumes is an opportunity to escape the ordinary. *FANCY: Costumes, Characters and the Richmond Masque* explores the many ways Richmonders have used creative clothing to disguise themselves for frivolity, celebration and performance.

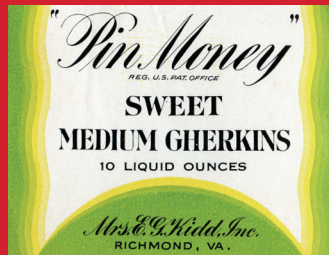


**Save the Date!**  
FANCY Exhibition Opening & Costume Party  
Saturday, May 10, 2025

# This Just In! New to the Interactive Timeline

## 1868: Kidd Started Pickle Empire

At 16 years old, Ellen G. Kidd began making her grandmother's pickle recipe out of her parents' kitchen and selling them to friends and neighbors to make a little "pin money" or extra spending money. By 1919, she opened a pickle processing plant that made 1,000 barrels a day at 1500 W. Marshall Street for her growing business,



Pin Money Pickles Label, ca. 1928, FIC.017788b, the Valentine.

Pin Money Pickles. In addition to being an entrepreneur, Kidd was an active suffragist, belonging to the Equal Suffrage League and the Virginia League of Women Voters. She remained president of the company until her death in 1932, and the company remained in business until 1959 when it was sold and dissolved.

## 2006: First Chicken Fiesta Opened

Harold Vega brought the first Tex-Mex rotisserie chicken restaurant to Richmond when he opened Chicken Fiesta in 2006 on Midlothian Turnpike. Vega immigrated to the United States from Colombia and worked in his family's restaurants in Washington, D.C., before coming to Richmond. With a mission to bring the best Latin American food to the city, Chicken Fiesta has expanded to seven locations in the metro area.



Courtesy of Chicken Fiesta, 2006.

### Discover More Richmond History!

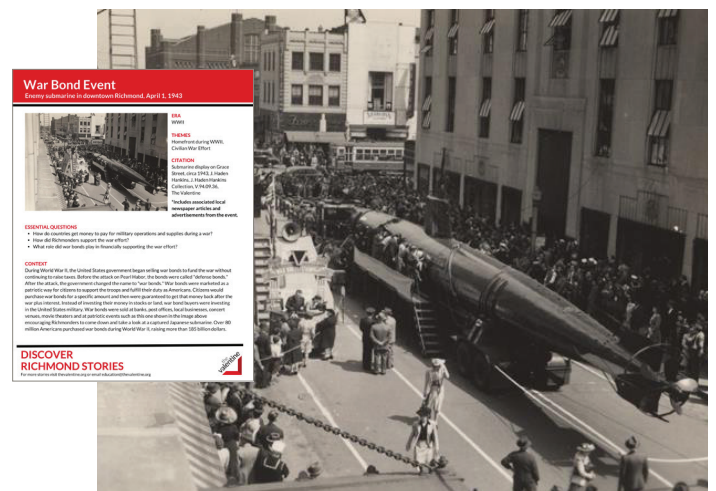
Explore the Interactive Timeline at:  
[thevalentine.org/interactive-timeline](http://thevalentine.org/interactive-timeline)

## Valentine Teaching Resources

Did you know that the Valentine has hundreds of teaching resources available online that educators can access for free? From collections in the classroom to featured stories to self-guided walking tours, there's something for every student.

### War Bond Event: Enemy submarine in downtown Richmond, April 1943

Richmonders paid \$1 to get a close look at the enemy submarine in the middle of Grace Street to raise money for the war effort at this War Stamp and Bond event. The Japanese two-man submarine had been captured after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. In addition to the image of the event from our collection, check out the newspaper advertisement for the event sponsored by the retail stores of Richmond and two newspaper articles from the event. One article features a Miller & Rhoads employee, Mrs. Katherine Dew Horne, who first saw the submarine washed up on the beach in Hawaii when her husband, Army Lieutenant M. T. Horne, was stationed on Oahu in 1941.



Submarine display on Grace Street, circa 1943, J. Haden Hankins, J. Haden Hankins Collection, V.94.09.36, the Valentine.

Scan the QR code to learn more about this teaching resource or visit:  
[thevalentine.org/teaching-resources](http://thevalentine.org/teaching-resources)



# The Valentine

1015 E. Clay Street, Richmond, VA 23219

[thevalentine.org](http://thevalentine.org)

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## Supporting the Valentine is Always in Fashion!

Your support of the Valentine helps us showcase the wide range of people and stories that make Richmond unique. It is thanks to our members and donors that we can continue the important work of sharing those Richmond Stories.

With new exhibitions and an ever-growing selection of programs and tours, your generosity will not only support our mission but also give you access to exciting member-only events and experiences. See our events calendar for a listing of upcoming programming exclusively for members and friends.

We hope that you will renew your support today! An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. We also accept gifts of stock or IRA distributions, and you can donate online at [thevalentine.org/give](http://thevalentine.org/give).

If you have questions about giving, please contact Olivia Stickley, Annual Giving and Donor Relations Manager, at (804) 649-0711 ext. 325 or [membership@thevalentine.org](mailto:membership@thevalentine.org)



Men Up High, 2/8/1986, Richmond Newspapers, Inc., V.86.288.98

COVER CAPTIONS: (A) Controversy/History panelists Rabbi Michael Knopf, Danita Rountree Green and Jabriel Hasan, 2024. (B) Director Bill Martin with hosts Michael Maddix and Douglass Moyers at the Centennial Circle Reception, 2024, photo by Duane Berger. (C) Nutasha and attendees at Winter Wander, 2023, photo by Duane Berger. (D) Mollie Archer Payne, Guy Archer and Christina Vida at the opening of the Edmund Archer exhibition, 2024.

**RICHMOND STORIES™**

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