



Hereditary Fortnight in Washington

Heralded by Spring

Brantley Carter Bolling Knowles

JUST AS TULIPS, DAFFODILS, and cherry blossoms cloak Washington in delicate floral beauty, spring heralds the arrival of hereditary lineage groups to the District of Columbia. Since the mid-20th century, dozens of societies have descended upon Washington for two weeks in mid-April. This series of events is known as Hereditary Fortnight.

Through the decades these societies have ebbed and flowed. Those that have remained relevant, and those with an

enduring mission, remain. Many of these societies were founded in the late 19th century, while some were formed as recently as in the last decade. The common thread is that the societies which meet during this time all require direct or collateral descent, proven with primary source documentation from a qualifying ancestor.

Many of these groups have formal meetings only once yearly... exclusively in Washington. Other large national, even international groups, such as the

Jamestowne Society, the Society of Mayflower Descendants, and the Colonial Dames of America meet with much greater frequency but host events during Hereditary Fortnight, ensuring a presence in the spring celebration of shared history and heritage.

With the advent of the internet with its tools to aid research, with the emergence of DNA testing, and with the popularity of television programs featuring genealogy, hereditary lineage societies have become

Above: (l-r) Lineage luminaries awaiting introduction by Mrs. Knowles: David Trebing, Governor General of The Society of Colonial Wars; Molly Carey, President, The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Virginia; Anna Duff, National President of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America; Sharon Vaino, President General, The Colonial Dames of America.

Bottom: (l-r) Laura Ramsay; Timothy Finton; Tonya Finton; Laurie Aldinger, Treasurer, Order of the Crown of Charlemagne in the United States.

Above: (l-r) Bill Carrell, Governor of the Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Kentucky; Philip Livingston, Registrar General of The National Society Americans of Royal Descent; Nicholas Donnell Ward, former President of the National Gavel Society; and Karen Cardullo, Governor General of The Hereditary Order of Descendants of Colonial Governors.

Below: Michael and Carol Lynch, 1st Vice President General of The Colonial Dames of America.

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About the Author

Brantley C.B. Knowles (Mrs. Peter I.C. Knowles II) is President General of the National Society of Americans of Royal Descent (NSARD); President of the Society of American Friends of Lincoln Cathedral; and First Vice President General of The Colonial Dames of America (CDA). A frequent lecturer and writer on the topics of historic preservation and both English and American history, Mrs. Knowles completed the Royal Collection Studies of the Attingham Trust, which took place in the various royal residences of HM the Queen in 2017.