ROBERT HARTSHORNE MILLER
1798-1874
A Quaker Presence in Virginia

Perry Wheelock
Edited by John G. Motheral

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Foreword

The Alexandria Archaeology Publications series is composed of papers on various aspects of research conducted under the auspices of Alexandria Archaeology, a division of the Office of Historic Alexandria, City of Alexandria, Virginia. The authors include professional staff members, university students and Alexandria Archaeology volunteers. Editing of the papers has been kept to a minimum. It should be understood that the papers vary in tone and level of technicality, since they were originally directed toward many different audiences.

We are pleased to offer the papers within this series and in so doing are opening our "manuscripts on file" - including professional conference papers, background documentary studies, student course papers, and volunteer research papers - to professionals and public alike.

Perry began her research into Robert Hartshorne Miller as a term paper (Perry D. Swain 1984). Eventually she became so interested in the man and his contributions that they became the subjects of her Master's thesis at The George Washington University (Perry D. Swain 1988).

This document shows how much research is necessary to truly understand one person, his business, relationships, spirituality and beliefs. Fortunately with the case of Robert Miller, his life is a perfect case study for understanding Alexandria during its turbulent 19th century history. It is also possible for us to recognize how much impact one person's actions have on his larger society. Perry's manuscript also brings forth this Quaker's actions in several domains of life -- economic, social, community, health and African American freedom.

This paper is an addition to other Alexandria Archaeology Publications on Quakers. It also dovetails with several archaeological projects in Alexandria, namely the King Street Courthouse Project (44AX1), the African American Neighborhood Project and the Coleman Site (44AX30), and the Alexandria Canal (44AX28).

Pamela J. Cressey, Ph.D.
City Archaeologist
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Preface

In the summer of 1977, two privy wells located on the 500 block of King Street were excavated by Alexandria city archaeologists. Both features (AX1, Ft. 6 and AX1, Ft. 7) were associated with middle class residences that had been located on the block during the 19th century. Artifacts of interest re-covered from these two wells included a large collection of green transfer-printed ceramic ware, showing European scenes of black or brown framed with a green floral border. When reconstructed, these ceramics appeared to be parts of broken or discarded dinner sets. Platters, a serving bowl and a tureen, as well as plates of different sizes, were among these artifacts. The manufacturer's markings labeled the two different sets, "Select Sketches" and "Continental Views."[1] When displayed, these wares made an impressive statement about material culture in 19th-century Alexandria. As a student intern assigned to work on the analysis of these ceramic artifacts, I questioned where the plates, bowls and platters had come from. Who had sold them to the Alexandrians living on the 500 block? Analysis of advertisements from the Alexandria Gazette suggested that the china store of Robert H. Miller, a Quaker merchant, was a possible place of purchase. What was even more interesting was that Alexandria Archaeology had been conducting background research for other site excavations, and Robert Miller's name was continuously uncovered in that research. Evidently, there was a relationship between Miller and life in 19th-century Alexandria which needed to be examined.

Heretofore, Robert Hartshorne Miller has been an almost anonymous citizen. He has been mentioned in older Alexandria histories, but in the most recent, Alexandria, A Towne in

Transition, he is merely listed. In David Goldfield's quantitative study of urban leaders in antebellum Virginia, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, Miller is included on his list of "maximum" civic activists, but no further information is provided in the text.[2] When Goldfield does discuss some of Alexandria's leaders, he does it to demonstrate the high degree of familial connections among the activists. He excludes the Miller family entirely. This omission probably occurs because the scope of Goldfield's work is limited to the 1850's, past the point in time of civic involvement for Miller's father and his brothers. The ongoing research of Alexandria Archaeology, however, has served to rescue Miller from obscurity.[3] It is the goal of this thesis to unify much of this research into a cohesive and unified discussion of Miller's life and career. In turn, by examining Miller's Quaker upbringing, his successful business career, and his contributions to the building of Alexandria, and by connecting these aspects to events and developments as they occurred in the community this study enhances our understanding of Alexandria in the 19th century.

There are certain challenges presented by undertaking a biographical study of Robert Miller. The first is to unify all the separate studies in a way so that coherent, accurate biographical data on Miller is provided. The second is to find the primary documents that can elaborate and expand upon the basic data. In the case of Miller, almost all of what we know

[1] See research on file at Alexandria Archaeology for AX1, Feature 6 and 7.

[2] John D. Macoll, ed., Alexandria, A Towne in Transition, 1800-1900 (Alexandria: Alexandria Bicentennial Commission and Alexandria Historical Society, 1977); and David Goldfield, Urban Growth in The Age of Sectionalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).

[3] Detailed discussion of this research is found in Pamela J. Cressey and Steven J. Shepherd, "Geographical versus Social Scale in Alexandria: A Growing Archaeological Perspective," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, January 7-10, 1987.

about him comes from sources that deal indirectly with him. Therefore, it is important to analyze the subjective aspects of Miller's life without relying on mere impressions. This is especially necessary when examining the details of the reminiscences of friends and relatives that mention him, since we are dealing with secondhand information to tell us how Miller lived and worked. Therefore, sources, both primary and secondary, that can keep a balanced perspective are essential. The use of original Quaker documents and works on Quaker history help with this. The third challenge is to find the sources that can elaborate his activism. Goldfield has identified Miller as one of Alexandria's most active leaders; therefore, which materials will give us the most in-depth analysis of his civic contribution? To answer this question I have selected the Alexandria Gazette and the Alexandria Water Company records.

The final challenge, however, is to take all these separate materials and create a biography from them. By doing so, Miller's influence on the development of Alexandria will be better understood. In turn our understanding of the evolution of Alexandria from Federal seaport, through the antebellum period and retrocession, to the city reconstructed after the Civil War will be enhanced.

The creation of this biographical study would not have been possible without the contributions and support of the staff, students and volunteers at Alexandria Archaeology. In particular, the guidance and direction of Pamela J. Cressey and Steven J. Shepard have been most valuable. They have both assisted me in handling all the variety of materials and documentary evidence that exist on Robert Miller. I am also indebted to those students at Alexandria Archaeology who have preceded me, for without their individual manuscripts and research this biography of Miller could not have been created. I also greatly appreciate the

encouragement and support that I have received from my professors, Clarence C. Mondale, Howard F. Gillette and James O. Horton, in the American Studies Department at George Washington University.

INTRODUCTION

> Alexandria cannot with truth be called any longer a one horse town. How much soever evil-disposed people may talk about its slow progress, all must admit that the old City is at this time in the march of steady improvement. Within the last few years some of the finest mercantile establishments in the Union have been erected, while her more quiet streets are adorned with residences that will compare in point of architectural beauty with some of the finest in the Federal Metropolis.

This description of Alexandria, Virginia is from an 1857 edition of the Alexandria Gazette.[1] Within these few lines, characteristics of this 19th-century city can be found. These include civic pride in growth and progress, boosterism for local businesses, and a desire for favorable comparisons with nearby Baltimore and Richmond. They are also among the themes that characterized most 19th-century American cities. To date, historical analysis of Alexandria's urban development has centered on many aspects: the political, social and economic. One approach that has yet to be used is the biographical. The biographical approach uses life history and data dealing with one person, or certain individuals, in order to better understand the course of the city's growth.

David Goldfield's 1977 Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism identified, through the quantitative use of census data, city directories and a reading of the Gazette, a core group of forty-four Alexandria leaders of the 1850s. These were men who contributed to the general cultural, social and economic development of the city. They were grouped by Goldfield as "maximum," "moderate" or "minimum activists," according to their degree of civic

[1] "Alexandria Gazette," 8/11/1857, quoted in T. Michael Miller, ed., Pen Portraits of Alexandria, Virginia 1789-1900 (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1987), p. 179.

involvement.[2] Because of their involvement, the life and careers of these activists are logical sources for the study of Alexandria.

One "maximum" activist in 1857 owned one of the "finest mercantile establishments."

> A passenger passing through the principal streets to the wharf can but admire the handsome building wherein Richards sells so much of his splendid finery to the ladies, while on the opposite side below stands the elegant China establishment of R. H. Miller & Co., where the most fashionable can call and be accommodated with everything that is elegant in their line of business.[3]

This activist and merchant was Robert H. Miller. The degree of his civic involvement was far-reaching; it spanned more than 50 years. Not only did Miller appear on Goldfield's list and was featured in the 1857 edition of the Gazette, but also his activities have come to light throughout ten years of research by Alexandria Archaeology. The same year that Goldfield published his study, a large, plaster-lined brick cistern, with an enclosed filter dating from the 1830s, was excavated by Alexandria city archaeologists on property once occupied by the Miller family. Additional research into ceramics excavated from other Alexandria sites revealed the presence of Miller's china business.

Analysis of land records used in social histories completed in the early 1980s also suggested Miller's concern for the welfare of Alexandria's free black community. Other studies have discussed his membership in the Society of Friends, his relative wealth, and his leadership in the Alexandria Canal Company and the Alexandria Water Company.[4] The life and career of

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[2] David Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977). Appendix B.

[3] "Alexandria Gazette," 8/11/1857, in Pen Portraits, pp. 179-180.

[4] These studies include Melissa McCloud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology: An Alexandria Cistern and Filtration System" (Alexandria Archaeology manuscript, 1980); Barbara Magid, Artifacts, Advertisements, and

Robert Miller can illuminate the 19th-century history of Alexandria. What I intend to show, by using the biographical approach, is that Robert Miller directly influenced the shape of Alexandria's urban development.

From the Alexandria Gazette, the Goldfield study, the discovery of the cistern, the existence of the excavated ceramics and the various social histories, it is evident that Robert Hartshorne Miller (1798-1874) was a dynamic individual who was directly involved with the development of 19th-century Alexandria. At the time of his death, the Gazette described his career. He was a merchant with a longstanding wholesale and retail china, glass and pottery establishment. "... from his youth upward he was engaged in active and successful business," gaining prominence not only for his enterprise but for his civic concern. At one time he served as a bank president, president of the water company, and "at different periods of his life filled other offices for the benefit of his fellow citizens, in all of them securing the confidence and respect of the whole community." The Gazette further described him as a man of "great intelligence", of "sincerity," and of "integrity."[5] The "other offices" he held were with organizations such as the Lyceum, the Benevolent Society, the Female Orphan Society, the Alexandria Canal, the Mount Vernon Cotton Factory, the Alexandria, Loudon and New Hampshire Railroad, as well as the Citizens National Bank and the Alexandria Water Company referred to above.[6] He was also a

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Archaeology" (Alexandria: City of Alexandria, 1985); T.B. McCord, Jr., Across the Fence, But a World Apart (Alexandria: Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, 1985); Paula Coomler, "The Impact of the Quaker Community Upon the Economic Development of Alexandria, Virginia 18th through mid-19th Centuries" (Alexandria Archaeology manuscript, 1986); Lorna Anderberg, "A Comparison of Alexandria Quakers to the White Population of Alexandria" (Alexandria Archaeology 1987); Philip Terrie, "A Social History of the 500 Block, King Street in Alexandria, Virginia" (Alexandria Archaeology manuscript, 1979); and Philip Erikson, "The 1000 Pipers" (Alexandria Archaeology manuscript, 1987).

[5] Alexandria Gazette, 3/10/1874.

[6] More detailed information can be found in Philip Terrie, "The 500 Block."

member of The Alexandria Monthly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends. His associations with these singular enterprises and concerns are the logical starting point for initiating a biographical inquiry.

Sam Bass Warner, Jr. has cited and utilized biography in two of his urban histories. In one section of The Private City, Warner features biographical sketches of several Philadelphia leaders to show how urban leadership became increasingly specialized throughout the 19th century. He uses the careers of these individuals to serve as illustrations of Philadelphia as it changes over time. In his more recent work, Province of Reason, Warner uses biography as a methodology for understanding the development of 20th-century Boston. Other historians have noted the value of biography in "completing our record of the past."[7] Royce Shingleton's 1985 publication, Richard Peters, Champion of the New South, is a biography of a successful Atlanta businessman whose public career spanned both the antebellum and Reconstruction eras of that city. It, too, is an example of biography used to illuminate urban history. In their analysis of the patterns of the development of urban infrastructure, Joel Tarr and Joseph Konvitz have also acknowledged the importance of the roles played by individuals in the building of a city. The establishment of the infrastructure, the building of internal improvements such as canals, railroads and municipal services, are the mileposts in marking a community's growth. Tarr and Konvitz state:

> History suggests that the preferences and perceptions of different actors such as business leaders, politicians, and public health and engineering professionals in a particular time may be more important in the timing of

[7] W. Stitt Robinson, "The Nature and Challenges of Biography: Examples from the Life of a Royal Governor in Eighteenth-Century America." The Historian 48 (August 1986): 504.

> the city building process than a generalized set of forces that relates to all cities.[8]

However, one of the challenges of writing historical biography is determining the best way to analyze the available documentary materials. Sam Bass Warner, Jr. explained in an 1984 interview that when he began to conceptualize a biographical approach to studying urban Boston,

> You grab every tool you can get your hands on. My only objection to quantitative studies is that they depend on elaborating the material that's been observed; it's the same objection I would make to a study of the city of Boston with painting because if the painters weren't there, you don't have it.[9]

With this statement, Warner seems to be saying that the most appropriate method is to investigate beyond the data to reach an original point of view from that historical time and place. Bernard Bailyn has also addressed this challenge.

> Even in what would seem to be the most manageable aspect of the problem--in the biographies of key historical figures whose individual actions shaped events and about whom a great deal is known--the difficulties of exploring interior worlds of subjective experience are great. In any case, collective biography is most often the main question for historians, and to prove beyond what people did, wrote and said to what they experienced, how they felt, and how they comprehended the world remains a major challenge to historical investigation.[10]

To write a biography of Robert H. Miller, the challenges are both greater and more difficult. No biography or autobiography exists to tell us of his life. No personal papers or

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[8] Joel A. Tarr and Josef Knovitz, "Patterns in the Development of the Urban Infrastructure," Howard Gillette and Zane L. Miller, eds., in American Urbanism. (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1988.) p. 360.

[9] Bruce M. Stave, "A Conversation with Sam Bass Warner, Jr. Ten Years Later." Journal of Urban History 11. (November, 1984):96.

[10] Bernard Bailyn, "Challenge of Modern Historiography," American Historical Review 87 (February 1982):20.

business records have been located. In fact, an unknowing descendant may have burned these materials.[11] Yet we know from all the individual historical studies that he was involved in or connected to significant events in the city's history. The challenge is to sort through the many primary sources which contained information on Miller in order to identify those that best describe his life; thereby helping us to understand the critical years in Alexandria's development.

Tarr and Konvitz have suggested that it is worthwhile to examine the characteristics and backgrounds of the "different actors," such as Miller, who participated in the city building process. To understand Robert H. Miller, the civic activist, in the way suggested by Tarr and Konvitz, I have looked for sources that would provide information beyond that found in the documentation dealing with his public life. I have done this with the hope that any materials dealing with his private life would possibly reveal Miller's own "preferences and perceptions," that with the information gathered and collected, I would be able to piece together a more complete portrait of the man. Evidence concerning Miller's upbringing and family life, his longstanding business success, his motivation for civic concern, and more specifically, the nature of his thinking and his personality, has been difficult to ascertain. Reminiscences and the records of the Alexandria Quakers are the best documentation for these aspects of the man. They illuminate Miller's life, his activism, and add to our knowledge of the contribution he made to Alexandria.

From the autobiography of his good friend Benjamin Hallowell and from the recollections of two of his children, Warwick and Eliza, comes personal information about Robert Miller. Because of his friendship with Hallowell, a prominent Quaker educator,

[11] T. Michael Miller, Interview 2/28/87. Alexandria Library Lloyd House.

examination of Miller's affiliation with the Society of Friends is also an excellent way of "exploring the interior world" of the merchant and civic leader. The degree of Miller's Quakerism, as determined by an analysis of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting Records, appears to be a strong link to understanding his private life, and his relationships with family, friends and kin.

For investigating the entrepreneurial aspects of Miller's life, the Alexandria Gazette and the public records of the Alexandria Water Company are the best sources. The Gazette contains most of R.H. Miller Company's advertising, and thus, a way for understanding the course of his business. The Water Company's annual reports and stockholder lists from its inception are available for examination. These were used to chronicle Miller's concern with clean city water.

These sources were chosen because they were the most complete and the most accessible of all the primary materials that could be used to study Miller. Common Council minutes, Deed Books, Court records and the histories of other organizations, like the Lyceum or the Citizen's National Bank, all contain pertinent information, yet are more difficult to analyze than the Gazette, the Water Company records and the reminiscences. The Alexandria Monthly Meeting records were selected because the Quaker perspective was appropriate for evaluating what Hallowell, Warwick and Eliza Miller had written.

Benjamin Hallowell was a noteworthy Quaker educator who owned and operated a boarding school in Alexandria from 1824 through the 1850s. According to his 1877 autobiography, Robert Miller was a close, personal friend. Hallowell mentioned Miller several times, especially with regard to the Water Company. The Reminiscences of Warwick P. Miller

of Alexandria, Virginia, 1896, written by Robert's oldest child when he was 72, is a fairly serious historical work. It deals with a variety of topics, including political situations and other current events of his lifetime. Warwick also produced for his own children an elaborate genealogy which is most helpful in sorting the many friends and relations mentioned by both authors. Eliza Miller, the youngest of Robert's children, wrote her recollections in 1926, when she was in her eighties. They are a lighthearted account of what it was like to grow up in the Miller household. Yet, within the narrative there are many facts about the Millers and other details about their relationships. Eliza's and Warwick's publications are not lengthy, yet they both yield valuable information on Robert Miller's up-bringing and family life. Another source for anecdotes about Miller is Mary G. Powell's history of Alexandria. Her re-collections of the Miller family are credible, as she was acquainted with some of the Miller children, and the two families were neighbors on North Washington Street.

The precedent for researching the records of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends comes from two recent Quaker studies. One is Howard Beeth's "Outside Agitators in Southern History. The Society of Friends, 1656-1800," and the other is Larry Dale Gragg's Migration in Early America, The Virginia Quaker Experience. These two studies are both important to this work because they use extensively the records of various Virginia and North Carolina Monthly Meetings. Beeth utilizes microfilmed records, epistles and queries issued by different Quaker groups to show that by adhering to and living by their tenets, Southern Quakers evolved into an organized opposition to the colonial establishment. Gragg uses monthly meeting records a different way. By interpreting data compiled from Virginia meeting records in William Wade Hinshaw's Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy,

Gragg was able to determine the migration patterns of Quaker settlers as they moved into and out of colonial Virginia. Even though these two studies are based on an earlier era, they demonstrate how the meeting records and Hinshaw's compilation can be used. In turn, I have examined the microfilm records for the Alexandria Friends, as well as the Hinshaw compilation of them. The records cover the years 1802-1877. They also include a member-ship listing and a ledger. The Hinshaw Genealogy is an alphabetical compilation of all the members of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting through the 1930s and includes any pertinent information on each individual, such as birth, marriage and death dates, as ascertained from Hinshaw's reading of the original documents.

The Alexandria Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends was established in 1802. Prior to that time, Quakers living in Alexandria were assigned to the Monthly Meeting at Fairfax. This meant that, while Alexandria Friends would meet for worship in their own community, they would need to travel to Fairfax where they would gather with other nearby Quaker meetings for a joint monthly business meeting. With the formation of a monthly meeting in Alexandria, Friends from the city of Washington, Alexandria and the outlying areas joined together to conduct meeting business. The business would consist of the recording of all births, deaths and marriages among the members, as well as the acceptance and authorization of all certificates of removal for various member to or from Alexandria and other monthly meetings. The minutes of the meeting also show the answers to the queries, or questions of belief, asked regularly of each monthly meeting by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, the overall governing body for Maryland and Virginia Quaker groups. The Alexandria Friends were active in the Monthly Meeting throughout the 19th century until the time of the Civil War, when the membership dispersed to other

locations. Since the records and minutes are of an era that corresponds with the lifetime of Robert Miller, they are a unique source for this inquiry into his private life. The minutes reveal the concerns of Alexandria Quakers and how these concerns changed over time. They also show the Quaker leadership and how that leadership evolved. The minutes also reveal the degree to which Miller and the Miller family were involved with the Quaker organization. Further reading uncovers the elaborate connections which existed among family and friends in Alexandria during the antebellum years. While the microfilmed records and minutes are often difficult to read, they bring an added dimension to the Hinshaw genealogy. The combination of the Minutes and the Hinshaw compilation is critical for understanding Miller as a Quaker. This Quaker upbringing and cultural heritage are key factors in understanding the course of Miller's life.

The Alexandria Gazette is a most important resource for studying the history of Alexandria and the surrounding area. Beginning in 1784, the Gazette has been published almost continuously. From its editorials, ships lists, obituaries and advertisements, much can be learned about day-to-day life in this community. The Gazette was a key resource for David Goldfield's study of urban leadership in the secessionist era, and has also been cited in other Alexandria works that relate to this study.[12]

Valuable information about Robert Miller and his china business can be gained from the analysis of the advertising that his firm placed with the Gazette. These ads, which first appeared in the 1820s, at the time Miller established his shop, and continued through the century, appear to be the primary documentation for understanding Miller, the 19th-century merchant.

[12] The Gazette was used extensively in McCord, Across the Fence; and Magid, Artifacts, Advertisements, and Archaeology.

For the purposes of this study approximately 155 advertisements were examined. This survey began with advertisements in 1822, when Miller first opened his china shop, and concluded with the year 1856, when Miller's son, Elisha Janney Miller, assumed control of the business.

The documentary characteristics of the advertisements are based on the state of 19th-century newspaper advertising. In The Making of Modern Advertising, Daniel Pope has described this as simplistic and fairly straightforward. At that time, newspaper ads informed consumers of their retail choices. Merchandise was described, yet prices were not mentioned. This was because regular customers might have knowledge of a merchant's usual prices, or because of the strong tradition of bargaining. The setting of fixed prices for all customers was a mid-century development used by the first department stores. These practices were not necessary in towns where there were merchant monopolies. Unlike 20th-century advertising, early newspapermen usually handled the local advertising by themselves. There were no agents selling space. In fact, the editor often received goods or services in payment for running the advertisements. From time to time editors would improve the look of the ads by altering the size of the type or by adding "cuts of sailing ships, decanters, or runaway slaves." Yet, printing technology was fairly inflexible. As a result, most ads were confined to small single-columned spaces. Newspaper advertising did indeed look like columns and columns of small "announcements."[13]

Even though antebellum advertising was small in comparison to the large-scale national and brand advertising that began at the close of the century, the cultural significance of the announcement style of advertising was no less important. Advertising in rural or eastern areas,

as Daniel Boorstin notes, was "a necessity of existence," without which the newspapers could not survive. Furthermore, according to Thomas Cochran's analysis of the 19th- century business climate, the newspapers and the advertisements of that era exercised great social influence. Indeed, the growth of the newspaper industry itself led to "quicker interchange of current knowledge, increased intercity trade and led to better informed entrepreneurs."[14]

Advertising in the Alexandria Gazette was an integral part of that paper's format. In the antebellum era, advertisements could be found on all pages of the publication. A typical Gazette of 1822 was three or four pages long and five columns wide. Subscriptions were five dollars per year. At that time, the newspaper's official title was the Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser. Advertising rates were not published in the paper. An 1837 Gazette, in turn, was four to five pages long and six columns wide. Two editions were printed. A city edition appeared daily, and one for the country was published on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Subscription to the former was eight dollars per year and for the latter, five dollars. Again, advertising rates were not published, but it was noted that advertising would appear in both editions "for the usual rates." By 1849, the paper's title reflected both the scope and the growth of the Gazette's projected audience; it was now the Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser. Although the subscription rates had not changed since 1837, Edgar Snowden, the editor, in 1849, clearly defined the advertising terms.

> TERMS OF ADVERTISING--Advertisements not exceeding one square, inserted three times for one dollar. Advertisements continued after three times, for 50 cents a square for each insertion inside, or 25

[13] Daniel Pope, The Making of Modern Advertising (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983) p. 73.

[14] Daniel Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 126; and Cochran, Frontiers, p. 49.

> cents outside. Sixteen lines are counted as a square. Advertisements by the year, at prices to be agreed upon, having reference to the usual amount of space they may occupy. Persons advertising by the year not to advertise articles not included in their regular business, nor to insert in their advertisements, any other names than their own.[15]

From this we see that it was advantageous for the merchant to be a regular advertiser, to repeat the same advertisement three times successively. There were also printing restrictions and warnings about false advertising. Clearly, announcements and advertisements were an essential part of both publishing the Gazette and of communicating business information to the consumers of Alexandria and beyond. Indeed, considering the straightforward nature of 19th-century ads and the lack of other kinds of materials, the analysis of antebellum newspapers and advertisements is an "ingenious use of sources" for the historian.[16] Their use is important to the present study, because Robert Miller advertised extensively to promote his business.

While Miller's advertisements are evidence of his public or business self, so too are the records of the Alexandria Water Company. Miller's financial support and service as a director and second president of the company show his concern for clean water, for the well-being of the community and the economic development of the town. Furthermore, analysis of his activities on behalf of the Water Company demonstrates his relationship with other civic leaders. It also details the process of community decision-making and Miller's role in the process, as it occurred at that time. While the early history of the Water Company is, on the one hand, an example of a 19th-century business enterprise, it is, on the other, an example of how Alexandrians accomplished a major municipal success. Thomas Cochran has stated that the value of a

[15] Alexandria Gazette, 1/24/1849.

[16] William Becker, remarks made at Washington, D.C. Area Studies Conference, 2/24/1984.

company history lies not only in the insights that come from a statement of historical facts and the biographies of entrepreneurs, but also from the larger historical possibilities. Since study of current

> ...business management is basically a study of people in a vast array of meaningful relation-ships, company history can contribute to, and gain from, all of the social sciences. It is not much closer to economics, for example, than that it is to social psychology or even cultural anthropology. Put in a more generalized form, good company history can provide an excellent meeting ground for social scientists.[17]

Thus, an analysis of the early records of the Water Company is valuable for the variety of the historical relationships, as well as the business information, revealed in it.

A copy of the Alexandria Water Company Record Book, 1851-1874, along with the annual reports to the stockholders and a copy of the 1850 act to incorporate, are part of the historical collection at the Alexandria Library. In addition, an analysis of the laying of pipes and the initial installation of water to the first one thousand residences and businesses has recently been completed by Alexandria Archaeology. These materials are complemented by several research projects which document Alexandrians' concerns with clean water and sanitation in the first half of the century.[18] Clearly, there exists excellent source material on the establishment and subsequent operation of the Water Company. From these materials, a determination of the extent of Miller's participation in the development of a clean water supply is possible. Such a

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[17] Thomas Cochran, "The Value of Company History: A Review Article," Business History Review 53 (Spring 1979):83-84.

[18] Water supply research on file at Alexandria Archaeology includes Erikson, "1000 Pipers;" McLoud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology;" Perge, "A Historical Survey of Alexandria's Water Supply, 1777-1852" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1980); and Edward Arnold, Alexandria Water supply research on file at Alexandria Archaeology.

determination would also enhance a discussion of Miller's civic activism, and give a more in-depth picture of the public man than that found in Goldfield's study of urban leader-ship.

Company history is a useful research resource. Yet the history of the Alexandria Water Company is not simply company history. Development of the community water supply was a significant milestone in the growth of 19th-century cities. Public works history, which deals with the founding of railroads, canals, and waterworks, is a key part of understanding urban growth. This public works aspect is what makes the investigation of Miller's individual role in the establishment of the Water Company important to this study. Because the establishment of the Water Company was beneficial to Alexandria's growth and development, and because Miller was an active participant in this organization, the available documents help to exemplify and underscore the relation-ship between Miller and the community.

Thus, with the limitations of the available materials, the structure of this study cannot depend completely on a straight-forward biographical chronology. The method of inquiry is to connect the private and the public sides of Miller with the historical development of Alexandria. Evidence of both the public and private Miller can be found in the sources described above: the reminiscences of family and friends, which reveal his private life, and the minutes of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting, which deal with his Quakerism; the advertisements of the Alexandria Gazette, which demonstrate his business career; and the records of the Alexandria Water Company, which show him as a civic activist. Building on these sources, this study will examine the relationships between the personality of the family man and the values of the Quaker, the success of the china merchant and the entrepreneur, to determine Miller's role in the building of the city.

Chapter I of this thesis briefly analyzes the development of 19th-century cities. This analysis helps to underscore the historical context of the contribution Miller made to Alexandria. Chapter II follows with a chronology of both Miller's life and of key events in the city's history. A chronology for Miller and Alexandria is useful to show the direct connection between the two.

A chronology is pertinent because Miller's birth in 1798 roughly coincides with the beginning of the century, the establishment of the Alexandria Quaker community, and the joining of Alexandria to the District of Columbia. Additional justification can be found in the fact that Miller's life, the success of his business and the range of his civic interests spanned significant decades in Alexandria history. During the first decades of the century, "the major thrust of municipal activity...was directed at maintaining Alexandria's position as a seaport and commercial center."[19] Then, the city's commerce depended on the tobacco, wheat and flour supplied by inland farmers. In the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, Alexandria also suffered from an extended recession, brought about by the effect of American and European wars on her sea trade. During the late 1840s and 1850s, after the 1846 Retrocession of Alexandria to Virginia, construction of the C&O Canal, the Alexandria Canal and the railroads helped to stimulate industry. From 1861 to 1876 Alexandria's growth and development were inhibited by the Civil War, the accompanying Federal military occupation, and by the era of Reconstruction.[20] Though Miller died in 1874, a Miller presence was maintained in Alexandria by family ownership of the china shop until the end of the century. Clearly, Miller's life fits into the chronology of events in

[19] William B. Fraley," Government," in Alexandria, A Towne in Transition, p. 2.

[20] Sharrer, "Commerce and Industry," pp. 34-35.

Alexandria. Thus, a straightforward approach is helpful for placing Miller within the context of Alexandria's history.

Chapters III and IV analyze the specific information gathered from the primary sources. Miller's Quaker upbringing, his youth and his family life are discussed first in Chapter III. An analysis of his business and his entrepreneurial activities with the Alexandria Water Company follows in Chapter IV. Thus, by examining his private life, we learn more about the man; by examining his career we learn more about the city. The conclusion reviews the historical legacy of Miller to show how his influence in 19th-century Alexandria is reflected today in the 20th-century city.

CHAPTER I

CITIES IN TRANSITION

Nineteenth-century American cities were urban areas under-going constant change. This process of change, called urbanization, had a profound effect on most communities. At the beginning of the century, the end of the colonial era, these areas were for the most part still linked to the Atlantic economic system, a relationship based on the exchange of staple items for manufactured goods. By the time of the Civil War, some of these communities were truly big cities, whose geographic and social environments had been greatly altered by the coming of immigrants and the growth of inter-regional commerce. By the close of the century, the big city had become the modern megalopolis as we know it. Of course not every community evolved into a 20th-century megalopolis; but each did feel the effects of growth and development. Understanding the outside influences, the local situations, the geographical position is key to analyzing the nature of urbanization in a 19th-century community. This kind of examination is therefore necessary for writing about Robert Miller in antebellum Alexandria.

Sam Bass Warner, Jr. has developed the following points about the urbanization process in Philadelphia. He holds that in each city there is a historical sequence of events which form a scheme or pattern. The first point is that industrialization and enormous population growth in the pre-Civil war era caused major alterations in the cultural and social composition of the city. Secondly, individual and group response to the innovations in transportation, communication, technology and business organization brought about changes in the nature of work, affecting occupational as well as social relationships. It is the human element or

behavioral dimension of relationships that intrigues Warner, and that is helpful for finding Robert Miller's place in the history of Alexandria. For Warner has also found in his work on Philadelphia a perspective of continuity that is in direct contrast to the changes noted above. This perspective

> ...is especially useful to political history since it helps to explain the enduring power of urban businessmen, the commercialism of urban leader-ship, and the perseverance of business ideology at all levels of city politics.[1]

With this statement he acknowledges business leadership as an integral and continuous part of the human element in urbanization.

For David Goldfield there are two measures of 19th-century urbanization, one quantitative and the other qualitative. Like Warner, Goldfield uses quantitative numbers to deal with increasing population, area and wealth and the development of an economic superstructure with its transportation facilities, industry and export trade. The qualitative measure consists of two indicators, the organization of urban life and urban consciousness or civic pride.

Goldfield identifies the advent of the railroad as the major catalyst of urbanization. The railroad greatly increased the accessibility between the hinterland and the city. It made commercial agriculture more feasible and promoted prosperity in the countryside. It generated capital, which made the urban building process possible. And the railroad helped to transform local economies into regional and, later, national economies. The railroad also promoted the development of the economic super-structure, which generated the increases in population, area

[1] Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "If All The World Were Philadelphia: A Scaffolding for Urban History, 1774-1930," American Historical Review 74 (October 1968): 31.

and wealth. With these increases the urban economy diversified and occupations at all levels became more specialized. The places of residence and work were segregated; separate business districts were established.

Again, like Warner, Goldfield holds that another part of the process was the emergence of "identifiable, cohesive leadership to rationalize the city's quantitative growth."[2] Using entrepreneurial skill and the required capital, this leadership organized and directed urban development. In addition, improved communications, such as the mail service, the telegraph and especially the urban press, facilitated business transactions. Goldfield particularly emphasizes the development of the press for not only its political influence on the city, but also the way it promoted the city's interest. Moreover, with its advertising, the local newspaper published important price and market information. Urban growth also generated a growth in local governments, which were especially needed to exercise the powers of taxation required to provide such services as police, fire protection, sanitation, street improvement and poor relief. Goldfield concludes that urban consciousness and civic pride indeed underlined the significant aspects of urbanization:

> Demands for railroads, the differentiation of urban life. civic boosterism, the press, and the increased role of local government were all manifestations of urban consciousness.[3]

Another aspect described by Warner is the American cultural phenomenon known as "privatism." This phenomenon is the most important element of our culture for understanding

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[2] David Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) p. xxii.

[3] Ibid., p. xxii.

the development of the city. Simply stated, privatism can be considered capitalism.[4] Yet, Warner's more elaborate definition demonstrates how essential this individualistic element is to any discussion of early urbanization. Warner defines privatism as a cultural characteristic that stresses the concentration upon the individual and the individual's search for wealth. The social implications of privatism have meant that an individual's loyalty is, first, to his family and then to his community, a community that usually consists of other money-making families. Politically, this has meant that a sense of community existed when peace among individual money-makers is maintained in an open, thriving setting, allowing each citizen the opportunity to prosper. For the American city, privatism has meant that development of urban areas depended on wages, employment and general prosperity, not on community action but rather upon the collective successes and failures of thousands of individual enterprises. Privatism reflected the shape of the city, the geography, since the configuration of lots, locations of houses and factories, and layout of the streets were influenced by the real estate market and the transactions of builders, speculators and investors. The private economic activities of businessmen have been the driving force in local political issues, as well.[5]

The "open thriving setting" described above was due in fact to the national economic phenomenon which occurred in the first half of the 19th-century. At this time, the emphasis on trade and commerce shifted away from overseas to a concern for intra-regional business relationships. This change in the pattern of trade had been greatly influenced in the 1790s by several outside forces: a new and stronger central government, a creative financial policy as

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[4] Theodore Hershberg. "The New Urban History: Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City." in Theodore Hershberg, ed., Philadelphia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 21.

established by Alexander Hamilton, European wars, and reduction of barriers to interstate trade. In the Jeffersonian era, the embargo on foreign trade helped to force the change. Essentially, important economic growth was now generated by the developing relationships between the eastern cities and their nearby hinterlands, rather than through foreign trade. This relationship was based upon the new and less expensive transportation and the faster and more reliable communication networks referred to in Goldfield's work. Moreover, the scope of intra-regional trade was directly linked to the organization and financing of improvements in roads and rivers, and the construction of canals.

In his book Frontiers of Change,[6] Thomas Cochran holds that it was not only the natural configuration of the American continent, the geography of the rivers and great bays, which could be connected by canal to the hinterland regions of the Shenandoah, the Ohio and the Hudson, but also the cultural characteristics and natural resources which led to America's economic achievements in the 19th-century. The entrepreneurial work ethic, having evolved out of the strong colonial artisan tradition, joined with the knowledge of the agricultural fertility and of the rich coal and iron deposits found west of the Appalachians, contributed greatly to the rush to build canals and to improve rivers and roads. Furthermore, it was the nation's success in processing the agricultural and metal products, in developing the tools and energy necessary for those processes, and in building better steamboats and barges that initiated American industrialization. In addition, he notes how the relationship between the hinterlands and Middle States was connected and enhanced. As migration patterns and transportation networks spread

[5] Sam Bass Warner. Jr., The Private City (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 3-4.

[6] Thomas C. Cochran, Frontiers of Change (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). pp. 38-44.

from those urban areas, residents of agricultural regions, finding themselves in the sphere of markets, began to demand non-farm products. Conversely, as "idle" farm youths migrated to the cities in search of work, agricultural productivity and practices were improved by increased demand and by the introduction of new machinery. These factors, in turn, influenced farmers to consume more urban goods, while consumption in the city was accelerated by the influx of immigrants and of workers from the West.

Diane Lindstrom's work Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1815[7] also emphasized the regional approach. She stresses the development of an intra-sectional domestic market, the importance of rural demand to propel regional growth, and the accelerated economy brought about by the force of urbanization. In fact, the needs of the rural areas intensified the Western communities' relations with the regional centers in the East because of the West's reliance on:

> ...regional cores to distribute their goods to extra-regional markets and to supply wares for interior consumption. Western expansion therefore redounded to the benefit of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore. These sea-port cities channeled vastly increased interior trade through their wharves and depots, at the same time maintaining their firm grasp upon trade between the East and other areas.[8]

At the beginning of the century, Alexandria had been much like other mercantile cities. It had been a port city of merchants. As depicted earlier, it too became less concerned with overseas trade and more concerned with western commercial connections. In the fifty years

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[7] Diane Lindstrom, Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1815 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), cited by Thomas C. Cochran, Frontiers of Change (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 98.

[8] Lindstrom, Economic Development, p. 14.

prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Alexandria businessmen had looked for and tried to create the opportunities that would bring them financial success and bring the city economic prosperity. Certain political, economic and social factors influenced the course of its development, all of which merit examination.

From the beginning of the 19th-century until its retrocession to Virginia in 1846, Alexandria was one of three jurisdictions comprising the District of Columbia. Although the century began with expectations of prosperity, a stagnant economy characterized the succeeding decades. Between 1820 and 1830, the city's population remained stable at about 8,320, with virtually no increase.[9] The citizens of Alexandria and the rest of the District, especially Georgetown, acknowledged that commercial ambitions for the area rested on the need for improving navigation on the Potomac River. Once this was done, goods could be effectively transported between the western reaches of the river and the Potomac Tidewater.[10] Unfortunately, Potomac improvements were small and made little impact. The District's economy also faltered when the new Capital City's building boom failed to materialize. Alexandria's trade, which had since colonial times sustained its port activities, was adversely affected by embargoes. However, during the early 1800s, wheat became an important export commodity, in the form of grain, flour and bread. Between 1800 and 1822, Alexandria was the fourth largest flour exporting city, following only New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Unlike these markets, though, Alexandria had no large merchant mills with which to process

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[9] T.B. McCord, Jr., Across the Fence, But A World Apart (Alexandria: Alexandria, Va: Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, 1985), p.17.

[10] Constance McLaughlin Green, Washington, A History of the Capital, 1800-1950 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.73.

wheat products. Indeed, without sufficient water power for this kind of industrial production, Alexandria had, by 1823, lost its flour ranking to Richmond. In addition, there were certain events which contributed to economic stagnation. The capture of the city in 1814 by a British squadron caused $100,000 in damages. The British Corn Laws (1815-1846) severely curtailed the overseas trade of foodstuffs, such as Alexandria flour. A fire in 1827 burned forty houses, stores and warehouses. In the national bank crisis of 1834, the Bank of Alexandria failed. With a lackluster regional economy, diminished overseas trade, political dependence on the District, insufficient industrial power, and a decrease in the supply of money, the city's growth and development were severely inhibited.[11]

During the recession years, while Alexandria looked for a major economic force to propel it toward prosperity, small scale trade and commercial activity helped to maintain the status quo. Whiskey, animal hides, pig and bar iron, tar and hemp were some of the export items which generated income for imports. The actual export/import transactions created income. However, without locally manufactured goods to replace the imports, the balance of trade was unfavorable to Alexandria, for even essential items like food and clothing had to be imported. There were small manufacturers, one for earthenware and one for leather goods and saddles. Merchants and craftsmen such as silversmiths, cigarmakers and cobblers were also to be found. The larger factories included a rope walk and two sugar refineries. Yet, there was not enough economic stimuli to be found in their production. Thus, in the 1820s, Alexandria's economic growth was "fundamentally stunted."

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[11] G. Terry Sharrer. "Commerce and Industry," in John D. Macoll, ed., Alexandria, A Towne in Transition, 1800-1900 (Alexandria: Alexandria Bicentennial Commission and Alexandria Historical Society, 1977), p. 17; and McCord, Across the Fence, p.17.

This potentially disastrous situation was made more difficult by the success Baltimore and Richmond achieved in drawing off the trade of Northern Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. With the decline of the tobacco and wheat trades, there were increased exports in two other commodities, slaves and fish. G. Terry Sharrer writes that "Alexandria became a leading market for both, taking on a reputation more odious for the former than odiferous for the latter."[12] Clearly, these two trades did not hold much promise for the future economic health of the city. The key to growth was industrialization. And industrialization required either water power, which Alexandria did not have, or coal and iron which were expensive to transport to the East. Cheap immigrant labor, another prerequisite for industrialization, tended to avoid settling in Southern towns like Alexandria with its pro-slavery status.

Slowly industrial influences did come to Alexandria. In 1830 a steam engine factory was established by Thomas Smith. By 1835 Smith could claim production of high and low pressure steam engines, fire engines, rope machinery and other equipment made with metals.[13] Steam engines required coal for their power. Coal finally came to the city via the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the new steamboats which navigated the Potomac River.

While the founding of the steam engine factory was one essential factor toward achieving prosperity, the incorporation of the Mount Vernon Cotton Manufacturing Company in 1847 and of the Alexandria and Orange Railroad in 1848 appeared to be additional steps toward shifting the economy away from shipping and merchandising to manufacturing and transportation. Earlier initiatives for growth had included construction and maintenance of

[12] Sharrer, "Commerce and Industry," p. 23.

[13] Ibid., pp.27-28.

turnpikes. This had been made possible by both state and private purchase of stock in the toll roads.

However, the most anxiously awaited "internal improvement" for Alexandria was the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The canal plan to link the three jurisdictions of the District with the Ohio River Valley was first conceived in 1822, after the successful opening of the Erie Canal. The canal, with financial backing from Alexandria, Georgetown, Maryland and Virginia, as well as private investors, was initiated in 1828. Since plans called for only one terminus, in Washington City, Alexandria had to build its own canal and aqueduct bridge to connect its commerce with the C&O. The Alexandria Canal Company was incorporated in 1830; construction was not finished until 1843. The C&O was finally completed in 1850, and even then it went only to Cumberland, Maryland. Ironically, 1828, the year canal construction began, was also the year of initial construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In fact, the success of the Baltimore railroad virtually insured the eventual failure of the canal. In 1848, before the C&O was completed, five years after the Alexandria Canal was navigable, and in the same year the Alexandria and Orange Railroad was incorporated, the B&O established a connection at the Shenandoah gateway, Harper's Ferry. With this "hinterland" link, Baltimore clearly had the commercial advantage over the Potomac ports. Yet, in the period between 1828 and 1848, Alexandria businessmen were generally complacent and not alarmed by the trade threat posed by Baltimore and the B&O. The city's merchants, anticipating the completion of the canal system, continued to utilize the turnpikes in their dealings with western counties.[14]

[14] Sharrer, "Commerce and Industry," pp. 27-29: Ames Williams, Transportation in Alexandria, Towne in Transition, pp. 50, 53: and Green, Washington, A History, pp. 112-118.

The need to fund these internal improvements was the motivating force behind the petitioning for the 1846 Retrocession to Virginia. The city government had borrowed money to pay for the Alexandria Canal, and her citizens were faced with the necessary increase in taxes. Alexandria also owed for her share of the C&O Canal construction. The Virginia Legislature agreed to assume a majority of the city's debt, and to provide subsequent aid in the financing of Alexandria's railroads. Indeed, in the years following retro-cession, Alexandria's economic fortunes improved. Its population increased from 8,625 in 1850 to 12,650 in 1860; ranking it as one of the leading southern cities.[15] In 1880, William F. Carne, an Alexandria historian, described this improvement in the city's economy. He recalled that many new enterprises were initiated. There was also the promise of heavy trade as grain shipments from the country increased and as both passenger and freight use of the railroads rose.

> An era of prosperity began. Over one hundred were built in a single year. Many exceedingly large ones including the Pioneer Mills, the Cotton Factory and large warehouses along the river front were erected. In June 1860 there were seventy-seven manufacturing establishments in operation, employing 785 hands and producing from raw materials valued at $91,000 manufactured articles worth $860,000. This was a good beginning.[16]

The civic leaders who guided Alexandria through the boom times of the 1850s were among an elite group who not only participated in commercial activity, but also served in voluntary associations, such as the Benevolent Society (1828) and the Lyceum (1834), in local

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[15] Majorie D. Tallichet, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1850 Census (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986); T. Michael Miller, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1860 Census (Bowie, MD.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986), David R. Goldfield, Cottonfields and Skyscrapers (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 31: and Sharrer, "Commerce and Industry," p. 31.

[16] William F. Carne, "Centennial Oration," in T. Michael Miller, ed., Alexandria's Forgotten Legacy, The Annals of William F. Carne (Alexandria Library Lloyd House, 1983), p. 239.

government, on the Common Council, and on the boards of the banks and the internal improvement companies, like the canal company, the railroads, and the water company. According to David Goldfield's study of urban leadership in antebellum Virginia, approximately forty-four of these individuals can be considered among the leadership of the city. A majority of these men were merchants. As a group their influence was widely felt, in part because family ties were more "crucial" in Alexandria than among the elites of other cities. Moreover, the family orientation of the city's leadership probably heightened the exclusivity of the group. Slaveholding was slightly less common than it was among the urban leaders of Virginia cities like Norfolk and Richmond. Overall, Alexandria's urban activists were a "stable, indigenous leadership." Many were long term residents who had been born in Virginia. They were a mature group of men; one third were fifty years or older. Most were married and had children in residence. Alexandria's leadership is best described as a group emerging from a traditional, patrician oligarchy into an urban entrepreneurial

Several of Alexandria's 19th-century merchants were Quakers. Four of the civic activists cited in Goldfield's work were members of the Society of Friends. The group's existence in the community can be found frequently in historical accounts written on the region. Nearly four hundred Friends had migrated to Northern Virginia, especially Loudoun County, in the mid to late 18th century.[17] Most of the Alexandria Quakers appear to have settled there in the post-revolutionary era. By 1810, there were approximately twenty-four heads of households

[17] Larry Dale Gragg, Migration in Early America: The Virginia Quaker Experience (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), p.41.

who were affiliated with the Alexandria Society of Friends.[18] In her recollections of old Alexandria, Mary Powell stated that "They were usually a wealthy class of merchants and farmers and, in coming in numbers as they did to Alexandria, they added much to the prosperity of the town." Later, after the 1802 establishment of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting and the building of a meeting house, "The Friends met here once a week, and during Quarterly Meetings they met every day. They then became a feature of the town, their sober raiment making them conspicuous." She also adds that "The Society of Friends became a valuable asset to the town, and their influence was felt in most civic affairs."[19] As a cultural group the Quakers' influence on the economic development of Alexandria and the surrounding region was felt throughout most of the century. They also brought to the community the traditional Quaker commitment to hard work, practical innovation and a sound education, and their testimony against slavery.[20] The Miller family was one of the Quaker families whose community influence, like that of the Friends as a whole, spanned the century. And Robert H. Miller was one of its most influential members.

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[18] Lorna Anderberg, research of 1810 census on file at Alexandria Archaeology.

[19] Mary Powell, History of Old Alexandria, Virginia (Richmond: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1928), pp. 163-164.

[20] Lorna Anderberg; "A Comparison of Alexandria Quakers to the White Population of Alexandria" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1979); Paula Coomler, "The Impact of the Quaker Community Upon the Economic Development of Alexandria, Virginia, 18th through Mid-19th Centuries" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1986); and Virginia Jenkins, "Edward Stabler, A Kind Friend and Counsellor: A Quaker and Abolition in Alexandria. D.C., 1790-1830" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1986).

CHAPTER II

A CHRONOLOGY

Robert Hartshorne Miller was born August 10, 1798, the third of five sons, to Mordecai and Rebecca Hartshorne Miller. Rebecca, daughter of William Hartshorne, a prominent merchant, was one of three sisters who married Alexandria Quakers. Mordecai, a Pennsylvanian who had migrated to Alexandria in the early 1790s, was a silversmith and an importer of clockworks. He eventually achieved his success in shipping and trade. A survey of Alexandria businesses taken from Gazette ads in 1807 shows that Mordecai operated a "grocery business, with sugar and molasses to sell."[1] His granddaughter claims that he made his fortune in the West Indian and South American trade and in shipping tobacco to Bremen. She also claims that Robert Miller, her father, learned the china business from Hugh Smith, an established Alexandria crockery merchant. In 1820, Mordecai sent Robert and two other sons to Germany, as "super-cargo." Robert spent one winter there. Upon his "return via England," he "purchased his first stock of china for the store."[2] In 1823. Miller married Anna Janney, a member of a well-known Loudoun County Quaker family. Between 1824 and 1844, eleven children were born to them. Miller was associated with many public enterprises, such as the Alexandria Canal, the Mount Vernon Cotton Factory, one of the Alexandria railroads, a local bank and the Alexandria Water Company.

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[1] Terry Bennet, ed., "Survey of Alexandria Business from the Alexandria Gazette of 1807" on file at Alexandria Archaeology.

[2] Eliza H. Miller, Personal Recollections of Eliza H. Miller, 1926 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House), p.1; and Warwick P. Miller, Reminiscences of Warwick P. Miller of Alexandria, Virginia, 1896 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House, 1981), p.3.

> These offices he filled with great efficiency. He was a man of considerable culture, and a great reader on all subjects. His wit was pungent and his humor never failing. He was always considered a good companion.[3]

He also lectured at the Lyceum and served as a trustee of the Female Orphan Asylum. He was a member of the Common Council from 1834 to 1837. Politically, he was allied to the Whig party. And like his brother William, a furniture merchant, Robert was one of Alexandria's wealthiest citizens. At the time of his death in 1874, his estate was valued at $75,000.[4]

A decade by decade comparison of key events in Alexandria and of events in Miller's life reveals the connection between the man and the development of the city.[5] Only two years after Robert's birth, Alexandria became part of the District of Columbia in 1800. Expectations for economic prosperity were high with the development of the wheat trade and the growth in flour exports. In 1802, canal construction around Great Falls was completed; in 1805 the Long Bridge joined Alexandria and the District. And with a new corporate charter (1804), Alexandria seemed to be on the threshold of unlimited growth.

Mordecai and Rebecca Miller were also thriving. Mordecai was busy with his shipping business, and both Millers were active in the Society of Friends. They were charter members of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting when it was established in 1802. Rebecca was clerk of the Woman's Meeting in 1803, 1806 and 1810, while Mordecai served on various standing

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[3] Mary Powell, History of Old Alexandria (Richmond, Virginia: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1928), p. 319.

[4] Several studies have attributed wealth to Miller; among them are Anderberg, "A Comparison of Alexandria Quakers to the White "Population of Alexandria" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1987); Philip Terrie, " A Social History of the 500 Block, King Street in Alexandria, Virginia" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1979); and the Alexandria Gazette, 3/16/1874.

[5] The discussion of historical events in Alexandria is taken from John D. Macoll, ed., Alexandria, A Towne in Transition, 1800-1900 (Alexandria: Alexandria Historical Society, 1977).

committees, such as those which were concerned with the building of the new meeting house (1810). An important event among the members of the Alexandria Quaker community occurred in 1806, when Edward Stabler, the prominent druggist and an elder and minister in the Monthly Meeting, married Rebecca's sister, Mary Hartshorne. Robert Miller, then age 8, attended this wedding; his name is listed as one of the witnesses on the marriage certificate.[6]

However, the embargoes passed by Congress in 1807 and 1809 virtually cut Alexandria off from the foreign trade essential for a strong economy. For the Miller family there were other setbacks. In 1810, a fire burned many buildings along the waterfront, among them, Mordecai Miller's "wooden warehouse," valued at $1,500.[7] In December of that same year, Rebecca Miller died at the age of 40. Robert was 12 years old. Mordecai's sister, Rachel Hewes, a widow with "four or five children, took charge of the family."[8] When the War of 1812 brought British troops and ships, Alexandria's commerce was drastically curtailed. The 1814 raid of warehouses and stores by the British severely affected Alexandria merchants.[9] In fact, the city's economy never really recovered. In the years following, successive business panics, like the one in 1819, kept commercial activity stagnant. It was most likely during the latter part of the decade while in his late teens that Robert Miller learned the china trade from Hugh Smith, who had been trading and importing in Alexandria since 1796.

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[6] "Record of Marriage Certificates and Certificates of Removal," Alexandria Monthly Meeting, 1803-1884, Maryland Hall of Records, Microfilm M569.

[7] Alexandria Gazette, 9/26/1810, in T. Michael Miller, ed., Pen Portraits of Alexandria, Virginia 1789-1900 (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1987), p.3.

[8] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p.2

[9] Janice Artemel, "1800-1840," in Fairfax County, Virginia, A History (Fairfax County, Virginia: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978, p.231.

During the 1820s and 1830s, years of prolonged economic recession in Alexandria, Robert established his business, started his own family, and began his years of community service. In 1822 at the age of 24 he opened his china shop. The store was located in the Market Square Block at 65 King Street (311-313). He had purchased the initial inventory the preceding winter when Mordecai sent him and his brothers to Germany. In 1823, he married Anna Janney, the daughter of Elisha Janney, "a miller and a man of means," from Loudoun County, Virginia.[10] They occupied a house at 312 Wolfe Street, between Fairfax and Royal. Here, their first three children, Warwick, Charles and Elisha, were born. At this time Robert was also serving as Recorder of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting, a position he appears to have held until 1850.[11]

In 1824, the town celebrated the triumphant return of Lafayette with parades and receptions. That same fall, Benjamin Hallowell moved to Alexandria and founded the Alexandria Boarding School. In 1827, the Alexandria Benevolent Society was formed by Hallowell and others to "render assistance to such persons as were slaves" and "to secure to the slaves their legal rights." Several Quakers joined the society.[12] In 1828, many Alexandrians, including Friends like Robert Miller, signed a memorial to Congress, petitioning for the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.[13] Ironically, at the same time the infamous Franklin and Armfield slave business was established at its site on Duke Street. 1827 was also

[10] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p.1.

[11] This information comes from a survey of "Records of the Minutes of Alexandria Monthly Meeting, Commencing 9th Month 23rd 1802," Maryland Hall of Records, M567.

[12] Benjamin Hallowell, Autobiography (Philadelphia: Friends Book Association, 1884), p. 109.

[13] "Memorial of the Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, Praying for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia, March 24, 1828," Congressional Serial Set vol. 274, Doc. 140, House of Representatives, 23rd Congress, 2nd session.

the year that Robert and Anna moved their family to a house on Prince Street, where Francis (1829) and Cornelia (1831) were born.[14]

Alexandria's economy suffered drastically in 1827, when a fire, more devastating than any the city had previously experienced, damaged approximately forty buildings. However, when the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (1828) and the Alexandria Canal (1830) were chartered, economic prospects began to improve. William H. Miller, Robert's brother, was one of the subscribers of the Alexandria Canal. The 1834 City Directory shows that Robert was one of the directors. He was 36 years old at the time. The establishment of Thomas Smith's steam engine factory in 1830 was another indication of Alexandria's economic growth. Miller's china business grew as well. In 1835, the family opened a branch store in St. Louis, Missouri.[15]

The 1830s were active years for Miller. Not only was he expanding his china business, but he also expanded his participation in civic activities to include cultural as well as political involvement. In 1834, Benjamin Hallowell, Robert Miller, and others founded the Lyceum and inaugurated the lecture series there. And, as the city directory shows, he served on the Common Council, representing the third ward from 1834 until 1837. During these years Robert, Anna and their six children lived on South St. Asaph Street. Mordecai Miller had died in 1832; 106 South St. Asaph had been part of his estate. Sometime in 1835 or 1836, improvements were made to the dwelling. One of the features added to the house was a water filtration system. A scarlet fever epidemic in 1831 and a cholera epidemic in 1832 had probably awakened Miller's concern

[14] This was probably 212-214 Prince Street. See Ethelyn Cox, Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street (Alexandria: Historic Alexandria Foundation, 1976), p. 123.

[15] Warwick Miller, p. 19.

for a supply of clean water for his family.[16] During this decade, three more children were born to Robert and Anna. They were John (1833), Sarah (1836) and Mary Anna (1839).

1840 opened the decade with the victory in the national election of William Henry Harrison and the Whig party. Alexandrians like Miller lent their enthusiastic support to his political campaign.[17] This was also the decade for internal improvements. The Alexandria Canal and the Aqueduct Bridge link to the C&O were opened in 1843. In 1849, the Common Council invested in two railroads, the Alexandria and Orange and the Manassas Gap. That same year, the C&O canal was completed to Cumberland, Maryland. General economic conditions continued to improve. The Mount Vernon Cotton Manufacturing Factory was incorporated in 1847 with Miller, then 49, as one of the incorporators. A group of Friends from New Jersey purchased large tracts of farmland located nearby in the surrounding counties, with the hope of rejuvenating the agricultural production of the region.

The coming of these Friends into the Alexandria Monthly Meeting seemed to bring a new enthusiasm to the Quaker community. For one, Miller appears to have become more greatly involved with the organization, serving, like his father had before, on various committees and as representative to the Monthly Meeting.[18] In 1846, Alexandrians overwhelmingly voted to

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[16] Melissa McLoud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology: an Alexandria Cistern and Filtration System" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1980).

[17] T. Michael Miller, ed., Pen Portraits, pp. 125-126; and Warwick Miller, Reminiscences p, 17-18.

[18] This information comes from Dorothy Troth Muir, Potomac Interlude (Washington: Mt. Vernon Printshop, 1943); and Alexandria Monthly Meeting Records on M567.

retrocede to Virginia; Miller is listed as one of those voting for the retrocession.[19] Miller also prepared to take advantage of the improving commercial climate. To enhance the Miller business connection with the West, Warwick, the oldest son, was sent in 1844 to St. Louis to apprentice in the china store there. Warwick was then 20 years old. Eliza, the Miller's eleventh and last child was born that same year. She had been preceded by Caroline (1842) and by Benjamin (1840).

The 1850s were boom years for Alexandria. For the first time in decades the population expanded, as did the economy. The Bank of the Old Dominion was incorporated in 1851. Railroad construction continued and shipping flourished. Water was piped to the residents for the first time in 1852. The city also became a municipality, having been granted a new corporate charter. Not only did Robert Miller work to incorporate the Alexandria Water Company, but he served as a director and, later in 1856, as its second president. In 1853, when the family moved to a large house at 77 (311-313) North Washington Street, the renovations included stationary laundry tubs in the basement and two bathrooms on the second story.[20] Management of the china business also increased to include Elisha, who joined the firm in 1856.[21]

Unfortunately, the 1860s brought the political storm of secession and the subsequent military occupation which virtually ruined Alexandria's economy. On May 23, 1861, Virginia voted to secede from the Union. Anna Miller's brother, John Janney, although a strong Union

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[19] Harrison Mann, "Chronology of Action on the Part of the United States to Complete Retrocession of the Alexandria County (Arlington County) to Virginia," Arlington Historical Magazine 1, (October 1957): 18.

[20] Eliza Miller, Recollections, pp. 6,7.

[21] Alexandria Gazette, 9/26/1856.

man, like Robert, was president of the Virginia Convention which prepared the ordinance of secession. On May 26, Federal troops marched into Alexandria, occupying the city until the end of the Civil War. The railroads were taken over to deploy troops; the Canal and aqueduct were drained; and the pump at the Water Company operated continuously to provide enough water to the town. Most large building and unoccupied homes were turned into barracks or hospitals, including the Quaker Meeting House, which was used as a hospital. Robert, to keep the china store open, and Anna, to keep possession of their house, remained in Alexandria during the occupation.[22] Most of their children had grown, married and moved away before the outbreak of the War.

During the Reconstruction period that followed, Alexandria experienced little economic growth. In 1886, the Mount Vernon Cotton Factory was sold and closed by its new owner, and the Canal and aqueduct were leased to local entrepreneurs. Eventually the railroads became operational, and repairs were made at the Water Company. During these years, Robert Miller, began to experience periods of ill health.[23] Most likely, it was his son, Elisha, who ran the daily china shop business while Robert and Anna enjoyed more honorary positions in the community. In 1866, Anna was appointed an Elder of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting.[24] In 1870, Miller was made president of the new Citizens National Bank, reorganized from the former Bank of the Old Dominion. The couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1873. Miller died

[22] Warwick Miller, Reminiscences, pp. 13-14; "Alexandria Water Company," proceedings of the Annual Meeting, November 1866, pp. 5-6; and Eliza Miller , Recollections, pp. 18-19.

[23] "Alexandria Water Company", November 1866, pp. 5-6; and Eliza Miller, Recollections, pp. 20, 27.

[24] "Women's Minutes, 1853-1877, "Alexandria Monthly Meeting, Maryland Hall of Records, Microfilm M5676.

the following year at age 76. Then, Anna and the youngest daughter, Eliza, moved to a smaller house at 303 South Washington Street. Anna died in 1885.

This chronological assessment of events in Alexandria and Miller's life demonstrates how both histories come together. Although each has its own time line, there is a definite relationship. By following the course of general historical events through the perspective of an individual's life, a different appreciation of the interpretation of those events is possible. In the early decades, Miller was a Quaker youth, apprenticing with Hugh Smith, traveling to Europe, setting up his china business, marrying and starting a family. Alexandria was a new Federal city struggling to right her economy in the face of economic setbacks. As analysis of his upbringing will later show, Robert was carefully following the course established for most young men with his Quaker background. Alexandria, too, was beginning to follow the course of development taken by larger cities. By the 1830s, Robert's family had grown, his business had branched to St. Louis, and his investment in the community had expanded to include his active support for such diverse enterprises as the Canal and the Benevolent Society. Industry came to Alexandria in the 1840s with the railroads and the cotton factory; Miller held positions with both. He also became more politically active by showing his support for the Whigs in 1840 and by voting for the 1846 Retrocession. As Alexandria developed, the degree of Miller's civic involvement grew, too, to include establishing the new water company, a new bank, and an additional railroad. Thus, when we focus on the connections between Miller and the city, we examine Alexandria through the eyes of not only a Quaker merchant but also a civic activist; a man who made a contribution to the community. Additional insight comes from our seeing Alexandria in terms of being a

Quaker, of raising a family, of owning and operating a mercantile business, and of improving the quality of life, not just for one man, but for other citizens too.

CHAPTER III

PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

The best way to examine Miller's personal life is to analyze what Warwick and Eliza have written about their father and to then interpret it from a Quaker perspective. Analysis such as this can reveal Miller's personal characteristics, especially those which motivated him to public leadership. Therefore, in order to make a proper interpretation, a discussion of Quaker life, especially in 19th-century Alexandria, is essential. Since a great deal of our understanding of his private life centers on a Quaker perspective, the degree of Miller's Quakerism also needs to be determined. Moreover the first important fact to understand is the definition of a Quaker. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen the following description provided by Frederick Tolles, of the "Central religious idea of the Friends, which continues to be held by Quakers all over the world." That idea is

> ...of the Inner Light, that glint of the divine effulgence shining in the souls of men, giving them knowledge of God's will for their guidance, leading them, as they believed, into purity of life, and as it were, restoring [to] them the conditions that had prevailed among the primitive Christians.[1]

Because the early Quakers conceived of religion as a spiritual rather than an intellectual experience, "there were no distinctive Quaker doctrines, apart from the central one of the indwelling Light." However, there were important "testimonies," or ways of behaving, which exemplify Quakerism. The rejection of all war and violence, the refusal to swear judicial oaths,

[1] Frederick Tolles, Quakers and the Atlantic Culture (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 76.

to pay tithes, the stand against slavery, the use of "thee" and "thou," and the emphasis on plainness and simplicity are some of these.[2]

It is indeed likely that Miller was raised in a Quaker-oriented household. For one, his father, Mordecai, was an active member in the Alexandria Monthly Meeting, as was his mother, who served as clerk of the Women's Meeting. Miller's aunts and uncles were also Alexandria Friends; one of his Hartshorne aunts was married to Edward Stabler, the Quaker minister, and another to Phineas Janney, a respected elder in the meeting. In his later years Miller's affiliation to the Society was demonstrated by his service as the recorder of the Monthly Meeting (1823-1850) and as a frequent representative to the Monthly Meeting (1848-1853).[3] Clearly, a lifelong belief in Quakerism and allegiance to the Society is evident. Yet, he was a quite different individual than his Quaker contemporary and friend Benjamin Hallowell from his writings and from reading the Monthly Meeting records when he served as clerk, we see that Hallowell was a man devoted to his Quaker faith. Unlike Hallowell, Miller does not leave us any written evidence of his feelings on this matter. Instead, we have only his actions and deeds, as reported by others, to analyze.

By examining the Discipline for the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, the organizational body which had jurisdiction over all the Friends in Maryland and Northern Virginia, we can determine what the codes of belief and behavior were for members of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting at the time of Robert Miller's youth. Analysis of the 1806 Discipline can be best understood if it is

[2] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[3] "Record of Membership, Alexandria Monthly Meeting, 1823-1881," Maryland Hall of Records, Microfilm M569.

also considered in the context of what was happening to the Quaker faith in the post-revolutionary era and to Friends in Alexandria at the same time.

For the American Quakers, the last half of the 18th century was known as a period of reformation and quietism. The move to reform the Society to a more inward and reflective organization was precipitated by the Pennsylvania crisis of 1756, when Friends were forced, because of their anti-war beliefs, to relinquish political control of the colony. These events affected Quakers throughout the colonies, with the result that the organization became less worldly, more separate and sect-like. Discipline was tightened, and the requirements for membership were strengthened to the point that the numbers of members began to decrease significantly. In order for Quakers to survive as a viable faith, gaining new converts, Quakers turned to emphasizing their conduct, "both as individuals and as a church, as a good example to the rest of the world."[4] By leading exemplary lives, they hoped to exert greater influence and to more effectively spread the doctrine of the Inner Light. These beliefs were held by many Quakers through the first half of the 19th century. In many respects, the peace testimony, the anti-slavery stand and the example of plainness were efforts to influence community morality and humanitarianism. And:

> If the Society benefited the nation by its solidarity in virtue and its service as a corporate preacher to the public at large, it served the nation well by the strictest system it could devise to ensure a new generation of Friends.[5]

[4] Sydney James, A People Among Peoples (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.). p. 280.

[5] Ibid., p. 287.

One way to ensure the survival of the faith was to instill in Quaker children the "same degree of fervor" for the truth as that held by their parents, for pious parents and a godly home life were more likely to encourage the growth and development of religious children. Concentration on child rearing and education was emphasized. After the reformation, family nurture became very important. For example, a Quaker father, as head of the household, was encouraged to rule gently, not harshly, for harshness would turn the children against him and his religion. Quaker children were raised in the plain style with sensible clothes and a few toys. Children were taken to meeting at an early age, usually before age seven. By this time, in fact, attendance at a meeting school was appropriate. Quaker education usually stressed practical learning with some religious indoctrination. There was little concern with higher education; there were no Friends colleges until the 1850s. Quakers were, for the most part, opposed to the theological training found in the curriculum of the universities. Therefore, formal education for Quaker youth was probably completed by age 14, when apprenticeship to a trade or training as an artisan was begun. Usually the trade was learned from another member of the meeting, while training in a skill could be learned at home or from relatives. By 21, indenture completed, a young man was ready to enter a business and to marry. Before establishing himself, though, the son of a wealthy Friend might be sent on a European voyage, as supercargo, to gain business experience, to see the world, and to form overseas contacts. Selection of a partner in marriage was supposed to be aided by the Inner Light. In actuality, however, Quakers, through the

Discipline, "attempted to bring the entire process of courtship and marriage under the purview of the meeting."[6]

For Alexandria Quakers, the Discipline of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting was a guide for child rearing, education, marriage, and business conduct, as well as behavior relating to the specific testimonies. Many of the beliefs stated in the Discipline are inherited from those which were characteristics of colonial and reformation Quakerism. On the subject of parents and children, the Discipline stated that:

> As next to our own souls, our offspring are the very immediate objects of our care and concern, we entreat all who are parents and governors of families, that they lay to heart the great and lasting importance to the youth, of a religious education.[7]

Parents were further exhorted to keep their children out of "the vain fashions, the corrupt customs, and unprofitable conversation of the world," so that their "young and tender minds" would be convinced of the " propriety of restraint." As for their education, Quaker youth were to be given "useful learning, under the tuition of religious, prudent persons." selected by the Monthly Meetings as appropriate teachers. The Yearly Meeting looked upon Quaker marriages with affection and tenderness, yet established very formal rules for selection of a wife, for courtship, and for the marriage ceremony. "Marrying out of Meeting" was indeed just cause for being disowned by the Society. The reason behind this thinking was that while marriage implied union, the couple would be "disunited in the main point," their religion.[8] In the matter of

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[6] J. William Frost, The Quaker Family in Colonial America (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), pp. 74-77, 127, 137, 144, 183.

[7] Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in Baltimore, printed by the direction of the Meeting (Baltimore: John Hewes, 1806), p. 81.

[8] Ibid., pp. 82, 100-101, 51.

business conduct, the Society hoped that its reputation would not be dishonored "by any impudence of its members in their worldly engagements." They further recommended that

> ...they be careful not to venture upon business they do not understand; nor to launch in trade beyond their abilities, and at risk of others; but that they bound their engagements by their means; and when they enter into contracts, or agreements, whether written, or by words, that they endeavor on all occasion of reproach may be given to truth, and the society.[9]

Business accounts were to be kept "clear and accurate." The "pernicious practice" of raising and circulating "paper credit" was to be avoided, as well. Overall, "industry" was not only "praise-worthy but indispensable," yet the pursuit of it was not to be at the exclusion of the individual, his family, and above all, God.[10]

In addition, the Discipline featured the slavery testimony, which specifically prohibited members from "holding in bondage our fellow-men." Prohibitions against the swearing of oaths and of supporting a hireling ministry were also detailed. The peace testimony stated that it was inconsistent with the faith "for any Friend to pay a fine or tax, levied on account of their refusal to muster to serve in the militia..."[11] Indigent members were to receive relief and assistance from the Meeting, and a fund was to be established to provide for the education of their children. Plainness in dress and address was emphasized, too. Their efforts not to conform to the "vain and changeable fashions of the world," were not only a symbolic distinction of the Society, but also were

[9] Ibid., p. 108.

[10] Ibid., pp. 108, 11.

[11] Ibid., pp. 73, 114-115.

> ...in some respects like a hedge about us, which, though it does not make the ground it encloses rich and fruitful, yet it frequently prevents those intrusions, by which the husband is injured or destroyed.[12]

In the beginning, members of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting were, to varying degrees, able to maintain codes of behavior, keep the testimonies and establish "a hedge of distinction" around themselves. However, as these Friends became more settled in the community, the way in which the message of the Inner Light was executed did change. These changes were for the most part conditioned by local events, the "adjacent culture and the extent to which Friends have accommodated themselves to it."[13] Moreover, the strong sense of community among Quakers "expressed itself in the practice of mutual aid" among the members, in the individual efforts toward humanitarian and benevolent activities for outsiders, and in the "sporadic, but sharp criticism of the acquisitive spirit." Yet the same emphasis on individualism, when it pertained to economics and business, "promoted an attitude remarkably conducive to success."[14] Indeed, Robert Miller would seem to be typical of the example thus described. He was most likely reared in the traditional Quaker manner, grew to establish his own business, and with that successful enterprise in hand, became active in the affairs of the community.

The career of his father, Mordecai, sheds light on the nature of Robert's childhood. Sometime before 1971, Mordecai moved to Alexandria from Leesburg, Virginia. The 1971 Census shows his occupation as that of a silversmith and watchmaker, living on Fairfax Street in a building owned by another Quaker, Benjamin Shreve. Miller evidently imported clockworks

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[12] Ibid., p. 84.

[13] Tolles, Atlantic Culture, p. 91.

[14] Ibid., p. 55.

which he placed in mahogany cases with his name on the face. He is also supposed to have repaired a knee buckle and mended a table cross for George Washington. After his marriage to Rebecca Hartshorne in 1792, Mordecai became a partner in the mercantile and shipping business of his father-in-law, William Hartshorne. In 1974, he bought from William a double dwelling house on Prince Street. He and Rebecca occupied that residence probably until after the birth of Robert, their third son. In 1799, Mordecai was briefly affiliated with his brother-in-law's auctioneering company. He then went into the shipping business, "and made quite a fortune for himself in the West Indian and south American trade."[15] He also shipped tobacco to Bremen.

In 1817, Mordecai became an agent for the Mount Hebron Cotton Manufacturing Company. In 1818, his oldest son, William, became his partner. Throughout this period Mordecai was involved with the buying, selling, and development of Alexandria real estate.[16] In addition, he served the Alexandria Monthly Meeting. In 1802, he was appointed to be on the committee for superintending the burying ground. In 1804 and 1808 he served on respective committees collecting funds from members for the purchase of a meeting house stove and to pay for forthcoming expenses of the meeting. In 1809 he was among several Friends who were asked to research the possibility of and to eventually initiate the building of a new meeting

[15] Warwick P. Miller, Ancestry of the Children and Grandchildren of Warwick P. and Mary M. Miller, Alexandria Library Lloyd House, p. 1.

[16] Our Town: 1749-1865, Likeness of This Place and Its People Taken from Life by Artists Known and Unknown (The Alexandria Association, member National Trust for Historic Presentation, 1956), 54-55. Additional Information is available in T.B. McCord, Jr., Across The Fence, But A World Apart (Alexandria: Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, 1985); Philip Terrie, "A Social History of the 500 Block King Street in Alexandria, Virginia"; and Ethelyn Cox, Alexandria Virginia Street by Street (Alexandria: Historic Alexandria Foundation, 1976), pp. 42, 48, 121, 123, 194, 196.

house.[17] Mordecai also worked to arrange the establishment of a meeting school. However, this did not happen until 1815, a fact which leaves unanswered the question of where his own children, in particular Robert, received any formal Quaker education. It is possible that Robert might have had religious instruction at home while attending the Alexandria Academy, an institution that his grandfather Hartshorne had served as an original trustee.[18]

Mordecai's career reveals how cohesive the Alexandria Quaker community was in the early 19th century. This cohesiveness was strengthened by family connections, kinship and membership in the meeting. This strong sense of Quakerism had to have influenced Robert's childhood. Three events mentioned in the records of the Monthly Meeting reveal how unified in their faith the Friends were. The first event was a series of three weddings that took place between Alexandria Quakers. In 1802, William Hartshorne, Robert's grandfather, married Susannah Shreve, widow of Benjamin Shreve, the Quaker who had rented to Mordecai. In 1806, Elisha Talbott and Sarah Saunders were married. By the time of the next wedding, in 1808, when Edward Stabler married Robert's aunt Mary Hartshorne, Robert was old enough to attend the ceremony; his name is listed as one of the witnesses. All three of the marriage certificates are part of the Monthly Meetings records. No others from subsequent years survive. Each of the three is written in flourishing script and in the form directed by the Discipline of the Yearly

[17] "Record of the Minutes of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting Commencing 9th Month 23rd 1802." Maryland Hall of Records on Microfilm M567, 9/23/02, 12/20/04, 2/25/08, 3/23/09.

[18] Additional information on education can be found in William C. Dunlap, Quaker Education in Baltimore and Virginia Yearly Meeting (Philadelphia: The Science Press Printing, Co., 1936); and Henry G. Morgan, "Education," in John D. Macoll, ed., Alexandria, A Towne in Transition (Alexandria: Alexandria Bicentennial Commission and Alexandria Historical Society, 1977), p. 96; and Alexandria Monthly Meeting minutes on M567, 7/24/15.

Meeting. In addition, all list the witnesses who were supposedly present. Approximately forty-five to fifty people, not all of them Quakers, attended these ceremonies.[19]

The other two events which demonstrate the working of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting are their consideration of the business failure of Elisha Janney and their actions taken during the War of 1812. Elisha Janney's case is an example of how Friends dealt with the bankruptcy of other members. This example is also significant because it discusses how national policies affected Alexandria merchants, and because Robert Miller eventually became Janney's son-in-law. In his Quaker genealogy, William Wade Hinshaw described Janney's financial difficulties.

> Note: Elisha Janney became insolvent in 1809 caused by overexpansion of his business, and the burning down of his mill, extension of credits, borrowing from his bank and giving preferential promises to bank and special creditors, the immediate cause being the "EMBARGO" which caused many business failures at that time. Alex MM exhonorated Elisha from all intentions fraudulent, however, after receiving his written acknowledgement of his errors of judgement which caused some of his creditors to lose heavily in the final settlement.[20]

In December of 1812 the minutes of the Monthly Meeting show that the members were concerned about the possible "imposition of military fines and exactions" on the members. In the fall of 1813, the meeting considered three infractions of the peace testimony. Committees were assigned to take appropriate actions against these particular Friends. In December, two of the three were disowned, one for military service and the other for attending a militia muster.

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[19] Alexandria Monthly Meeting Records on M569.

[20] William Wade Hinshaw, ed., Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, vol. 6 (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1936-1950), p. 756.

The third was dealt with more favorably three months later, after he acknowledged his wrongdoing. The offender, John Janney, had purchased a substitute in order to fulfill the government's requirement for military duty. The Monthly Meeting was further galvanized by the peace testimony when, in 1813, eleven members suffered property loss, and two were imprisoned for resisting the government's efforts to exact fines. When the British squadron did invade Alexandria in August of 1814, the minutes show that because of the confused state of the town and the absence of most members, that month's meeting was postponed.[21]

Sometime between the end of the War and 1821 when Robert was sent to Europe as supercargo, he was placed with Hugh Smith, a china merchant, to learn the trade.[22] While there is no specific information regarding that apprenticeship, there are two points that can be made about Miller's association with Smith. One is that Hugh Smith was not a member of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting, and thus Robert was exposed to some non-Quaker influences. Hugh Smith's career, in fact, suggests what those influences might have been. Not only was Smith a prominent merchant, but he was also a civic leader. In 1825, he left the management of his china business to his son, so that he could devote himself to his investment in Alexandria's stoneware manufacturing. Ultimately the stoneware manufactured by the pottery was highly decorative, with elaborate designs, thus suggesting that Smith also possessed artistic sensibilities. Smith must have been for Robert an interesting "master" or role model. Secondly, it is important to note that once Robert had established his own china business, he also entered an aggressive

[21] Alexandria Monthly Meeting Minutes on M567, 12/24/12, 10/21/13, 12/23/13, 2/21/14, 7/21/14.

[22] Eliza Miller, Personal Recollections of Eliza H. Miller, 1926 Lloyd House, Alexandria Library, Alexandria, VA.), p. 1.

competition with Smith's son, who was managing the firm. Perhaps one reason Robert did this was to prove to the Smiths how able and successful he had become.[23]

The winter Robert was sent to Bremen as supercargo, he made the acquaintance of Edward Deluis. They evidently became good friends, having in common the fact that they both were engaged to be married. According to Eliza, the two friends corresponded over the years. What Eliza remembers about the friendship is that Deluis tried to teach Miller to play cards.

> ...but he never got to the point of knowing a Jack from a King and never had any liking for games of cards during his life.[24]

The way Eliza states this story also suggests that Miller had not had much practice in his youth with card games. After all, the Discipline admonished against wagering, gaming or diversionary amusements.[25] And while gambling was not the issue, this instance shows how serious Miller was. This story also tells us that Robert was engaged to be married for a period of several years. He was probably in Bremen in 1820 and 1921; he and Anna were not married until April of 1823.

When Robert was a young man in Alexandria, he was also a member of a literary club which printed a small newspaper, called the Columbia. Miller contributed the following poem, which Eliza included in her recollections.

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[23] Suzita Myers, The Potters Art, Salt-Glazed Stoneware of 19th Century Alexandria (Alexandria: Alexandria Archaeological Research Center, 1983), pp. 14-20.

[24] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 2.

[25] Discipline for 1806, p. 38.

TO LUCY

Farewell to these hills where with Lucy I've roamed

`Neath the cool breeze of evening with love for a guide

Till the bright star of Eve through the twilight has gloamed.
And the sun-beaten reaper to his cottage has hied.

On `twas here amid scenes, such as poesy seeks
That I first spoke of love with the ardor of youth
And behold the sweet blush with which modesty speaks
When mingling her roses with affection and truth.
Ye hills and yon streamlet that foams from above
Till it reaches the mill and is dashed through the wheel
My heart though shalt cherish these scenes that I love
Till the last stroke of death shall make memory reel.[26]

According to Eliza, the mill and the stream were those at Hillsborough where Elisha Janney had his milling business. Eliza wrote that "Lucy" was Anna Janney and that this was a love poem to her. In any event, its publication shows that Robert, too, possessed an artistic sensibility, creativity and a romantic nature.

In the month before marrying Anna, Robert was nominated to the office of recorder of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting.[27] This meant that he was responsible for maintaining the records. In 1827, the record book of the meeting minutes was closed with the words "End of this book of `Records of the Minutes of Alexandria Monthly Meeting' to 12th month 1827," followed by an elaborate swirling signature of Robert H. Miller, Recorder (Figure 1). He inscribed the title page of the next book with a similar style of penmanship and also included his signature. It is not clear from the actual minutes how many terms as recorder he held, but it

[26] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 2.

appears that he served in that capacity off and on until 1850. The penmanship, like an artifact, demonstrates again that Miller did have a flair for artistry.

He also appears to have cared deeply for his wife, Anna. While the reminiscences of their children do not discuss the early relationship between Robert and his wife, there are some facts which suggest how they might have felt about each other. For a twenty year period, starting with Warwick's birth in 1824 through to Eliza's in 1844, a child was born to them nearly every two years. A family with eleven healthy children was indeed exceptionable. Their household was also extended and augmented by the presence of live-in relatives and domestics, such as Margaret Deakins, a mother's helper.[28] Certainly, a unique degree of mutual understanding, consideration and respect must have existed between them, even if only to successfully manage and care for so many people. In her History of Old Alexandria, Mary Powell notes that when the Millers celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, "numerous friends and neighbors met with them to praise them for the beauty of their past lives, and to wish them the blessings of the future." A photograph, probably taken at the anniversary celebration, shows Robert and Anna surrounded by a large group of what appear to be family and friends. In the photograph, Robert is a full-bodied man with white hair and a white beard.[29]

There are a few instances recorded in the reminiscences which suggest another aspect of the relationship between the two. When a schoolmaster flogged Warwick around the legs,

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[27] Alexandria Monthly Meeting Minutes on M567, 3/22/23.

[28] Marjorie D. Tallichet, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1850 Census (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986); T. Michael Miller, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1860 Census (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986); and Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 5.

[29] Mary Powell, History of Old Alexandria (Richmond, Virginia: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1928); and photograph of R.H. Miller and large group of people, Alexandria Archaeology photograph file.

Robert was so incensed that only Anna's restraint prevented him from going after the teacher.[30] On the return from their 1851 trip to St. Louis, where they had gone to visit Warwick and Charles, the second son, Robert unexpectedly learned that he would have to go back and Anna would have to go home alone.

> In the hurry of their change of plans, father forgot to give mother her ticket or to supply her with money. He thought of this just as the train moved off and she saw him throw up his hands in a gesture of dismay. She was in a most embarrassing position - went through the trains to see if she could find an acquaintance; no one there. The conductor was very rude and suspicious. She gave reference to well known people in Baltimore, but that did not quite satisfy him. He did not exactly threaten to put her off the train, but made it as uncomfortable as possible.[31]

In Robert's later years, the time of the Civil War and Reconstruction, his health was apparently not good, and he required much of Anna's attention. In spite of his ill health, both he and Anna agreed that it should not be the cause of delay in the wedding plans of their tenth child, Carrie (Caroline).[32] Perhaps what the two children are describing in their parent's relationship is the way in which Anna was a helpmate to Robert, one who managed not only children and a large household, but also his emotions and his care.

However, there seems to be several different ways in which Robert related to his children. For the most part, Warwick's recollection of his father displays an element of respect and fear. There does not seem to have been much warmth in their relationship. Whatever the reason, be it that Warwick was the first born or that Robert was still a relatively young father, the

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[30] Warwick Miller, Reminiscences of Warwick P. Miller of Alexandria, Virginia, 1896 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House, 1981), pp. 6-7.

[31] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 4.

[32] Ibid., pp. 20, 27.

examples given in Warwick's work show Robert to be a very firm, determined individual, perhaps even to the detriment of his son's development. Warwick's earliest recollection is of early morning swims when

> ...he would take me on his back and swim out in the river to my great terror but it was no use for me to protest, in that as in most things "he was a man of his own accord." I have always thought the fear of water which filled me at this time prevented my learning to swim as all my brothers did.[33]

Another similar memory was based on Warwick's first efforts at horseback riding, when he was about twelve years old.

> Father had two horses, on one of them he put me and then switched up the old horse to my terror, but I had to stay on as best I could. When father made up his mind that we were to do a thing, it had to be done.[34]

When he was about fourteen, Warwick went into the store to learn the china trade from his father. A few years later, he obtained some schooling from the Hallowells and then returned to the store. At 20, he was placed with Robert's friend, George Smoot, a lumber merchant and owner of a fishery. Shortly, thereafter, he went to St. Louis to manage that branch of Miller's business. Evidently Robert arranged for his son's education to be more useful and practical than scholarly. This was also the case with Charles, the next son, who read law in "Uncle Janney's office in Leesburg," before being sent to St. Louis to work.[35]

On the other hand, Eliza seemed to remember her father fondly. The difference between hers and Warwick's recollections could be, in part, because she was the last of the

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[33] Warwick Miller, Reminiscences, p. 3.

[34] Ibid., p. 3.

[35] Ibid., pp. 7, 8, 14, 20.

eleven Miller children, and because Robert was 46 when she was born, as opposed to 26 for Warwick. She remembers sitting on her father's knee for the ceremony of her sister Cornelia's marriage to Frank Stabler in 1850. She obviously remembered her father affectionately in recalling the anecdote about the forgotten train tickets. And she delighted in his calling the Alexandria railroad, "The Alphabetical," instead of by its proper name, The Washington City, Virginia Midland and Great Southern. And when she was away at school in Philadelphia, she received letters from him.[36] Yet, with Eliza and her father there, too, seemed to have been a formality and distance. In one anecdote, she noted that she first heard of her family's impending move to the "fine large house on Washington Street," from her Aunt Mary, not from her father or even her mother. When writing of the marriage of a dear cousin, she mentioned that everyone, "from father down," loved her. Such a description suggests that Robert was definitely the head of the family, with young Eliza far off in the ranking. She also included in her reminiscences a lengthy excerpt from the Alexandria Gazette detailing the founding of the Citizens National Bank and Robert's role in its establishment. Here, Eliza's references demonstrate her awe of and pride in her father.[37]

In the end, as the will of Robert Miller shows, he appeared to have dealt with all his children as equitably and fairly as possible. Three daughters each received $10,000 though the money was entrusted to their respective husbands. Eliza received her $10,000 directly, since she never married. Unlike the other girls, Mary Anna was given all of Robert's interest in property located in West Virginia. Concerning the sons' inheritance, from the will it seemed that prior

[36] Eliza Miller, Recollections, pp. 3, 9, 18.

[37] Ibid., pp. 6, 14, 23, 25.

loans and gifts had been made. In some instances the debts to the sons were discharged; in others, additional gifts were made, as in the case of John Miller who received thirty shares in a St. Louis insurance company. The china business was left to Elisha, which was understandable, as he had been a part of the firm since 1856.[38]

In both of the reminiscences there is very little specifically regarding how Miller related to his friends, other Quakers or the community at large. For example, when Eliza discussed the introduction of the water system, she revealed her pride in her father's association with Benjamin Hallowell, the Water Company's first president. She did note that one friend, Joseph Eaches, had a printer son, John, who painted a portrait of Mordecai, of Robert and one of Anna, John and "sister." While she considered only the latter one to be "pretty," Robert kindly promoted the artist by displaying some of the younger Eaches' work at the china store.[39] She also related one other detail, which demonstrates the degree of integrity Robert exhibited in the community. The family physician, Doctor Murphy, "never bothered to keep books, or send bills." Because Robert could never get an accounting of what he owed the doctor, he "just sent him a check now and then, according to his own judgement."[40] While these details are minor, they do suggest that two things Robert valued were friendship and integrity.

Another fact that can be gleaned from Eliza's work is that the Miller family circle was never expanding and encompassing of the Quaker community. Most of the people cited in her anecdotes are relatives and Friends, too. Certainly it is not unusual for "kinship and community

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[38] Alexandria Gazette, 3/16/1874, "Will of Robert H. Miller."

[39] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p.6; Alexandria Gazette, 11/23/1966.

[40] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p.5.

to become intertwined." And in Alexandria there were strong bonds of marriage that tied the Quakers together.[41] The Millers used their family connections for support as well as socializing. When Rebecca Miller died in 1810, Mordecai's sister, Rachel took care of the family and managed the household until Mordecai's death in 1832. When Rebecca and Anna journeyed to St. Louis in 1851, the younger children stayed with married siblings or their aunts and uncles. After their marriage, Elisha and his wife, Bettie, lived for several years with the Millers in the North Washington Street house.[42] As Eliza describes them, family weddings were also occasions for visiting and socializing with relatives. In 1860, when Eliza was in Philadelphia at school, she lived with and was entertained by a variety of Hartshorne, Janney and Miller cousins. And in the winter of 1865-1866, when she was of "coming-out age," Eliza was sent, as had been the family custom, to St. Louis to visit her two married brothers, Charles and John.[43] Clearly for the Millers the sense of family and kinship was strong.

The Monthly Meeting minutes also confirm the strength and importance of family among Alexandria Quakers. This fact is symbolized by the recording of the double wedding ceremony that took place in 1857. At the June Monthly Meeting approval for two marriages was sought, one by Henry Reese of the Baltimore Monthly Meeting to Mary Anna Miller, Robert and Anna's eighth child, the other by Henry C. Hallowell, Benjamin's son, and Sarah Miller, their seventh child. As was customary, two members were appointed to visit the betrothed and to

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[41] Daniel Snydaker, "Kinship and Community in Rural Pennsylvania, 1749-1820," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 13, (Summer 1982): 61; and Paula Coomler, "The Impact of the Quaker Community upon the Economic Development of Alexandria, Virginia, 18th through mid-19th Centuries" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1987), p. 1; also additional clarification of family relationships can be found in Warwick, Miller, Genealogy and in Hinshaw, Genealogy, vol. 6.

[42] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 2, 3, 8.

report on the marriage arrangements. The two were Chalkley Gillingham and Robert F. Roberts. Both Gillingham and Roberts were associated with groups of Quakers that moved from New Jersey to the Alexandria area in the late 1840s. A number of them had settled near Woodlawn plantation, entering into lumber and milling businesses. In fact, Roberts, through his ownership of Cameron Mills, later become involved with establishment of the water company. Eventually, after the Civil War, as Quakers in Alexandria died or moved away, the Friends at Woodlawn provided the leadership for the Alexandria Monthly Meeting.[44] In the minutes for the July 16th meeting, the clerk noted that the "solemnization of wedding vow" would occur that day at the home of Robert H. Miller at 4 o'clock. This was the only notation within the minutes of the actual wedding ceremony. Unfortunately a copy of the marriage certificates was not placed with the records, as they had been for three previous ceremonies. Therefore, the names of the witnesses are unavailable. Although

> ...the very near relatives of the three families made a sizeable company, but there was no crowd in the two large parlors; Aunt Alice Janney undertook the decorations which were very beautiful and I remember specially that that was the first time we had seen the bloom of the Yucca - Uncle John J. brought two fine stalks from Leesburg which were made the central ornament of the refreshment table.[45]

Eliza's description of this day does sound more festive than the formal notation found in the Monthly Meeting minutes.

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[43] Ibid., pp. 27, 25, 14, 15.

[44] For the story of the Woodlawn Quakers see Dorothy Troth Muir, Potomac Interlude (Washington: Mt. Vernon Print Shop, 21943.)

[45] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 12.

Among Robert and Anna's children, there were several marriages between theirs and other Alexandria Quaker families. Charles married Ellen Morgan in 1850. Cornelia was married to Francis Stabler the same year. Francis Miller married Benjamin Hallowell's daughter Caroline in 1852. And, as described above, Sarah married Henry Hallowell in 1857. Interestingly, only Elisha "married out of meeting," and was thus disowned by the Society. And in the end, Charles and his wife resigned their membership, while Eliza, the records show, "joined another society." Certificates of removal also show that five of the Miller children and their spouses transferred to the meeting at Sandy Spring, Maryland. This appears to be because the respective spouses all were from or had ties to the Sandy Spring Quaker community. As the later pages of Eliza's account seem to indicate, the presence of so many Miller kin did help to generate the growth of the Quaker community there.[46] These certificates of removal, though, were also indicative of the changes taking place within the Alexandria Monthly Meeting. In the decade prior to the Civil War, Friends had been leaving Alexandria proper, while Yankee farmers, such as those Quakers who came to Woodlawn, were moving into the surrounding region.

Several historians contend that Quakers settled in the agricultural areas around Alexandria in order to take a silent stand against the practice of slavery, to prove that successful farming was possible with free labor. Since before the Revolution, Southern Quakers had acted, through "debate and communal pressure," carefully and slowly to establish an organized opposition to slavery.[47] The Baltimore Yearly Meeting, in fact, advised its members to shun abolitionist activities by issuing this statement in 1835:

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[46] To trace the Miller children examine Hinshaw, Quaker Genealogy, vol. 6; Warwick Miller, Genealogy; and Eliza Miller, Recollections, pp. 25, 27.

[47] Patricia Hickin, "Yankees Come to Fairfax," Virginia Cavalcade (Winter 1977): p. 107; and Horace D. Buckman, "The Quakers Come to Woodlawn," Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia 9 (1964-1965): p. 65.

> ...as a Society and individuals [we may] keep ourselves unconnected with the excitement now so generally prevailing in the land, and be careful to maintain our principles in the meek and peaceable spirit of the Lamb.[48]

In Alexandria, it appears that the Friends exerted anti-slavery pressure and influence in subtle and individual ways. The presence of the thriving slave trade within the city had to have caused considerable conflict and social tension. According to Mary Powell, the Society of Friends held anti-slavery meetings, but they "became so unpopular that they had to be discontinued." Most likely these meetings were not those of Friends, but those of the Benevolent Society referred to by Benjamin Hallowell in his auto-biography.[49] The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting do show some of the ways the Alexandria Quakers handled the slavery issue. The minutes from February 1841 expressed the members' concern with Caleb Russell of the Goose Creek Preparative Meeting in Loudon County. Russell had been hiring slaves, and two Alexandrians, Benjamin Hallowell and William Stabler, were appointed to visit him. In May 1842 it was recorded that Goose Creek members had decided to allow Russell to remain in the meeting.[50] In February 1847, the overseers reported to the meeting that "Charles Sutton has hired and still continues to hire slaves, and being visited he appears unwilling to relinquish the practice." Sutton had also failed in his business and could not pay his creditors. The meeting again appointed Hallowell and Stabler to meet with Sutton. In April, this committee of two

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[48] Bliss Forbush, History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends (Sandy Spring, Md.: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1972), p. 63.

[49] Powell, History of Old Alexandria, p. 341; and Benjamin Hallowell, Autobiography (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1884), pp. 109-110.

[50] Alexandria Monthly Meeting Minutes on M567.

found Sutton "unprepared to condemn his departure from the support of our Testimony." Two months later, the Monthly Meeting disowned Charles Sutton for engaging in slave trade and for failing to pay his debts. In July 1859, Noah Glover was also disowned for holding slaves.[51] These three examples demonstrate that the Alexandria Monthly Meeting approached each breach of Quaker testimony on an individual basis. It appears that final judgments were made only after the evidence was determined and considered.

In 1828, the Benevolent Society gathered enough signatures to submit to Congress a petition calling for the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. (Alexandria was at this time still part of the District.) Miller was one of several Alexandria Quakers who signed this petition. His name among the signatures suggests that he was well aware of the slavery controversy and that he chose to stand against the practice. His long-term service to the Monthly Meeting as representative and as recorder is also evidence of his involvement with this issue. His attendance at the meeting in which the case against slavery was discussed, underscores the fact that he knew of the Quaker concerns for the slaves. He also bought the freedom of at least two slaves. These particular manumissions occurred in 1830. Another indicator of his personal concern was that the Millers hired free black domestic help.[52]

However, it is an analysis of property ownership in the years 1815-1840 on one city block which reveals further how Miller quietly, patiently and methodically expressed his "abolition sentiment." During these years, first Mordecai, and then Robert Miller, built a total of

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[51] "Rough Minutes, 1846-1851," Alexandria Monthly Meeting, Maryland Hall of Records, Microfilm M566.

[52] Virginia Jenkins, "Edward Stabler, A Kind Friend and Counsellor: A Quaker and Abolitionist in Alexandria, D.C. 1790-1830" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1986). Appendix, Deed Book enclosures; 1830 Census survey on file at Alexandria Archaeology; and a Tallichet, ed., 1850 Census.

ten rental dwellings on lots owned by them near the corners of Wolfe and South Royal Streets and Wolfe and South Fairfax. At first, these houses were rented to skilled, free black craftsman, but eventually Robert "provided terms which enabled [these renters] to buy their homes as early as 1834." While Robert Miller did realize monetary profit from renting and selling the properties, his actions helped to establish one of Alexandria's first free black neighborhoods, "Hayti."[53]

By investigating Robert Miller's Quaker background and by applying it to our understanding of the private aspects of his life, I hoped to better know this man. What was uncovered is the picture of a highly motivated, determined and probably artistic individual, secure in the circle of his immediate family and the fellowship of the other Quakers in the community. He appears also to have lived by the tenets of his faith, as the anti-slavery example shows. Furthermore, characteristics which include motivation, determination and artistic sensibility are understandable when the success of his business and his concern for Alexandria's economic and social well-being are considered in the analysis of his public record.

[53] T.B. McCord, Jr., Across the Fence, But A World Apart (Alexandria: Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, 1985), pp. 26, 63.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC BIOGRAPHY

To understand Robert Miller, the entrepreneur, it is necessary to examine the economic and social role of the successful merchant in the intra-regional economic system. By applying this information to Miller, a more thorough interpretation of the available materials is possible. Then, not only will we be able to describe his commercial success, but also comprehend the significance of his civic success.

In general, as the volume of business increased with the West and the eastern cities, the mercantile aspect of this business relationship became more specialized. The urban merchant was able to concentrate on importing and wholesaling a limited number of products rather that a wide range of goods. One type of specialized merchant was the jobber, or businessman who bought large lots of particular products for the purpose of selling and distributing them to small retail establishments in rural or western areas. In their business history, Glenn Livesay and Harold Porter cite the example of the Philadelphia drug jobber, Troth and Company. Between 1815 and 1856, Troth and Company maintained large inventories of 19th century "drug" products which they purchased from importers, large wholesale houses and domestic manufacturers. In turn, these goods were sold to wholesalers, retailers and physicians in the West and South. Troth facilitated transactions for valued customers by extending credit and other financial services, such as accepting bank notes and checks. The company also performed personal services for their clients. Upon request they bought and supplied journals, medical periodicals and equipment. To remain competitive with other drug jobbers, Troth packaged and

shipped products, usually via water transport. Frequently this included prepaying a partial amount of the freight charges. Thus, as the Troth case exemplifies,

> The specialized merchant, then, adapted to the techniques or the traditional mercantile economy to the new industrial environment. Specialization was economically logical, helped maintain an efficient distribution network, and cemented the merchants role as coordinators, movers and shakers of the American economy.[1]

The effect that the new economic pattern had on 19th-century Americans is discussed by Thomas Cochran in Business in American Life. According to Cochran, between 1790 and 1850 the growth rate for existing and new urban centers was a reflection of in-migration. Those people who came to the cities to find economic opportunities stayed, if successful, rather moving to another locale. As a result, those residents who prospered remained to invest in city property or industrial enterprises. What developed then was a sedentary business community of successful merchants and manufacturers who more or less ran the early 19th-century cities through both their property ownership and eventually their membership on city councils. The dominance of these men was further expanded by a network of family and kinship relationships. In fact, the changing business environment so strongly influenced the need for family business arrangements that among successful merchant families, marriages were often made to increase the potential profitability of the family firm. Later, it became necessary for these city entrepreneurs to deal with such political issues as funding for transportation improvements. To do this, they would often be required to reach beyond their immediate environment to the state legislature for financial backing. Here, the merchants negotiated with rural legislators for state

[1] Glenn Porter, and Harold Livesay, Merchants and Manufactures (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 29-36.

aid for the construction of highways, canals, and later, for railroads. Both Cochran and Goldfield note that in the South, farmers and merchants alike were anxious for canal and railroad access to the back country. In most situations everyone was in favor of "progress."[2]

In his description of the business-oriented society of the mercantile city, Thomas Cochran states that merchants set the standards for "consumption, taste and manners." Poorhouses, orphan asylums, temperance groups, libraries and some support for the arts were evident in most cities, yet that support was to be found among a few leading merchants. The merchant's sense of social responsibility worked to enhance his reputation. While a successful merchant frequently had the extra capital to donate to social causes, the manner in which he donated that money was at times paternalistic. The social role of the merchant had evolved out of a distinct aristocratic tradition. In describing this role, Cochran holds that

> ...it had standardized patterns of response to recurring situations; it had anticipated attitudes and beliefs, manners and ethics; it insured some uniformity in the type of man who succeeded. Habits and practices of social responsibility, which had hardly entered the roles of newer types of businessmen created by economic development, tended to persist in this generally sedentary and conservative group.[3]

Over the course of the 19th century, the social and civic role of the merchant became increasingly specialized, much in the same manner as his business role. In the Private City Sam Bass Warner, Jr. illustrates this change in Philadelphia. Beginning with an "cold style

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[2] Thomas C. Cochran, Business in American Life: A History (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972), pp. 123, 129, 132-133; Sally Griffen and Clyde Griffen, "Family Life and Business in a Small City: Poughkeepsie, New York, 1850-1880," in Tamara K. Hareven, ed., Family and Kin in Urban Communities, 1700-1930, (New York: New View Points, 1977), p. 160; Peter Dobkin Hall, "Family Structure and Economic Organization: Massachusetts Merchants, 1700-1850," in Family and Kin, p. 44.; and David Goldfield, Cottonfields and Skyscrapers (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 62-65.

[3] Cochran, Business in American Life, p. 139.

generalist," involved in both business and politics, he moves on to show the antebellum trend toward merchants who had a "variety of talent, experience, and opinions which could be harnessed to public commissions, private boards, and elective office." He continues by stating that industrialization and growth brought a new generation of Philadelphia business leaders whose civic contributions were not local but regional or national, were not community wide but directly tied to their business specialty.

> The new habits of business taught the mid- nineteenth century businessman that the city was not important to their daily lives, and in response these business leaders became ignorant of their city and abandoned its politics.

Thus a leadership vacuum was created which was to be filled by the modern, full-time professional politician, the municipal boss or the gentleman-democrat.[4]

During this time, government also became increasingly organized and specialized. This was especially evident in the local and municipal support for public works projects. Government on all levels, federal, state, county, and city, had participated in the funding of canal and railroad construction in the 1820s and 1830s. Following the depressions of 1837 and 1857, many state legislatures reacted against spending and enacted limitations on borrowing. During these years, convinced of the economic need for railroad and canal connections, local governments made their own investments. These patterns of change show how providing "service function" and building municipal "infrastructure" eventually became the responsibility of city governments. Indeed, as Tarr and Konvitz discuss in their work, traditional 18th-century cities had provided

[4] Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 80-86.

the basic services such as street paving and lighting, town wells and docks. Yet many other civic concerns "were handled by volunteer groups or remained an individual responsibility." As city governments gradually changed. so too these patterns, to the point where, by the 1840s and the 1850s, the larger cities had professional fire and police departments, and "urban governments had enlarged their activities in matters involving public health and sanitation."

Tarr and Konvitz describe several relatively complex forces which brought the changes in city government and the increase in public works construction. The first was the need for the city to support the private economy, the business and commercial interests and the real estate developers. The second was the widespread concern about public order and public health. And the third was based on the self-interest of the new professional politician who worked to deliver urban improvements and city services to his voting constituents. Tarr and Konvitz also note that the installation of water service was a key public works project. After all, water was critical for household uses, for cleaning the streets, for fighting fires and for industrial use. Furthermore, they state, city "boosters considered waterworks as crucial in the competition between municipalities for population, trade and industry...." As part of the civic response to a severe yellow fever epidemic, Philadelphia became, in 1799-1801, the first large city to construct a municipal waterworks system. Cincinnati followed in the 1820s, New York in 1841, and Boston in 1848. By 1860, there were 136 water systems nationwide, with the larger cities more likely to have publically owned systems, the smaller ones private ownership.[5] Alexandria was like the smaller cities with private ownership. And yet, the establishment of a city system had begun in

[5] Joel A. Tarr and Josef Konvitz, "Patterns in the Development of the Urban Infrastructure," in Howard Gillette and Zane L. Miller, eds., American Urbanism (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 361-366.

1850, only two years after the installation of New York's. Indeed, most Alexandrians recognized how important the new waterworks were to their community.[6]

Robert Miller possessed many of the characteristics used by both Cochran and Warner in their descriptions of typical merchants. Miller was a successful merchant with a sense of social responsibility. However, his Quaker beliefs probably shaped that sense, more than any inherent conservatism. He was also a generalist with a variety of talents and experience which could be harnessed to public commissions and private boards. Yet, as the following discussion of his commercial and entrepreneurial activities shows, he was more than just a civic booster. He was an individual committed to succeeding and to achieving prosperity for himself, his family and the community.

Commercial Activity

As the advertisements for his china business demonstrate, Robert Miller was a talented merchant and entrepreneur. The china shop, R.H. Miller and Co., was located at 65 King Street, on the city's main thoroughfare, in the block between Royal and Fairfax Streets. The firm remained at that location until the turn of the century. In the 1860 Directory, which classifies firms by the type of business, there are only two china and glass dealers in Alexandria. One is R.H. Miller, Son and Company; the other is Mary Entwisle, also on King Street. According to an ad which ran in an 1893 special edition of the Gazette, the Miller family established, in the

[6] Eliza H. Miller, Personal Recollections of Eliza H. Miller, 1926 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House). pp. 9-10.

1840s, a St. Louis, Missouri branch store known as N.E. Janney and Brothers. It was set up to conduct business with the Santa Fe and Indian trades.[7] Warwick Miller recalled in his reminiscences that his "Uncle Nathaniel Janney was in father's store for several years where he learned the crockery business very thoroughly." Warwick also claimed that Nathaniel was sent to St. Louis in 1835 to open the branch. In 1844, when Warwick was sent, his cousin went to St. Louis, too. Two years later, on his first visit home, he acknowledged that "after moving around the world everything looked so small, especially father's store."[8]

The family recollections supply some descriptions of Miller's business. Whether "small" or not, we can speculate that the range of the business was indeed large. Advertisements from the fall and winter of 1848 and 1849 indicate that Miller had "enlarged and fitted up his store in a commodious and comfortable manner."[9] By 1856, a new warehouse had been added.[10] In addition to his wife's brother, Nathaniel Miller must have employed several people. Warwick came first to the store to learn the trade when he was 14; he went to St. Louis when he was 20. Probably after a similar apprenticeship in the King Street shop, the next son, Charles, who also read some law with his uncle, joined Warwick in St. Lois. Eliza's recollections mentioned a childhood accident that occurred at the store. From it, some interesting details about the shop are revealed. Not only did the family work, and in this case, play there, but there were "boys" who

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[7] Alexandria Gazette, 9/16/1893.

[8] Warwick P. Miller, Reminiscences of Warwick P. Miller of Alexandria, Virginia, 1896 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House, 1981), pp. 19-20.

[9] Alexandria Gazette, 9/23/1848.

[10] Ibid., 11/17/1856.

did the unpacking and a particular employee named John. Most likely "John" was Robert's sixth child and fifth son, who also was sent to the St. Louis store. He eventually settled there. The "boys" may have been "stock boys" or two of the other sons, Elisha and Benjamin. (The 1850 Census indicates that a twenty-year-old merchant's clerk named Edgar resided with the Miller family. It is possible that he was also one of the employees.)

Eliza also remembered that the fine china and glass always came in hogsheads, while the earthenwares, and sometimes yellow baking dishes (yelloware), were packed in straw and crated. The unpacking was done on the second floor, where there was a hoisting machine with chains that raised and lowered "the big crates." She added that there was a cellar which opened onto the cobblestone alley "that ran at the side of the store." (An 1877 Hopkins map shows this to be Market Alley, a byway that led to Market Square.) Eliza also mentioned that her father had a "counting room." Clearly, a variety of tasks were being performed within this one store, each activity or function belonging to a distinct place, with various people having different responsibilities. It is also obvious from reading Eliza's account that her father's business provided "basic career training and livelihood for family members." In traditional merchant firms, family and kin were often a good source for trustworthy manpower.[11] The Miller enterprise must have been well organized, for as Eliza noted, her parents took time in the summer of 1851 to visit her brothers in St. Louis, where they "were conducting a branch of the business...."[12]

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[11] Hall, "Family Structure and Economic Organization," p.44.

[12] Eliza Miller, Recollections, pp. 3-5.

The Alexandria Gazette advertisements for Robert Miller's china store reflect some of the same business descriptions and personal information given above. In what is apparently his first advertisement, Miller, on October 10, 1822, announced that he had opened a new establishment dealing in china, glass and earthenware. He had just received from Liverpool 205 packages of stock -- "a complete and extensive assortment." (The ad confirms that the selection of goods had been made during that 1820 European visit.) There was an appeal to "country merchant" to trust his buying skill and importing ability. He had even hired an experienced packer, so that he might complete and ship orders "carefully and securely" to these merchants. The advertisement also listed the receipt of vials, various lamps and crucibles. To attract attention, the ad was laid out with a variety of type and letter sizes. There was a confidence in the way the copy read and looked. Moreover, examination of this opening ad suggests the nature of the evidence to be found in successive advertisements. That is Miller's concern for importing fine European merchandise, his desire to connect with western markets, his business and trade expertise, and even his personal beliefs, all of which further enlighten our knowledge of the man and 19th-century Alexandria.

Robert Miller did not advertise in every issue of the Gazette. An overview of the 1843 paper shows that he placed ads at least eleven times. Frequently, as in the fall of 1840, the same ad would run for several months. Over time, he used more selective methods to promote his wares. Rather than listing within one ad a composite of goods that might appeal to all of his customers, he developed individual advertisements for items that were directed to either local Alexandrians, country customers, or even male and female purchasers.

The advertisements that appeared to be designed for the local retail trade usually featured information about recent ship arrivals, new European imports, and the wide selection of luxury items for sale. From some of these ads certain facts are evident. Most of his European imports were shipped via Liverpool; yet some French porcelain was "imported through a resident French Agent in Paris."[13] An advertisement from August 18, 1838, featured in Figure 2, not only describes fancy consumer goods, like china sets and printed services, but it also expressed Miller's concern for the possible loss of trade to large cities such as Baltimore, or even the District. And, as other examples reflect, this ad, which was first submitted on July 30, shows Miller's merchant like sense for selling seasons. Here, in July and August, he was already stressing "fall" goods, "right off the boat" from Europe. This approach sounds like modern retail advertising. Other imported items which were advertised during this period include gilt and silvered girandole lamps, French porcelain, flowing blue and mulberry printed wares, Italian alabaster ornaments, cut glass cologne bottles and German silver castors. In many of these ads, the number of crates, hogsheads or sets of china received was included, often in bold face numerals, presumably to catch the consumer's eye and to impress him with the size of Miller's enterprise.

Prices for Miller's imported wares were rarely featured. As indicated in Chapter I, this practice was not generally the custom until after the Civil War. One of Miller's advertisements for French porcelain, pure white dining sets in octagonal and oval shapes, did list a price of $40 to $75 per set.[14] For English wares, the failure to advertise prices may have been based on the

[13] Alexandria Gazette, 3/15/1854.

[14] Alexandria Gazette, 11/25/1841.

price fixing practices of the Staffordshire potters. In his study of a Philadelphia pottery merchant, George Miller describes these practices. The use of standard wholesale price lists which were "originally set up to prevent destructive price cutting" by the manufacturers, "became in the long run a device by which merchants importing Staffordshire wares into North America secured larger and larger discounts."[15] Likewise, Miller probably "cut his own deals" with the English manufacturers. As a direct importer, Miller could order specifically what he felt he could sell, new patterns to suit his customers, and replacement pieces for sets; he could set the local retail price.

Another major category of advertisements were those Miller placed in the Gazette for his country customers. While none of the ads mention the St. Louis connection, it is evident that Miller was proud of his efforts to reach western clientele. A typical insertion tailored to the country market would be similar to one found in the May 10, 1833 edition of the Gazette and shown in Figure 3. In this example, the merchandise is more basic than luxurious. Window glass and bottles suggest construction supplies and general merchandise rather than consumer extras. Moreover, the request for other Virginia newspapers to insert this advertisement in their publications for a three-week run clearly indicates Miller's intended market. In the 1840's, Miller actually extended his newspaper advertising to towns in Western Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Portions of another advertisement from November 17, 1837 catered to the West by stating that

[15] George Miller, "George M. Coates, Pottery Merchant of Philadelphia, 1817-1831," Winterthur Portfolio 19 (Spring 1984): 40-41.

> Country merchants within reach of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal will find it to their advantage to purchase of the sub-scriber, as they will be carefully packed and forwarded...

Orders by mail are solicited, "as particular care will be taken in selecting the goods and filling the orders with precision." Although coal from the western Maryland mines became the most important commodity to be shipped via the canals to the Potomac River Wharves in Alexandria, typical products shipped to the West included building materials, fish and "sundries."[16] In 1838 Miller appealed to country merchants to call on him and to examine his stock as the quality and prices were as low or lower than that of Northern markets.[17] In an advertisement from 1849, he announced that country merchants and families alike would find his assortment, prices and terms pleasing.[18] In these instances, Miller utilized improved communication through advertising in western newspapers, stressed ease of transport through the C&O Canal, and mentioned the availability of credit to operate as both a wholesaler and retailer to rural customers.

Competitive Businessman

That Robert Miller was an astute importer of china wares is obvious from the ads that describe the new European imports. That he was an active trader and buyer of American manufactured or produced goods becomes more clear from additional interpretation of his

[16] Vivienne Mitchell, "A Canal for Alexandria," Alexandria History 1 (1978): 23, 24.

[17] Alexandria Gazette, 10/16/1838.

[18] Ibid., 9/17/1849.

advertisements. First, because actual prices were not shown, one can assume that bargaining took place in Miller's store. The deal negotiated with a country merchant, presumably at wholesale, would necessarily be different than the price charged to a cash or credit walk-in customer. Secondly, as the customer base expanded, the advertisements became more specific aimed at particular consumers. The ad, from August 18, 1838, which is Figure 2, appears to be designed for women, as it is mostly concerned with food preparation and food service items. This "home economics" ad contrasts with another Miller ad two columns over on the same page of that day's Gazette. This other ad, Figure 3, features imported wares. Miller's efforts to diversify his enterprise continued into the 1840s. He frequently placed single ads for individual items.

One page from an 1850 Gazette contains, within one column, nine distinct Miller announcements for lamps, window glass, ethereal oil lamps, French China vases, girandoles, window glass and putty, Wedgewood teapots, white graniteware and porcelain busts of Jenny Lind. One of these for window glass shows that Miller was the agent for the Waterford Works in New Jersey.[19] There are other ads which state that he carried stoneware made in Alexandria.[20] Once he featured "cut glassware, decanters, Bowls, Celeries, Tumblers, and Champagnes," from Pittsburgh.[21] At one time he tried to sell ten kegs of Shenandoah Butter.[22] At another time his name is used as a reference in a Gazette ad placed by a Baltimore produce and general

[19] Ibid., 11/9/1850.

[20] Ibid., 10/11/1835.

[21] Ibid., 10/18/1839.

[22] Ibid., 8/18/1838.

commission merchant.[23] He may have also purchased pottery made in Baltimore by Maulden Perine, a Quaker with a large earthenware and stoneware manufactory.[24] These more specialized advertisements suggest that Miller not only traded and dealt with suppliers in the Shenandoah, the Lehigh and Ohio Valley regions, New Jersey, Baltimore and in Alexandria, but that he worked to expand both his supplier and customer base. Figure 5, from 1838, indicates his efforts to trade and deal.

Another factor demonstrating Miller's business acumen was the way in which he dealt with his main competition, Hugh Smith and Company. Hugh Smith had established his retail business in 1803. In 1825 his son, H.C. Smith, joined the firm, managing it off and on for the next twenty-five years. During that time, both Smith and Miller were involved in an "aggressive advertising contest." Frequently their ads would appear side by side in the Gazette, citing shipments from the same vessels, itemizing similar imported merchandise. (The Smith and Miller wharves were also side by side at the foot of Wilkes and Gibbon Streets.) Once their storefront windows displayed identical merchandise, as indicated in a notice from the Alexandria Gazette.

> We were amused, day before yesterday, at the ingenuity and wit displayed in the ornaments on a set of plates which are exhibited at Mr. Miller's and Mr. Smith's China Stores, representing the "progress of Steam." One of them, now at Green's Barber Shop, shows off a row of jolly fellows, all ready lathered, with the Steam Shaving Machine just about to commence operations...[25]

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[23] Ibid., 3/12/1858.

[24] Susan H. Myers, "Marketing American Pottery: Maulden Perine in Baltimore," Winterthur Portfolio 19. (Spring 1984): 53; and Bliss Forbush, A History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends (Sandy Spring, Md.: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1972, p. 57.

[25] Ibid., 5/25/1833.

Smith, too, chose to advertise in rural Virginia papers, but unlike Miller, he did not expand to those in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Along with greater distribution, Miller's ads during these years showed a greater diversity and selection of goods. He also appears to have advertised more often than Smith. While H.C. Smith managed the family firm, the elder Hugh Smith invested money and energy in Alexandria's only stoneware manufactory, the Wilkes Street Pottery. From 1825 to 1841, he served as merchant/manager of that business. Thus the Smith family sought profits by integrating backwards into production, while the Millers achieved success by expanding westward through a network of distribution and supply. The Smiths sold their business out of the family in 1854, two years before Robert Miller made his third son, Elisha, part of the Alexandria firm.[26] In 1856, the business relationships expanded to include Miller, Elisha (then 29), F. Westwood Ashby, Warwick M. Stabler and Samuel Howell in a new partnership under the name R.H. Miller Sons and Company. Four years later, Stabler and Howell left the partnership, and a new one was formed with Robert, Elisha and Ashby. It is interesting to note that Stabler and Howell were both Quakers.[27]

Some additional information on Miller can be gathered from the Gazette advertisements. There are several ads which deal with Miller's rental properties, his positions in various organizations, like the cotton company, and his legal connections to other individuals, as

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[26] Suzita Myers, Potters Art, Salt-Glazed Stoneware of 19th Century Alexandria (Alexandria: Alexandria Archaeological Research Center, 1983), pp. 14-21.

[27] Alexandria Gazette, 1/17/56, 2/24/60; Marjorie D. Talichet, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1850 Census (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc. 1986); T. Michael Miller, ed., Alexandria Virginia City and County 1860 Census (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986); Warwick P. Miller, Ancestry of the Children and Grandchildren of Warwick P. and Mary H. Miller, on file at Alexandria Library Lloyd House; and William Wade Hinshaw, ed., Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, vol. 6 (Ann Arbor: Edwards, Inc., 1936-1950).

executor of estates. Their existence shows further how active Miller was in the affairs of the community. There is, moreover, a unique series of store ads which reflect Miller's political affiliation with the Whigs. The following excerpt from one expressed his political sentiments:

> N.B.--By an early arrival, R.H.M. expects supplies of ware with Harrison and Log cabin engravings, from designs sent to the Potteries by himself. Whig merchants will be supplied upon the "Credit System" at reasonable prices, in time to celebrate the approaching triumph of correct principles.

Some of these wares included an imported Staffordshire creamer and a teapot, decorated in mulberry on one side with a portrait of General William Henry Harrison and on the other side with the picture of a log cabin bearing the sign on the door, "To Let in 1841." On the base, in mulberry, was the mark "Manufactured for Robt. H. Miller, Alexandria, D.C.," (Figure 6.B).[28] The announcement for these wares, which was designed to be inserted in several western newspapers, ran at least six times, from September through December 1840. Warwick Miller recalled that

> The Whig campaign of 1840 was a memorable time; it seemed as if the whole country was crazy over the log cabin candidate General Harrison and John Tyler who was nominated at Harrisonburg.[29]

For Robert Miller to order the production of commemorative pottery, Alexandria and Miller's enthusiasm for Harrison must have been very strong indeed.

Manufacturers' marks such as the one on the bottom of the "Harrison" creamer served another purpose. Not only did the mark serve to identify the maker, but also was a form of

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[28] Robert H. McCauley, "American Importers of Staffordshire." Antiques, June 1944, p. 295.

[29] Warwick Miller, Reminiscences, pp. 17-18.

advertising for the wholesale merchant. As china goods were sold locally or shipped westward, the businesses of merchants, like Miller, were promoted on the base of each item. A whiteware fragment excavated from a well at 809 Duke Street in Alexandria shows a different mulberry colored marking on its base. Here, there is a lion and unicorn crest, with the words "MANUFACTURED FOR R-H MILLER & [CO] [ST. LOUIS, M" in an arc across the top. Underneath the crest, "IRONSTONE CHINA J. HEATH." is written (Figure 6.A). This ironstone had probably been designed and commissioned for the St. Louis branch, and its existence confirms the presence of the Miller business in Missouri.

From the advertisements we also learn that Robert Miller retired in 1865; Elisha was his successor. During the previous four years, when Union troops occupied the city, the Millers managed to keep the firm in business. Eliza remembered that soldiers wanting Southern souvenirs

> ...would go into father's store and buy any old odd thing and send it home with all sorts of stories as to where it came from and to whom it had belonged, and father got rid of much old and undesirable stock that way. I think he did not buy any new stock during the war, just kept the store open and sold what he could of what he had on hand.[30]

The firm remained at the King Street location until at least 1899. A March 20, 1874 ad which appeared just after Robert's death was a low-key statement of the upcoming spring trade. It concluded with Elisha's statement:

> Thinking of my friends for past favors and soliciting a continuance of the same, I am very respectfully, E.J. Miller.

[30] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 21.

Elisha was 43 when his father died. At some point during the ensuing years, Elisha's son, Ashby Miller, came into the business.[31] In 1883. E.J. Miller and Co. advertised "This establishment founded in 1822, and just as buoyant and juvenile as ever offers for sale CHINA, GLASS, and QUEENSWARE at No. 65 King Street of their own direct importation."[32] From this description it appears that some younger management had come to the firm. A large announcement in the 1899 Sesqui-Centennial Business Directory prominently stated that the company was "The Oldest Queensware House In The South" and the "Oldest Distributors of Souvenirs on China of Photographs of" historic Alexandria sites. Evidently, the firm had continued to specialize in selling commemorative wares, as it did in 1840 with the Harrison log cabin china. The tradition of importing china was also continued. From another Sesqui-Centennial book published that year, there is a caption beneath a photograph of the Miller store-front which reads

> Importers and Dealers in China, Crockery, Etc, the Miller Co., Oscar F. Carter, President, R.E. Miller, Secretary. This firm is old and reliable, having been established in 1822.

[31] Warwick Miller, Reminiscences, pp. 3, 19.

[32] McCauley, "American Importers of Staffordshire," p. 295.

> Another Alexandria institution, Mr. and has traded all over Virginia and the South, as well as in Washington.[33]

From the name in the caption, it appears that indeed some family members were involved with the business until the end of the century. From reviewing his advertisements, Robert Miller emerges as a merchant of "versatility" and his firm one of "longevity." As Porter and Livesay depicted in their study of Troth and Company, successful merchants were those who specialized and utilized improvements in transportation and communication to reach the markets of the West. Miller certainly used the newspaper network extensively, to communicate with country merchants and customers and to maintain his local Alexandria trade. Not only was he actively involved with the construction of transportation improvements, but he promoted them in both his advertisements and by the use of a wide distribution and supply system.

Water and the Public Welfare

Robert Miller's promotion of transportation improvements was part of a typical pattern found among merchants in other Southern cities. Commercial activity, and thus the economic health of the city, depended on strong, well-developed relationships between the rural agricultural areas and the cities and towns. City boosters, the mercantile leadership, worked to enhance the hinter-land relationship with not only the construction of canals and railroads, but with the building of new hotels and markethouses, all to "maintain and secure the business of the

[33] Lillian C. Perry Scrapbook, "Sesqui-Centennial Business Directory," 10/12/1899, on file at Alexandria Library Lloyd House, p. 8.

countryside." This need was particularly urgent for the urban South after the 1840s. By then transportation had "improved throughout the region," with the threatening result "that the rural customers might take their business elsewhere."[34] Moreover, because of the regard for the needs and concerns of the hinterland, funding for city improvements was based not on general civic need, but on the value of the possible economic return. If a particular improvement or service could "strengthen" the commercial connection, then the expenditure was worthwhile. Street paving and street lighting were two improvements that could definitely enhance the appearance of a city. City governments, such as Alexandria's, heavily indebted by the expense of the canals and the railroads, would then have to determine if there was sufficient economic benefit to undertake their installation. Indeed, as David Goldfield has written, a Southern city's cities image and appearance was an important ingredient for prosperity.[35] As a leading merchant, it had to have also been one of Robert Miller's major concerns.

The evidence of disease, the spread of epidemics and the pressure of filthy streets did not present a healthy urban image. They could hinder the promotion of trade, as well. As Goldfield notes, "Disease was bad business. No farmer wanted to trade cotton for yellow fever. No merchant enjoyed the prospect of empty wharves, deserted railroad depots, and idle drays and wagons."[36] Usually the periodic epidemics and the filth in the streets were handled by instituting port quarantines and by improving sanitation through garbage collection. There were yellow fever epidemics in Alexandria in 1797, 1800, 1802, 1803, 1804, and 1821. Alexandria's Board of

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[34] David Goldfield, Cottonfields and Skyscrapers (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982) pp. 36-37.

[35] Ibid., p. 37.

[36] David R. Goldfield, "Health Planning in the Old South," The Journal of Southern History 42 (November 1976): 560.

Health was established in 1800; the "Superintendent of Quarantine" was first appointed in 1804.[37] In cases like the Norfolk yellow fever epidemic of 1855, the quarantine was ineffectual. While that city's leaders and the press tried to shield the public from the devastation, the disease caused so much death in only four months that "it took five years to recover the population and business lost by the epidemic." News of the epidemic caused other Virginia cities, Baltimore and New York to forbid trade with Norfolk.[38] Unfortunately, it was often only after a disaster such as this that governments would fund services and health planning designed to prevent the spread of disease.

Bringing fresh, uncontaminated water to a community was one method of prevention. Although the germ theory of disease was not established until the end of the 19th century, the example of the experiences of the cities which improved their water supply earlier in the century suggested that understanding the connection between urban filth and miasma, the theory that disease was caused by the "inhalation of the fumes of decaying animal and vegetable matter," could help prevent the spread of disease. Even though the miasma theory was incorrect, by using the water supply to clean the streets of decaying matter before the anticipated summer epidemics and by providing some of their residents with pure water, places like Philadelphia and New York were able to achieve lower mortality rates during the widespread cholera epidemic of 1832. In succeeding epidemics lower death rates were also experienced by other communities with water supply systems.

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[37] Melissa McLoud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology: An Alexandria Cistern and Filtration System" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1980), p. 5: Edward Arnold, Water Supply research on file at Alexandria Archaeology.

[38] Goldfield, "Health Planning," pp. 566-568.

Alexandria, too, had attempted to alleviate its water problems. Throughout the 19th century the Common Council passed ordinances to protect the quality of the water in the public wells and to maintain the cleanliness of the town. A "night "scavenger" was appointed to clean wells and privies; individual lots and gutters were to be kept clean; and there were ordinances concerning stagnant water, burials, the washing of private walkways, the control of roaming animals and the pollution of the streets with wastewater. Garbage collection was instituted in 1856, although the carts rarely collected any refuse outside the business district. With the growth of the population in the 1840s and 50s, however, the supply of water available from wells was no longer sufficient to meet Alexandria's needs. Deficiencies in the water supply were also aggravated by the needs for fire fighting and for manufacturing. Memories of the destruction caused by the 1827 fire reinforced the need for ample water supplies. The establishment of Thomas Smith's steam engine factory in 1830 and the founding of the Mount Vernon Cotton Manufacturing Company in 1847, increased manufacturing's need for water, as well.[39]

Early Interest in Water

The increase in demand for water was not always based on tragic circumstances such as epidemic diseases or fires. Municipal boosterism and the desire to attract industry often counted in the decisions of municipalities to obtain water supply systems.[40] To trace Robert Miller's

[39] Perge, "A Historical Survey of Alexandria's Water Supply, 1777-1852" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1980), pp. 14-27.

[40] Letty Anderson, "Hard Choices: Supplying Water to New England Towns," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 15 (August 1984): 217.

involvement in bringing clean water to Alexandria, one needs to look first at his relationship with Benjamin Hallowell, the noted Quaker educator and the water company's first president, Hallowell, a teacher, came from Westtown, a well known Pennsylvania Friends school, to Alexandria in 1824 when he was 25, to open a private boarding school. The idea to settle in Alexandria had come upon him at meeting, when he recalled that "Edward Stabler and many other nice Friends resided there...."[41] In Alexandria his influence was considerable. Not only did he and his wife, Margaret, operate an excellent boy's and girl's school, but they were also involved with many community concerns. In 1827, Hallowell worked to establish the Benevolent Society, the group aiding slaves to procure their freedom. He served as the City Surveyor, without pay, using the experience to instruct his students in the art of surveying. In 1834. he founded the Lyceum, where he was often one of the lecturers who delivered talks on "literary, scientific and historical subjects." During the 1830s, both Margaret and Benjamin served as clerks for the Women's and Men's Meeting of the Alexandria Monthly Meeting; they both also served later as the clerks of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Hallowell was a scientifically minded man, with a great deal of intellectual curiosity, who was active in the Quaker organization.[42] Several of Hallowell's early experiences in Alexandria probably contributed to his overall interest in clean water and its possible benefits. Hallowell wrote that in early September 1825, when his son James was born, both the baby and his wife Margaret became ill.

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[41] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 93.

[42] Hallowell, Autobiography, pp. 109-123; "Alexandria Monthly Meeting Minutes" on M567 for 1830s, 1840s; and Forbush, History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, appendix.

> Then, for the first time, we heard that our situation on Oronoco Street, the edge of town as it was, had always been regarded as unhealthy...I could not bear the idea of my wife and family continuing in a place that was thought to be unhealthy, or of my inviting boarders to such a situation.[43]

These words seem to show his belief in the miasma theory, or that disease and illness can be attributed to an "unhealthy" location. In 1831, Edward Stabler, the druggist and esteemed Quaker minister, died of scarlet fever. In the course of the year, three of Hallowell's four children died, two of them also from scarlet fever. These family tragedies caused him to break up the school, take a leave to the home of Margaret's family near the Quaker community of Sandy Spring, Maryland, and to spend some time traveling in the North. On one of the visits, he called on Dr. Benjamin Silliman of New Haven. Hallowell was a regular contributor to Silliman's American Journal of Science and the Arts. Although Silliman was a chemist, he was knowledgeable on the subject of water potability and on filtration used in sugar refining. Like Hallowell, he had also lost three young children, the coincidence of which was the "foundation of a warm friendship that terminated only with his life."[44] The Hallowells returned to Alexandria in 1832, the year cholera struck most east coast cities. In his autobiography, Hallowell described the epidemic. He was deeply affected by the "sudden deaths," the "heartrending" scenes at the hospitals and by the sight of a large, strong man struck down in the street near his school with the disease, who, seemingly sensible and alert at the time, was dead and buried only four hours later. The shock of the death and of the image of the stricken man obviously left a lasting impression

[43] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 104.

[44] Ibid., pp. 110-114; McLoud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology," p.3.

on Hallowell; the account of it is still vivid when he writes of his memories in the 1870s. Characteristically, he relied on his faith for relief and peace of mind.[45]

Robert Miller and Benjamin Hallowell were contemporaries who shared similar interests in the Benevolent Society, the Lyceum and the Quaker organization. Therefore, it is likely that their friendship began soon after the Hallowells moved to Alexandria. Further indication of their ties comes from the fact that the Millers' ninth child, Benjamin Hallowell Miller, born in 1840, was named for their friend. This relationship was undoubtedly strengthened by the marriages of their respective children, Francis Miller to Caroline Hallowell in 1852 and Henry Hallowell to Sarah Miller in 1857. An 1873 letter to Miller from Hallowell, which he includes in his autobiography, has the salutation, "Dear Cousin Robert." (How genealogically accurate the word "cousin" is has not been determined.) It is also likely that Hallowell spoke to Miller about the depth of his feelings over his experiences with death and disease, shared his concerns with their cause and his ideas about their prevention. Undoubtedly, Miller had his own memories of the 1832 cholera epidemic. In 1836, Silliman's American Journal of Science and the Arts featured an article on an inexpensive domestic water filter. Perhaps Hallowell and Miller discussed the construction of just such a device as one possible way to provide a family with uncontaminated water. Easy access to an ample supply of clean water would have been important to the large Miller household, which at this time had grown to include seven children.

In 1977, a "large, plaster-lined, brick cistern with an enclosed filter" was uncovered during archaeological excavation of the St. Asaph Street lot on which a house once occupied by the Miller family had been located. The technology represented by the type of filtration system

[45] Hallowell, Autobiography, pp. 116-117.

found, its similarity to the one described in Silliman's journal, a significant property tax increase in 1834, plus Warwick's recollection that the family moved "about 1836" from St. Asaph Street to Cameron Street "while the former house was being added to and repaired," helps date the cistern's construction between 1834 and 1836.[46] The water supply for the cistern was most likely run-off water which was piped from the roof of the 1834 addition down into the cistern, through the filters, and then forced upward to be pumped eventually to the house. This cistern was exceptional because it was unusually large for a domestic filter of the 1830s, and it had probably been costly to build. This system was indeed a unique way to obtain an abundant amount of clean water for private use. It was definitely healthier than using water hauled from Alexandria's street pumps.[47]

Development of the Alexandria Water Company

With the evidence of the cistern to establish Miller's early interest in the improvement of Alexandria's water supply, examination of his role in the founding of the water company can be considered. Again, details can be gleaned from Hallowell's auto-biography. According to Hallowell's letter to Miller, finding an adequate way to supply the town with water had been a major concern of the community for many years. He had undertaken the investigation of several proposals in the hope that the water would eventually

[46] McLoud, "Feature LL, Urban Water Technology," pp. 13.

[47] Ibid., p. 1, 14-16.

> ...flow through our kitchens, bathroom, etc. to the Potomac River, and give us all a full supply of good water, as well as furnish a means for extinguishing fires, of which the city stood in great need.[48]

Upon visiting his sister in New Jersey, he had the opportunity to examine the Mt. Holley waterworks, and was struck by how appropriate the Mt. Holley technology would be to Alexandria. On his visit he saw that by using an existing mill, with its waterwheel adjusted, water could be forced up to the town's reservoir. Following this example, he suggested to several Alexandria friends the possibility of using the power from Cameron Mills to force water from Cameron Stream up to a reservoir that would be constructed on Shuter's Hill. Among these friends were Miller, Edward S. Hough and Thomas Smith, who encouraged him to make a speech on this subject at a public meeting. Interestingly, both Miller and Smith probably shared the same interest in the possible economic benefit to their manufacturing firms that would come from a city waterworks. As noted before, Smith was the founder of the steam engine factory; Miller was the president of the cotton factory.

Evidently at this meeting Hallowell spoke convincingly on the feasibility of waterworks construction. This meeting was most likely part of a campaign initiated by the incorporators to persuade the citizens to vote for the city's support of the plan. As required by the Act to Incorporate the Alexandria Water Company, enacted by the Virginia General Assembly, March 22, 1850, Alexandria was to subscribe to an amount of shares, not exceeding a value of $25,000, provided that three fifths of the voters voted in favor of such funding. Clearly, the incorporators had been working to put together a waterworks project for some time. It is also likely that the

[48] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 117.

tentative construction plans, the preparation for the act's passage through the General Assembly, and the solicitation of the Common Council's support, had involved much negotiation and political discussion. Since Miller was one of the incorporators, he was probably involved in these events. His participation, in fact, facilitated the initial construction in other ways, and examination of the Common Council's act to authorize a subscription to the stock of the water company shows this. Because the voters set a limit of $10,000 on the amount of the subscription, the Council set the number of possible shares at 200 (Section 1). However, in order to meet the subscription, the Council authorized the issue of city bonds, with interest payable after 1852 and the principle due in 1877 (Section 2). To secure the final payment of the bonds, the shares were to be transferred to Miller, Lewis McKenzie and James McVeigh, or their survivors, and held in trust. All accrued dividends were to be invested in a sinking fund, applied to the redemption of the bonds and to the interest. The Council could also resolve at a later date to transfer the stock to other individuals (Section 3). Essentially Miller and the others were guaranteeing the eventual payment of the city's "I.O.U." which had been given to the water company in exchange for the shares of stock. This act was passed in Council on March 7, 1851.[49]

In his letter to Miller, Hallowell recounted how, at a subscription meeting held earlier that winter, his own willingness to subscribe beyond his financial means, inspired the "moneyed men" to generously subscribe as well.

> The effect was electrical. Thou wilt remember it. I, a comparatively poor man, going so far beyond the wealthy ones, seemed to give eclat to the subject. Phineas Janney doubled his description at once, and recommended to others: "Do thou like-wise" which many did.[50]

[49] Alexandria Library Lloyd House, "The Alexandria Water Company Record Book, 1854-1874."

[50] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 198.

Although the number of shares of stock and their value cited by Hallowell do not reflect the respective amounts found in the records of the company, in the letter he made it clear that his personal and earnest involvement in the subscription drive was an instrumental part in the initial success of the project. Robert Miller subscribed for five shares; in the year of his death, "The Alexandria-Water Company Record Book" shows that he held 81 shares, which was, at that time, one of the larger amounts held by an individual.

Miller chaired the first stockholders' meeting. held three days after the Common Council's actions. Here, the water company accepted the bonds offered by the city as payment for the 200 shares, Section 2 of the Act having been recited to the stock-holders assembled. Section 3 of the Act, detailing the stock transfer, was not presented for discussion. Miller, as chair, then named a committee of fourteen stockholders to select by ballot seven directors of the company. This was done forthwith; Hallowell, Miller and McVeigh were among the seven selected. Miller was one of two directors who had also been involved with the incorporation. Hallowell was appointed president, asking to serve without pay and for the privilege of selecting an engineer to direct the construction.

Because Hallowell had intelligently researched the preliminary aspects of the water works project, and because of his own scientific interest and background, he selected a man well recommended by other water companies, Frederick Erdman, who agreed to "superintend the whole work...performing all the duties of engineer..." In the letter, Hallowell reminded Miller how thankful the directors were to have obtained Erdman's expertise.[51] Indeed, because

[51] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 199.

> Water supply technology is site-specific, that is, even though the technology is generally known, each location is different in terms of elevation, source characteristics, capacity requirements, rainfall variations, and storage requirements. A municipality considering a water supply system had to have access to an engineer who was trained to apply the general technology to a specific situation.[52]

Apparently Erdman was very knowledgeable. He adjusted the basic construction plan as originally presented by Hallowell, saving the company many unnecessary expenses.

However, Erdman's proposal to imbed a portion of water pipe into the arch of a bridge, "owned" by the Turnpike Company, met with resistance from the company's president, Phineas Janney. Janney, who was also a major subscriber to the water company and a prominent Quaker, claimed the bridge would be ruined. Miller again helped to facilitate the project, with his perceptive recollection that the Turnpike Company had disowned any claim to the bridge's ownership when it had been previously "carried away by a freshet." At that time, the city had rebuilt the bridge. Hallowell approached the Mayor on this matter, and having gained the city's support, instructed the pipe contractor to surreptitiously imbed the pipes across the bridge, thus circumventing Janney. Janney soon became aware of the work on the bridge: yet he never confronted Hallowell or the directors. Hallowell devoted much of his letter to describing this "little incident." Its significance could be that it represented the only major construction complaint received by the water company, that Hallowell knew his friend would still be amused by the irony of the situation, that he was grateful for Miller's help in solving the problem, or in response to Miller's letter, Hallowell included an item that could underscore Miller's role in the project. Obviously Miller's regard for Hallowell was an important ingredient to the

[52] Anderson, "Hard Choices," p. 223.

autobiography; a copy of the letter was returned to Hallowell, probably after Miller's death by one of the sons or daughters-by-marriage, so that it could be included in the book. Hallowell chose to include it, probably as an indirect and more modest way of describing his own water company role. Hallowell added, following the letter, that found among the papers of "my valued friend" was an inscription, written in his own handwriting, which he had intended

> ...to be placed upon a table to be inserted in the banks of the reservoir at Mount Cameron, in pursuance of a plan that had long been on his mind, and which he wished to accomplish at an early day.[53]

This inscription was never placed on a monument by the reservoir, but rather, as Hallowell wished, on a Market Square hydrant. Miller had composed the following tribute to his friend:

TO
BENJAMIN HALLOWELL
First President of the Alexandria Water Company,
Whose Foresight Devised,
Whose Influence and Energy Completed
The Simple But Effectual Scheme
Of Supplying Alexandria With Pure Water,
This Monument is Erected,
By His Grateful Friends and Fellow-Citizens.[54]

In June of 1852, the pipes to the city had been laid and service to approximately 180 residences and businesses had been installed. As Eliza Miller remembered,

> The great excitement of 1852 was the introduction into the town of gas and water. Cousin Benjamin Hallowell was the leader in the water system and father was his staunch supporter. We had an upstairs porch at the back of the house and this was made into a bathroom. The letters written to Ben at West Town during this summer tell of the pleasure of

[53] Hallowell, Autobiography, p. 202.

[54] Ibid., p. 203.

> using the "rubber Hose" and how a neighbor's flower garden - we had none ourselves then - was watered with it.[55]

Pride in the success of the water system is evident in the annual reports made by Hallowell, as president, to the stockholders. His enthusiastic reports are an excellent source for information about the construction, installation, continued financing, and the future planning of the president and the board. It is also evident that the care and foresight taken by the company in the 1850s produced a water works system that, while it surpassed the city's immediate needs, would adequately meet future increased demand. Additional information concerning Miller can be found as well in the annual meeting records. For one, Miller was reelected each year until 1856 to serve on the board of directors. As a board member, he was specifically mentioned only once. This was at the 1855 annual meeting, when he moved that any use of the future earnings of the company for the extension of pipes or other improvements must be ordered by the stockholders, a committee of stockholders having conferred with the board. He made this motion following Hallowell's declaration of the company's first dividend. This action seems to suggest his concern that the stockholders maintain future control of the company.

In 1856 Hallowell resigned, and Miller became the president of the Alexandria Water Company. He apparently served in this capacity until the Civil War, when, like Alexandria, his position was taken over by "Federal forces." In reading the president's reports for 1857-1861, assuming that Miller composed them himself, we not only gain insight into his term of office, but we also gain a more distinct impression of him as an individual. According to the reports, many of the issues that concerned Hallowell were also important to Miller. The success of the fire

[55] Eliza Miller, Recollections, p. 5.

companies in containing and extinguishing fires, the adequate supply of water during droughts, the justification of the purchase of a steam engine to supplement the pumping, the maintenance of the reservoir, the pilfering of water by residents, the nuisance of a legal action against the company, and the funding, increased revenues and reduction of the company's debt were some of the topics discussed in his reports.

Knowing Miller's association with the Mount Vernon Cotton Factory, it is interesting to note from the reports how this enterprise benefited from the new water supply. In the 1859 report, he stated that pipes, one and one-half inches in diameter, had, in the last year (1858) been laid on North Washington Street. As part of this project, "supply pipe from the great main on Washington Street, at its intersection with Oronoco" had also been put down so as to supply both the factory, "with water in every story," and its steam engine.[56] However, by 1861 these pipes proved insufficient, and they were replaced. In the report for this year Miller justified the expenditure by noting that it

> ...was for the better supply of the Mount Vernon Cotton Factory, the pipes originally laid down for that establishment having proved too small to give it an adequate supply of water for the steam engine and the upper rooms of the building.[57]

Although some of the records of the water company show that pipe on North Washington Street was laid in 1851-1852, the discrepancy is incidental to the point that Miller's enterprise benefited greatly, not only from increases in the water supply, but also probably from his relationship to the water company. Preliminary analysis of the residences and buildings where water was first

[56] Report of the President, Alexandria Water Company, 1859, "The Alexandria Water Company," proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1851-1867 (Alexandria Library Lloyd House), p. 4.

[57] Report of the President, 1861, p. 18.

installed does in fact suggest that some supporters of the Alexandria Water Company were among those who received the initial benefits. As Goldfield suggested, improvements were usually made in the business district and merchant class neighborhoods.[58] Whatever the reason, this evidence emphasizes Miller's role as business leader/civic activist, the relationship between improving the water supply and the anticipated growth in manufacturing, and the respective economic benefit of all three to the community.

Like Hallowell, Miller seemed to be proud of his contribution to Alexandria through the water company. His obituary cited his presidency, while it did not mention his position with the cotton factory.[59] And while there are few indisputable facts, there is a good deal of interesting conjecture about Miller that can be derived from this public record. An example of this would be that, through their work together in establishing the water works, Miller and Hallowell's friendship was probably further strengthened, to the extent that the company itself benefited. On the one hand, Hallowell was the eloquent spokesman, explaining to his fellow citizens the need for clean, abundant water in Alexandria and detailing the advantages and practicality of his proposal. On the other hand, Miller was, as noted by Eliza, the "staunch supporter." He was also the facilitator, incorporating and assisting the project financially by securing the city's bonds, advising Hallowell and maneuvering for both the stockholders and Mount Vernon Cotton. For understanding Miller as a public figure, there are two images: one from an advertisement, the other from Hallowell's autobiography, which suggest the many

[58] For additional information survey "The Alexandria Water Company Record Book, 1854-1874"; Philip Erikson, "1000 Pipers" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1987); and David Goldfield, Urban Growth in The Age of Sectionalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), p. 150.

[59] Alexandria Gazette, 3/10/1874.

different aspects of the man. The marketing of the William Henry Harrison Log Cabin China and the story of Phineas Janney and the Turnpike Company bridge show not only his ability to capitalize on an event for the purpose of expediting sales, influencing an election, or completing an important construction project, but also reveals this competitiveness, his eye for detail and his creativity. The ad and the story are both "factual" images. The characteristics attributed to Miller are perhaps conjecture yet knowing details from the analysis of his upbringing, background and family life, our understanding of the man and his place in Alexandria history is now more realistic.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

> Robert H. Miller was a man of great intelligence. He had many warm and attached friends, and was a sincere friend. He was also public-spirited, and active in all that he thought would contribute to the welfare of our city. He never held back his means or his influence in the cause of Alexandria. His probity and honor were known and appreciated, and gave him a deserved influence.
>
> He was a man of the highest integrity and honorable feeling. When he gave his friendship it was with warmth and zeal. What he thought right that he did with his whole heart.[1]

This description of Miller from his obituary in the Alexandria Gazette, precisely underscores Miller's stature in the community. It also acknowledges and expresses appreciation for Miller's civic contribution and states definitively that Miller was a "public spirited" man. The obituary cites, in another paragraph, his most important accomplishments. Miller was known not only for his large and extensive "China-ware" business, but also for his service as president of both the Citizen's National Bank and the Alexandria Water Company. In fact, both organizations published "Tributes of Respect" in later editions of the Gazette. Each mourned the loss of a man with such sterling integrity.[2] Indeed, Eliza's extensive treatment of her memory of the installation of the waterworks and of her father's involvement with the bank confirm the importance of them, at least for her.

This study has examined two of Robert Miller's accomplishments, his successful business and his role in the establishment of the Water Company. Both of these roles are key

[1] Alexandria Gazette, 3/10/1874.

parts of Miller's longstanding legacy. His service to the Citizens National Bank, however, is legendary. This bank was organized in 1870 by a group of Alexandrians who had been connected with the former Bank of the Old Dominion. The Old Dominion was the only Virginia bank to "redeem its outstanding currency, dollar for dollar," at the end of the Civil War. This was due to the initiative of its cashier, William Lambert. When Federal troops entered Alexandria in May 1861, Lambert collected all the Bank's assets and documents, loaded them in a wagon, and drove them to a spot known only to him and Miller, then president of Old Dominion. "Lambert buried the papers and funds at that spot, and at the War's end he and Miller disinterred them."[3] Interestingly, when Eliza wrote of this incident in her reminiscences, she did not mention her father's part. Nor did the 1927 Gazette article on the history of the bank, which she included, relate Miller's role in this drama. The article did state that Lambert buried the money in a "hidden grave."[4] What Eliza pointedly stated, though, was that in 1871 the reputations of her father and Lambert were such that:

> When there was an effort to get subscriptions to the stock [of the Citizens National] - Mr. John B. Dangerfield said he would take $25,000 worth of the stock on condition that Robert H. Miller was made President and William H. Lambert cashier, which was done and each served to the end of his life.[5]

Another legendary incident which shows how well respected Miller was also concerns his activities during the Civil War. Evidently, when the Federal troops first occupied Alexandria,

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[2] Alexandria Gazette, 3/10/1874.

[3] "First and Citizens," Yesterdays Remembered (Alexandria, VA.: First and Citizens National Bank of Alexandria, 1964.)

[4] Eliza H. Miller, Personal Recollections of Eliza H. Miller, 1926 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House), pp. 22-24.

Miller "was chosen to represent the city in the sensitive negotiations."[6] Neither Eliza nor Warwick specifically wrote about this in their recollections, though Warwick did imply that on at least two occasions some intervention by a member of the Miller family with Federal authorities did occur. One occurred when the general in command ordered leading Alexandrians to ride a Union train bound for the front as a deterrent to Confederate guerrilla activity along the railroads. The other was when Alexandrians who had not taken the Federal oath of allegiance were ordered to the Confederate lines. Both times Frank Stabler, Robert's son-in-law, arranged through his friend, Montgomery Blair, the Federal Postmaster General, to have the orders countermanded.[7] While Stabler's efforts may have been made on behalf of Robert Miller, the end result, however, benefited many. It is also noteworthy that in the reminiscences of both Eliza and Warwick, there is a great deal of emphasis on the family's experiences during the Civil War. This would indicate that for both the writers and their intended audience, children, nieces and nephews, the period during the war proved to be emotional and dramatic. The material they include is very literary and evocative.

However, the purpose of this study has been to examine the longstanding legacy of Robert Miller, rather than the legends. To do this the examination and analysis has centered on the way he influenced the development of Alexandria. The concentration has been on his successful business and on his role in the establishment of the water company. I have also used

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[5] Ibid., p. 25.

[6] Phillip Terrie, "A Social History of the 500 Block, King Street in Alexandria, Virginia" (Alexandria Archaeology Manuscript, 1979), p. 25.

[7] Warwick P. Miller, Reminiscences of Warwick P. Miller of Alexandria, Virginia, 1896 (Alexandria: Alexandria Library Lloyd House, 1981), pp. 19-20.

documents and evidence which pertain to his personal life and his Quaker background in order to better comprehend his success and his commitment to the community. Combined, these three aspects have demonstrated that Miller's essential contributions were to maintain and to improve the economy of the city. A healthy, thriving economy was not only important to his and his family's well-being, but also to that of Alexandria. In his efforts to increase his china business, he expanded his trade westward and supported the necessary canal and railroad construction, so beneficial to every merchant. To enhance the appearance of the city and the public health, he used his influence and his financial expertise to launch the Alexandria Water Company. To live by the Quaker codes of behavior, he provided real estate opportunities for some of Alexandria's free blacks. In each example Miller profited personally, but then so did the city. While his life and career follow the chronology of the city's urban growth, it is the connections between the china business, the waterworks and the Quakerism, rather than the series of events, that shows the influence of Miller's leadership.

Perhaps by considering the tangible symbols of Miller's legacy, these connections are better understood. Plain, well weathered and simply worded headstones can still be found at the Queen Street site of the old Quaker burying ground. The name of one of Miller's nephews is carved on one. The reservoir of the Water Company is still located at the top of Shuter's Hill, near the Masonic Temple. In 1980, archeological excavation at a site in the "Hayti", a free-black neighborhood encouraged by Miller and his father, uncovered a fragment of the base of a whiteware plate (English. ca. 1830, Figure 6.C). On the bottom, encircled by a pattern of leaves, was the printed mark

[Manufactured [for]

Rob't H. Miller

Alexandria D.C.[8]

The enduring presence of the Quaker community, the abundance of Alexandria's water supply, and Miller's entrepreneurial ambitions are revealed in the symbols of the burying ground, the reservoir, and the excavated plate fragment. To expand upon the idea of the symbols, we can envision Miller, the determined merchant, stocking his shelves with the most fashionable glass and printed ceramics from Europe, with the thoroughly practical yelloware and stoneware for everyday use, and with items of his own design, like the Whig campaign creamer and the whiteware plate. At the same time, we see him doing all that he possibly can to promote this business, as a hardworking, serious and thoroughly intent Quaker should. He advertises; he supports community enterprise. He eventually invests in enterprises like the cotton factory and the railroad, both of which need an improved municipal water supply in order to operate efficiently. With the support of other business-men, friends and Quakers, waterworks construction begins. Upon completion, not only do a good number of citizens have access to clean water, but the city streets are cleaner, the buildings are better protected in the case of fire, and Alexandria's industry is more efficient.

Further analysis of the plate fragment underscores the connections between Robert Miller and Alexandria. On one level, there is part of a plate which was probably sold from Miller's King Street store. This particular plate, though, was manufactured for Miller, and was most likely designed according to his specifications. In instances such as these, the merchant

usually made more profit per piece with the sale of the item. Thus some of Miller's entrepreneurial talent is revealed. The markings on the bottom of the fragment also signify that Alexandria was at that time in the District of Columbia. This serves as a reminder that the city was hindered economically by belonging to that jurisdiction until retrocession came in 1846. In addition, this ceramic artifact, with Robert Miller's name on it, was uncovered from a site in one of Alexandria's first free-black neighborhoods, where Robert and his father had rented and had eventually sold houses to skilled free blacks. These property transactions reveal not only their business dealings, but also their Quaker spirit and beliefs.

However, for the 20th century, there are far more enduring and significant symbols of Robert Miller's legacy. With determination and a sense of purpose, Miller and other Alexandria leaders organized the Lyceum, chartered the Alexandria Canal, incorporated the Mt. Vernon Cotton Factory and established the Alexandria Water Company. Men like Miller were city builders. They initiated these institutions, enterprises, corporations and companies so that Alexandria could successfully compete with Baltimore and Richmond. Some achieved longterm success; they serve the community today in the same way as when they were established in the 19th century. The Lyceum, now preserved, still functions as a cultural center, and the Water Company has continued operation since its beginning in 1852.

The other institutions which Miller worked to establish have evolved into yet another kind of symbol, the symbol of the living, changing city. Today, driving south toward Alexandria along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the road follows the former route of the Canal. In places you see the vestiges of the actual waterway. The course of the old Canal

[8] Barbara H. Magid, Artifacts, Advertisements and Archaeology (Alexandria: City of Alexandria, 1985), p. 16.

eventually leads to the recently restored tide lock which is a landmark on the north waterfront; it serves as a focal point for a new museum and as a centerpiece for the surrounding park and recreation area. Another 20th-century Alexandria landmark is the former Mt. Vernon Cotton Factory building. No longer used for manufacturing, the structure has been renovated for residences, known as Cotton Mill Condominiums. Perhaps, though, the most enduring symbol of Robert Miller's legacy is the thriving commercial activity centered on King Street. While today's trade concentrates on tourists, the effect contributes greatly to the image of the "open thriving settings" so desired by city builders of the 19th century.

Robert Miller was a Quaker, guided by a belief that the Inner Light exists in all people. He belonged to a religious organization and a cultural community, the Friends, which provided him with much kinship and fellowship. And he was an entrepreneur who promoted the economic activity of Alexandria with both financial investment and public service. Through researching and analyzing his role in these various activities, a biographical study of Robert Miller has been developed. In turn, this biography has been used to demonstrate Miller's influence on Alexandria and to achieve a deeper understanding of and a better appreciation for the course of urban growth in 19th-century Alexandria.

Figure 1

From the Record of the Minutes of Alexandria Monthly Meeting, 1827.

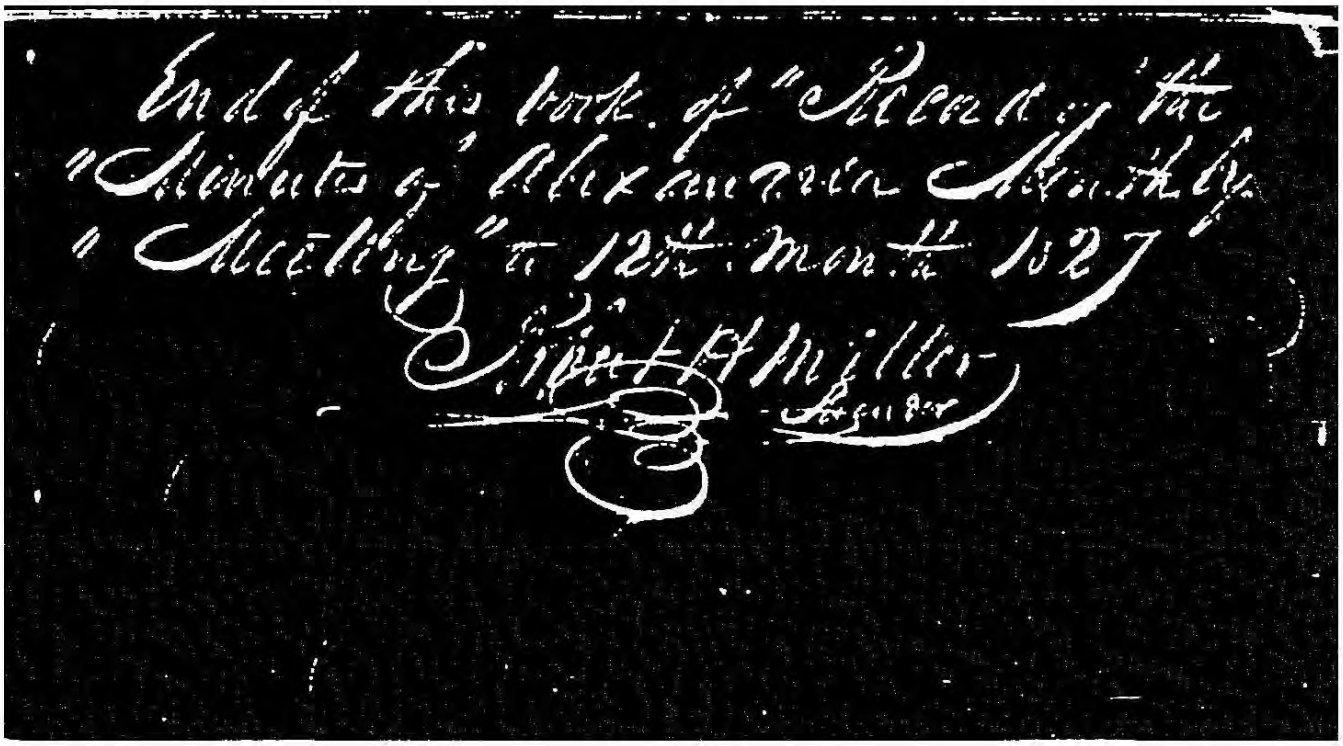


FIGURE 2

FALL SUPPLY

ROBERT H. MILLER has received
per ship Columbia, direct from Liverpool,
98 hhds, and crates of Earthenware
China and Glass - consisting in part of
Dinner services, blue, brown, green printed do, pearl
white and blue colored
Plates of all sizes, blue and brown printed
Ewers and basins and toilet set to do
Fire proof baking dishes, pitchers, tea pots, &
China tea sets, plain and gilt
China cups and saucers, plain and handled enamel and
white
Plain English glass tumblers
English large bowl pipes, 50 boxes each gross
By the next vessel from Liverpool, he will receive other large additions to his present excellent stock, and will be enabled to offer as handsome an assortment of goods in his line as is to be found in the country, and at prices equally as favorable, as can be had in any of the large cities north of us.

7mo 30

Figure 3

EARTHENWARE and CHINA

ROBERT H. MILLER

Has received, per ship Virginia, just arrived from Liverpool, a supply of
EARTHENWARE & CHINA. Viz:
Blue, brown, pink printed Dinner Services
Do do Plates, Cups, Saucers, &c.
Do do Ewers and Basins, &c.
China Teaware, &c.
Together with an excellent assortment of
Pressed, Plain and Cut Glassware
Pipes in boxes, 3 groce each
Window Glass, from 8 x 10 to 12 x 18
Black Porter Bottles
Furniture Knobs & Looking Glass Plates
N.B. 20 Groce Black Pint Porter Bottles, expected in a few days.

The Genius of Liberty, Winchester Republican, Sentinel of the Valley, and Political Spectator, will insert the above for 3 weeks, and charge R.H.M.

Figure 4

Ironstone or Fireproof Earthenware

RECEIVED per ship Columbia, twen
ty Crates Derbyshire Ironstone or
Fireproof Earthenware, consisting of
Round Baking dishes from 7 to 11 inches
Milk Bowls with and without lips
Ewers and Basins, and Chambers
Covered and uncovered Pickling and Preserving Jars
Fine Black and Brown Tea Pots, all sizes
Cullenders, Pitchers and Patty pans
Also on hand, Green Glass Pickling and Preserving Jars, for sale by

R.H. Miller

8thmo 4th

Figure 5

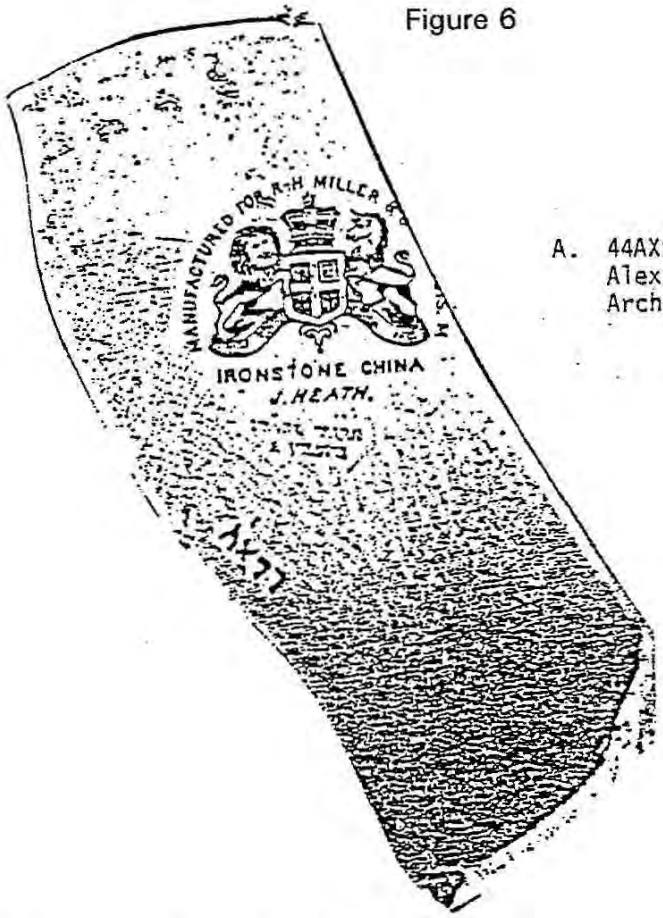
SHIN PLASTERS

THE subscriber will receive “Shin Plasters” in payment of debts or for goods, until the 10th day of October, and no longer - and will also exchange this description of currency for “Bank Paper” until that time, for a discount of five percent, and engage not to circulate them.

ROBERT H. MILLER

8mo 18

Figure 6



A. 44AX97
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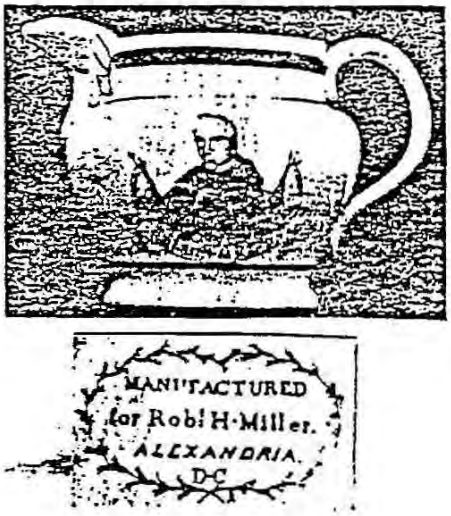
Archaeology

B. Antiques Magazine, June 1944



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