ARCHEOLOGY, CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

THUNDERBIRD ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES, INCORPORATED

126 EAST HIGH STREET WOODSTOCK, VIRGINIA 22664

> (540) 459-4017 (540) 459-4018

ARCHIVAL INVESTIGATIONS OF 101 WALES ALLEY, CITYOF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

By

Gwen J. Hurst

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Prepared for: James L. Brown and Associates 104 N. West Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Prepared by: Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc. 126 East High Street Woodstock, Virginia 22664

RESULTS OF THE ARCHIVAL INVESTIGATIONS

Introduction

The Wales Alley project area is currently an asphalt parking lot located on the back side of 104 South Union Street, or on the northwest corner of the junction of Wales Alley and "The Strand" (Figure 1). The Wales Alley property is bounded on the west by the Seaport Inn, a three and one-half story brick building fronting Union Street, and on the north by a recently constructed brick building attached to the back of the warehouse, and fronting King Street. On the east side of the parking lot is a roadway called the "The Strand" located in front of the Potomac River docks, and on the south lies Wales Alley. The project area is within the Alexandria Historic District placed on the National Register in 1966.

The Seaport Inn and Restaurant, on the west side of the project property, formerly known as "Fitzgeralds Warehouse," was owned and operated by Colonel John Fitzgerald in the late 18th century, and was known during the 19th century as "Irwins Warehouse" (Figure 2). Wales Alley was named for Andrew Wales, an 18th century Alexandria distiller and brewer (Raye 1997:9).

The City of Alexandria was separated from Fairfax County in 1791 to become part of the District of Columbia created as the seat of the new United States capitol. Alexandria was returned to the State of Virginia in 1846 and was renamed Alexandria County. The parent counties of Alexandria were formed from the early colonial District of Chicacoan: Northumberland County (1645-1651), Lancaster County (1651-1635), Westmoreland County (1653-1664), Stafford County (1664-1731), Prince William County 1731-1742), and Fairfax County 1742-1791). Earlier documents and records pertaining to the City of Alexandria and its early development are found in the counties of Stafford, Prince William, and Fairfax.

The town of Alexandria is located on sixty acres of a 6,000 acre Virginia Land Grant to Robert Howson (Howsing) of Stafford County obtained in 1669 for the transportation of 120 persons and ten Negroes into the Colony (Virginia Land Grants 6:262). Shortly after receiving the land grant, Robert Howsing assigned the grant to John Alexander on 13 November 1669 for 6,000# tobacco (Prince William County, Virginia Land Causes 1789-1793). John Alexander died in 1677 leaving all of the estate, except for 700 acres, to his two sons, Robert and Philip Alexander (Stafford County, Virginia Record Book 1690:193a-194). The Wales Alley project area at that time was underwater, and cannot correctly be identified as located on part of the Howsing patent.

In 1730, an Act for amending the Staple of Tobacco, and for preventing Frauds in his Majesty's customs, by the exportation of "bad and trash tobacco" was passed by the Virginia Assembly in May. Tobacco inspection warehouses were ordered to be established at various waterfront locations throughout the Virginia colony. On the Potomac River, tobacco inspection warehouses were ordered to be established: "at Qantico [sic], upon Robert Brent's land; and great Hunting Creek, upon Broadwater's land, in Prince William County, under one inspection from and after the 1st day of August 1731 (Hening 1820:268).

A further Act of the Virginia Assembly for erecting a town at Hunting Creek Warehouse in the county of Fairfax on the Potomac River, on sixty acres of lands owned by Philip Alexander, John Alexander, and Hugh West was passed in 1748/49 (Winfree 1971:443-446). A Plan of Alexandria now Belhaven surveyed by John West in 1749 (Figure 3).

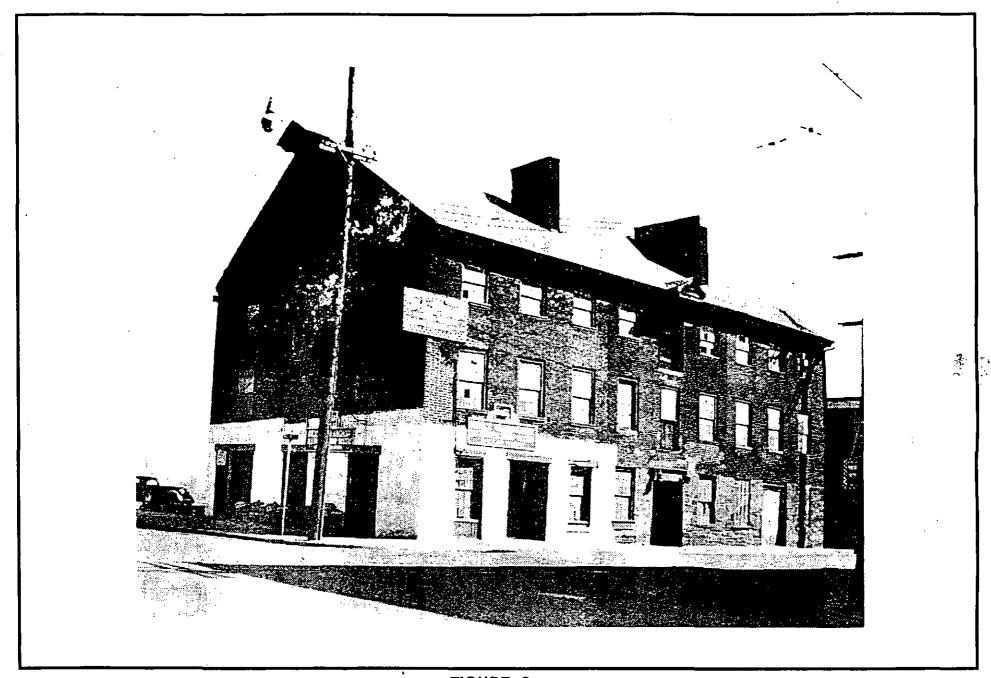


FIGURE 2
Colonel John Fitzgerald's Warehouse ca. 1789, fronting Union Street
Photographed ca. 1946 (Shephard and Cressey 1983)

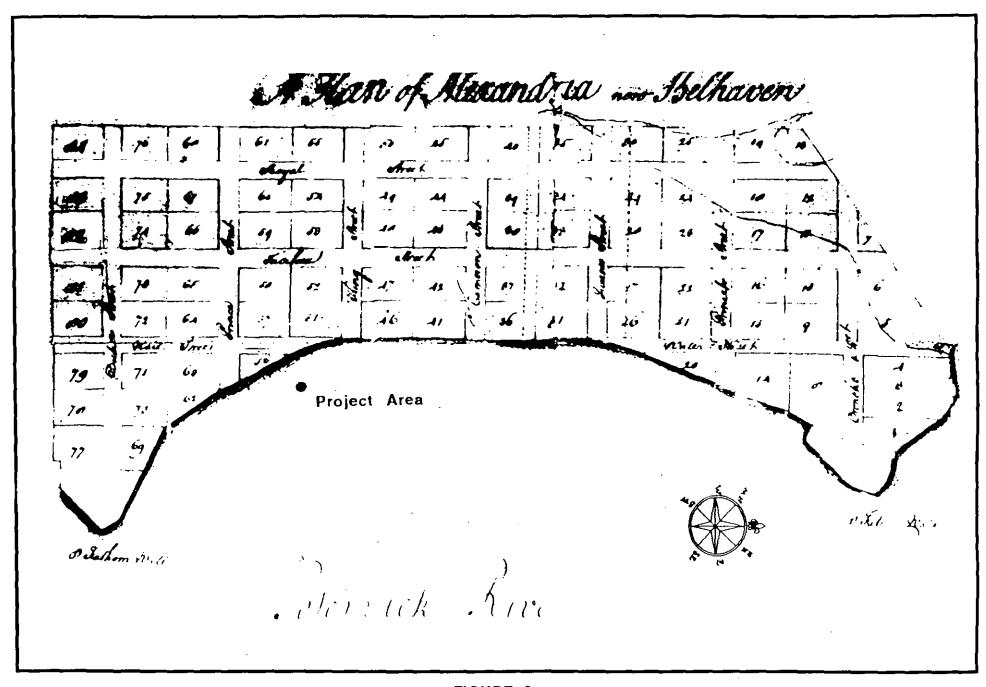


FIGURE 3
"A Plan of Alexandria now Belhaven" in 1749 Showing the Project Area Located in the Potomac River (Jno. West 1749)

shows the Alexandria waterfront as undeveloped, and the project area, south of the end of King Street, was underwater. By 1770, Alexandria had become the largest town along the Potomac River (Preisser 1981:283).

Colonel John Fitzgerald's Warehouse

A history of John Fitzgeralds Warehouse and the Seaport Inn claims that Fitzgerald's Warehouse was built prior to 1765 by John Patterson (Moore ND). Patterson's widow, Susanna Patterson, deeded the property to John Fitzgerald and Valentine Peers in 1778.

Two deeds to John Fitzgerald and his partner, Valentine Peers, were recorded in the Fairfax County, Virginia records. The first deed is recorded in Deed Book D4 (pages 196-198). This is a deed from Susanna Patterson to John Fitzgerald and Valentine Peers dated 25 April 1778 for Lots 51 and 52 in Alexandria. Lots 51 and 52 are located on the west side of Union Street, across from the project area (Figure 4). The project area located on the east side of Union Street, and south of King Street, is shown as underwater, or part of the Potomac River in 1763. Under an Act of the Virginia Assembly in May 1782, this portion of Union Street was filled in and extended to the northern and southern limits of the town of Alexandria (Hening 1823:44-45).

The second deed to John Fitzgerald and Valentine Peers, which appears to include the current project area, was conveyed from the Trustees of Alexandria and recorded in the index to the Fairfax County, Virginia, Deed Book N for the years of 1778-1783. Fairfax County, Virginia Deed Book N is missing and the deed could not be examined.

In 1789 the project area, jointly owned by John Fitzgerald and Valentine Peers, was surveyed and divided into four parcels between John Fitzgerald of Alexandria, and Valentine Peers of Portobaco, Maryland (Figure 5). John Fitzgerald released and confirmed to Valentine Peers one-half the parcel of ground between Water and Union Streets, located on the south side of the alley (Wales Alley), and also a parcel of land between Union Street and the Potomac River. Valentine Peers released the parcel between Water and Union Streets from King Street to the alley and the parcel between Union Street and the Potomac River to John Fitzgerald. Included in the partition released to John Fitzgerald was the:

"sole right and property in and to the front and water of the said river from a parallel line with King Street fifty feet south for the purpose of building a pier into the said river and from the South side of said Pier thirty feet being to the center of a Dock of sixty feet wide to be forever kept open and unimproved by the said John Fitzgerald"

for the common and joint use of John Fitzgerald and Valentine Peers. The project "property" at this time was the southern portion of the pier, and the northern portion of the 60 foot wide "Dock" extending into the "Potomack" River. The western section of Wales Alley, as it existed then, is shown as a "Street 30 feet wide" (sic; 30 feet long) (Fairfax County, Virginia Deeds Y1:85-88).

Valentine Peers conveyed his interest in his parcel of land on the south side of Wales Alley in 1793 to Philip Richard Fendall for £800. Peer's property is described as south of the "30 foot alley," laid out as the dividing line between himself and John Fitzgerald for their mutual use and benefit (Fairfax County, Virginia Deeds W1:253-258). This indicates that the project area was still an extant dock and pier site in 1793.

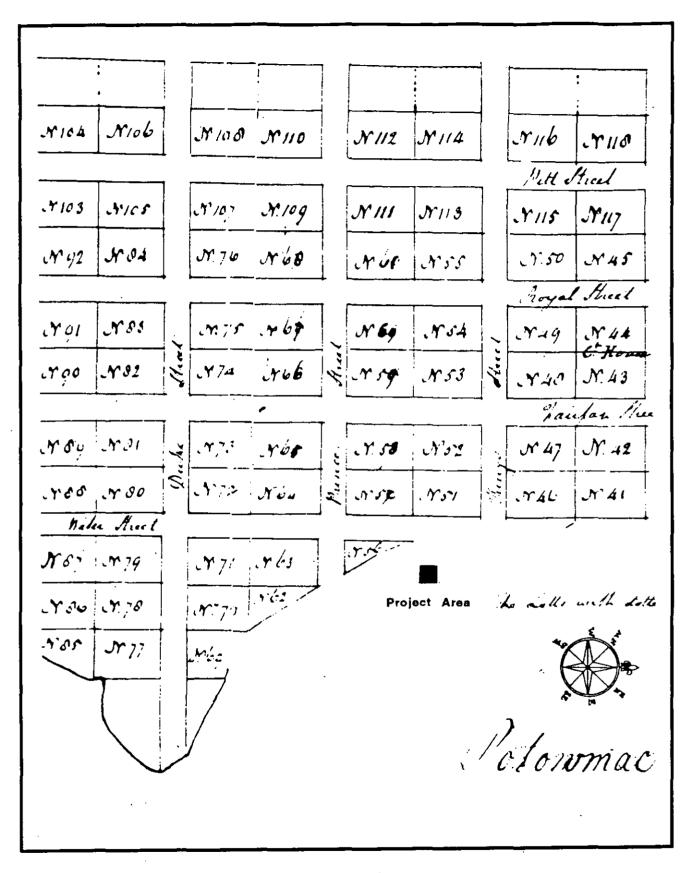


FIGURE 4
Alexandria Town Lots, 1763, Showing the Project Area Under Water and East of Lots No. 51 and 52 (George West 1763)

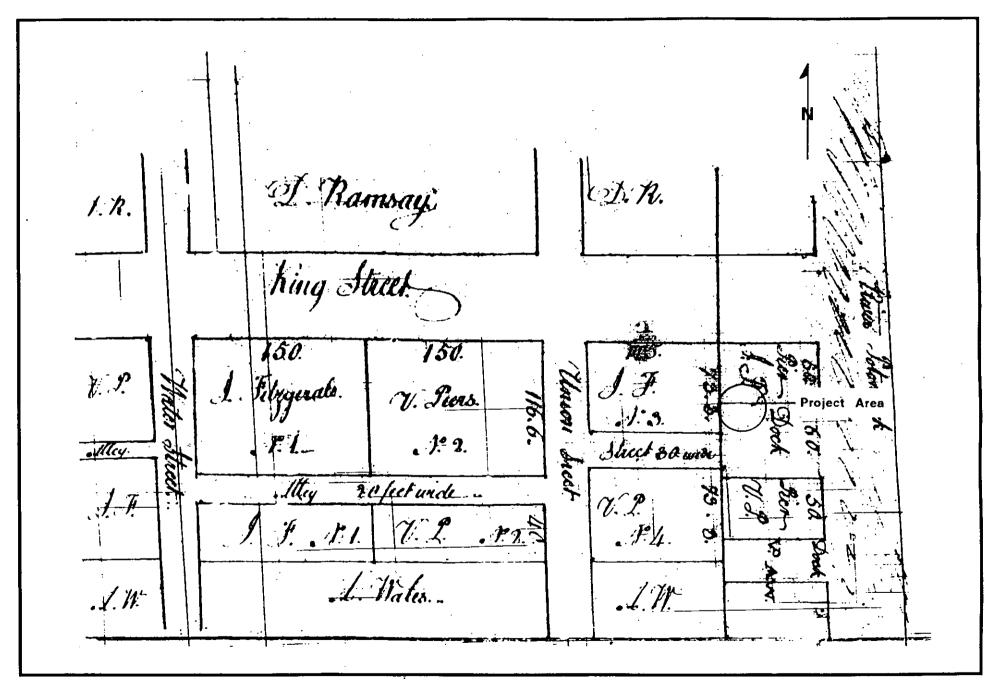


FIGURE 5
Fitzgerald and Peers Partition, 1789, Showing the Project Area
Occupied by a Pier and a Dock (Fairfax County, Virginia Deeds Y1:85)

John Fitzgerald, an Irish immigrant, was a partner in the wheat export business with Valentine Peers, and appears in the Alexandria Gazette advertisements as an importer of European goods (Miller 1991:139). During the Revolutionary War, Fitzgerald served as an Aide-de-Camp to General Washington from 1776 until he was wounded at the Battle of Monmouth on 28 June 1778, and until he resigned in July 1778 (Gwathmey 1797:275).

In public office, John Fitzgerald took an oath in 1785 for the position of the notary "publick" for the town of Alexandria and for the District of Columbia. In 1789 he was sworn in as the magistrate, or mayor, of Alexandria, however he was disqualified the same year from this position, possibly because he was not a U.S. citizen. Between the years of 1786 through 1798, he appears as a Justice of the Peace for Alexandria (Fairfax County, Virginia Orders 1783-1788; Fairfax County, Virginia Minute Books 1787, 1797-1798).

The Alexandria City personal property tax list for 1787 shows Colonel John Fitzgerald taxed one poll for himself, paying a poll for Jno. S. OKelly [sic], and for fourteen slaves, four houses, two head of cattle, and a two wheeled riding chair (Summers 1787:2; Schreiner-Yantis and Love 1987:71). In the Alexandria City Directory for 1791, John Fitzgerald is listed as a "Naval officer" and the owner of various properties within the city (Tollichet 1986:9).

In late 1798, or early 1799, John Fitzgerald was appointed the Customs Collector for the Port of Alexandria with Robert Townsend Hooe being his security, or bondsman, for the sum of \$10,000. John Fitzgerald, and his wife Jane, executed a deed of trust on 16 January 1799 to Robert Hooe to secure Hooe against fiscal liability "either as security for the Collector's post, or as co-signer of notes" using the project property: "located east of Union and south of King Street" including the "Pier formed and constructed by Fitzgerald...adjoining to the front of his wharf" as Hooe's security from possible liability (Alexandria, Virginia Hustings Court Deeds M:40-46). A *Plan of the Town of Alexandria* surveyed by George Gilpin (Figure 6) shows the project area in 1798 as a dock indented on the Alexandria shoreline.

John Fitzgerald died on 3 December 1799 (Gwathmey 1797:275). His will, written on 26 November 1799, was probated in the Fairfax County court on 16 December 1799 and authorized his executors to sell such part of his real estate to discharge all his just debts. The remainder of his estate, real and personal, was left to be equally divided between his children Elizabeth, Frances, Jane, John Digges, William Atwood, and George Richard Fitzgerald. "Not knowing what may be the Situation of my Estate when Some claims against it are Satisfied I cannot direct a specific provision for my Loving wife Jane, Least by such provision, I should her Injustice. I am therefore Constrained to Leave her to that provision which the Laws of the County provide" (Fairfax County, Virginia Wills H1:56-58). The estate of John Fitzgerald was not settled until 1826 (Fairfax County, Virginia Wills O:178-184).

Accounts for the estate of John Fitzgerald show that he was the owner of the schooner *Eliza*. and the owner of a distillery for which he was paying ground rent of £131.18.0 per year. Schooner *Eliza* was sold in March 1801. Account debits also include annual payments of £19.15.0 for the "rent of water Lott" in 1800 and 1801, indicating that the waterfront had become vested in the trustees of the town of Alexandria. Expenditures for the warehouse dated 11 February 1799 through 12 December 1799 (sic) were for: the cartage of books to the warehouse; a locksmith bill for mending the warehouse locks and one new key, and in December, "for moving sundries from red warehouse to place of sale." A debit entry for 15 May 1799 shows a payment to Ephraim Mills "for carrying sundry loads of earth to support the corner of the brick warehouse the tide having made the

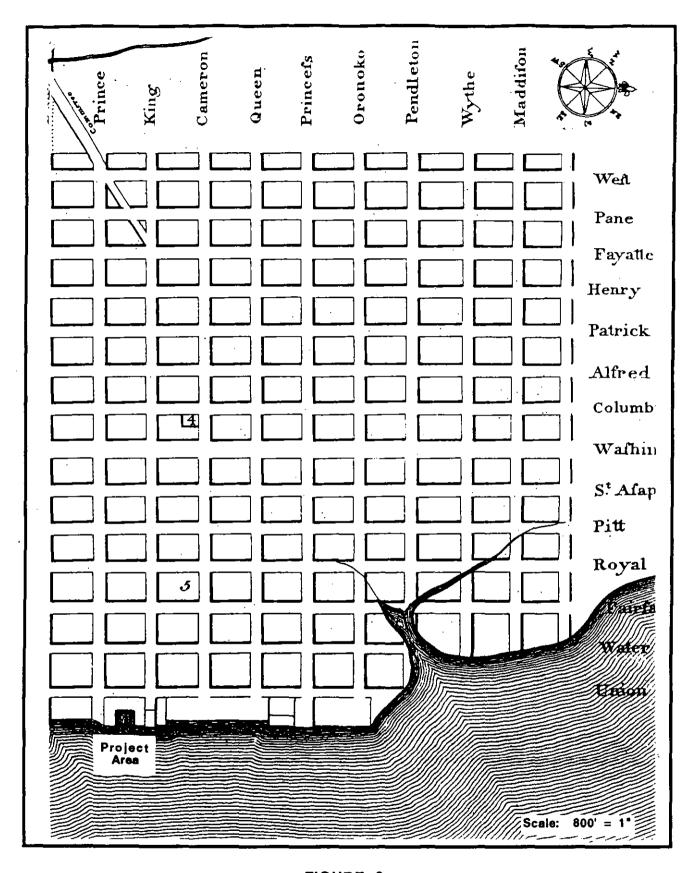


FIGURE 6
Plan of the Town of Alexandria, 1798, Showing the Project Area Location as a
Waterfront Dock (Gilpin 1798)

way therein." Credits are shown for the amount of £66.3.1 1/2 from John and James Tucker "for rent of part of the warehouse" in October 1799, and \$100.00 from Donald McDougall for six months rent of the sail loft in 1801 (Fairfax County, Virginia Wills I:49-50, 109, 111, 331, 332).

Colonel Fitzgerald's Warehouse was advertised in the Alexandria Gazette on 3 August 1801 to be sold: "on Monday, 17 August next, if fair, if not the next fair day, on the premises." Buildings on the property and appurtenances were described in the advertisement as:

"A Water Lot commonly called Fitzgerald's Wharf, lying upon the south side of King Street and east side of Union Street, and bounded by an alley of 30 feet in width, on the south from Union Street to the water. On this piece of ground are erected three Brick Warehouses, 24 feet 4 inches in front, 42 feet deep and three stories high each - Also, a SAIL LOFT above the upper story 73 feet in length and 42 feet wide upon the floor - all under one roof. Adjoining and on the east side of this house, is a piece of ground, unimproved the whole length of the house, 55 feet deep, terminating on a 25 feet alley, laid out upon the front of the wharf. From the front of the wharf is a pier extended into the river 100 feet by 60 in breadth. Appertaining to the pier is a dock 35 feet side on the one side and another 28 feet on the other side.

This sale is made for the purpose of ratifying certain sums of money which have been demanded of Robt. T. Hooe as security of Col. Fitzgerald, by the United States and the Bank of Alexandria" (Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer 1801:4.1).

The warehouse, wharf and pier, were purchased at the auction, actually held almost a year later, on 19 June 1802, by Thomas Irwin and John Dunlap (Alexandria County, Virginia Circuit Court Deeds C:73-79).

A deed executed on 20 January 1808 from James Dunlap of Casher County, South Carolina, to Thomas Irwin of Alexandria, D.C., conveyed one-fourth interest of John Dunlap's partnership in the Warehouse and wharf, to Thomas Irwin for \$1,500.00 (Alexandria County, Virginia Corporate Court Deeds O:491-494). The remaining interest of Samuel Dunlap, the other devisee and heir of John Dunlap, was conveyed by Charles Catlett, trustee of Samuel Dunlap, 7 July 1813 to Thomas Irwin (Alexandria County, Virginia, Corporate Court Deeds O:491-494; Alexandria County, Virginia Circuit Court Deeds Y2:313). The will of John Dunlap was not located in the Alexandria County Court Records.

Thomas Irwin died in 1827 leaving his entire estate, both real and personal, subject to the dower of his wife, to be divided equally between his children when his youngest son, William H. Irwin arrived at the age of 21 (Alexandria County, Virginia, Wills 3:269). The real property of Thomas Irwin was partitioned between his seven children in 1835. The Warehouse was divided into six sections with the receipts and income from the wharf and pier to be shared equally. The project property, then an open dock, adjoined the east side of the warehouse, and that section of the warehouse was allocated to Ann Carey of Baltimore, Maryland (Alexandria County, Virginia Circuit Court Deeds Y2:305-331). Pages 323 and 324 of this deed, apparently the plat maps of the divisions, are missing from this deed.

An undated map titled a Plan of Alexandria Showing End of Alexandria Canal thought to have been surveyed in 1850, appears to date before 1850, prior to the establishment of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad (Figure 7). "Irwin's Wharf" is shown on this map on the Alexandria waterfront in front of Fitzgerald's Warehouse. The waterfront to the south and east of Fitzgerald's Warehouse has been filled in, and the Wales Alley project area had apparently become real estate.

An agreement recorded in 1852 between Thomas Irwin, James Carey, Thomas J. Carey, and Mary Irwin, to George O. Dixon and John A. Dixon, permitted George and John Dixon to "keep open windows [install windows] on the east side of their warehouse abutting on the said wharf lot" (Alexandria County, Virginia Corporate Court Deeds N3:164-165). This agreement indicates that the warehouse was a rental unit in 1852.

C.M. Hopkin's maps of the City of Alexandria in 1877 is the first series of maps showing buildings and structures on the city lots in detail. The current project area in 1877 is shown as a brick building adjoining the south side of a brick building occupied by J. Schneider; both brick buildings having been added on to the east side of Fitzgerald's Warehouse (Figure 8). Fitzgerald's Warehouse is shown as owned by William Irwin in 1877. Justus Schneider is listed in Chataigne's 1876-77 city directory as a restaurant operator (Chataigne 1876-77:135).

Ann Carey, of Baltimore, Maryland, died intestate leaving her sons, James and Thomas Carey as her sole heirs at law. Ann Carey and her husband, James Carey, had acquired other interests in the warehouse from her brother William Irwin in 1847; from her brother James Irwin in 1850, and by the wills of her sisters Mary Irwin and Hannah Wilson in 1872 and 1875. James Carey of Baltimore, son of James and Ann Carey, conveyed his interest in the warehouse to his sons, James Carey, Jr. and Thomas Carey on 25 May 1885. The Carey interests in the warehouse included the "center warehouse" located on the alley, the warehouse on the north side of the alley, the wharf property and pier on the east side of the warehouse, and a "open space to the south adjoining" (Alexandria County, Virginia Corporate Court Wills 1C:19-20).

Additional details shown on Sanborn's Fire Insurance maps for 1885 and 1891 show the brick building on the project area, separated from the building to the north, by what is identified on later maps as a storage shed (Figures 9 and 10). Sanborn Map "Keys" to the building structure indicate that it is a two story brick building with a slate roof. The Sanborn maps show that the building was utilized between 1885 and 1907 by J. Dreyfus [sic] as a "Junk and Rags Warehouse." Julius Dreifus & Co. [sic] is listed in Chataigne's city directory for 1895 (page 88) as a junk dealer located at "4 South Wharf."

No changes are shown on the Sanborn maps in 1907 and 1912 except that the use of the building on the project area has been changed from "Junk and Rags" to "2nd Hand St." (Figures 11 and 12). The building is shown as occupied by J. Dreifus and Sons, Junk Dealers (Richmond 1907:280). Between 1921 and 1941, the building is shown as a two story "Vacant" building (Figures 13 and 14). In 1958, the project area is shown as a vacant lot. The attached brick building on the north side of the project area has also been removed, and Fitzgerald's original warehouse is the only structure remaining on this block in 1958 (Figure 15).

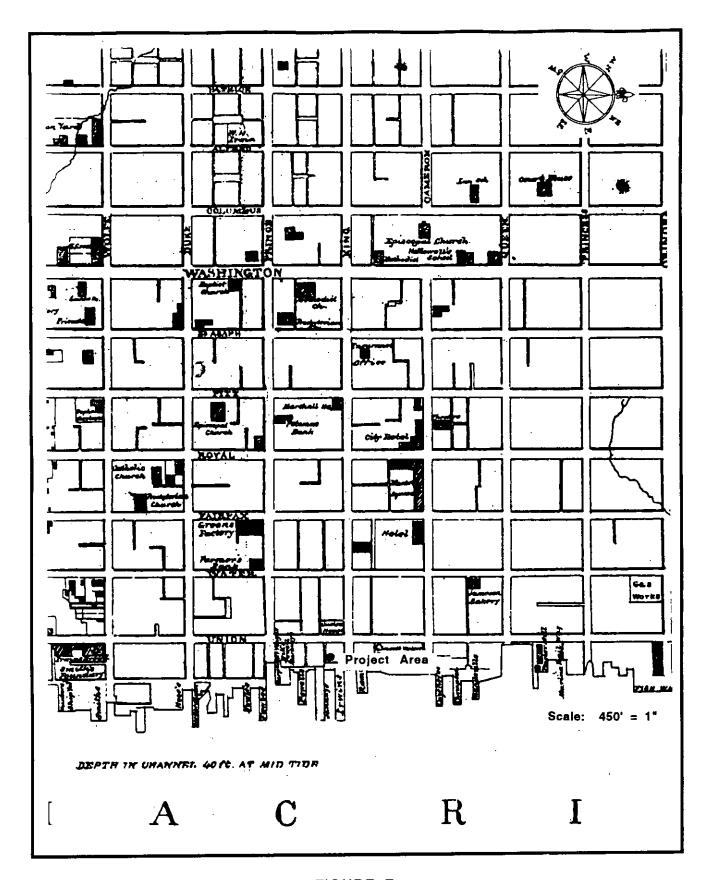


FIGURE 7
Plan of Alexandria, 185?, Showing the Project Area as Real Estate Property
(Cartographer unknown)

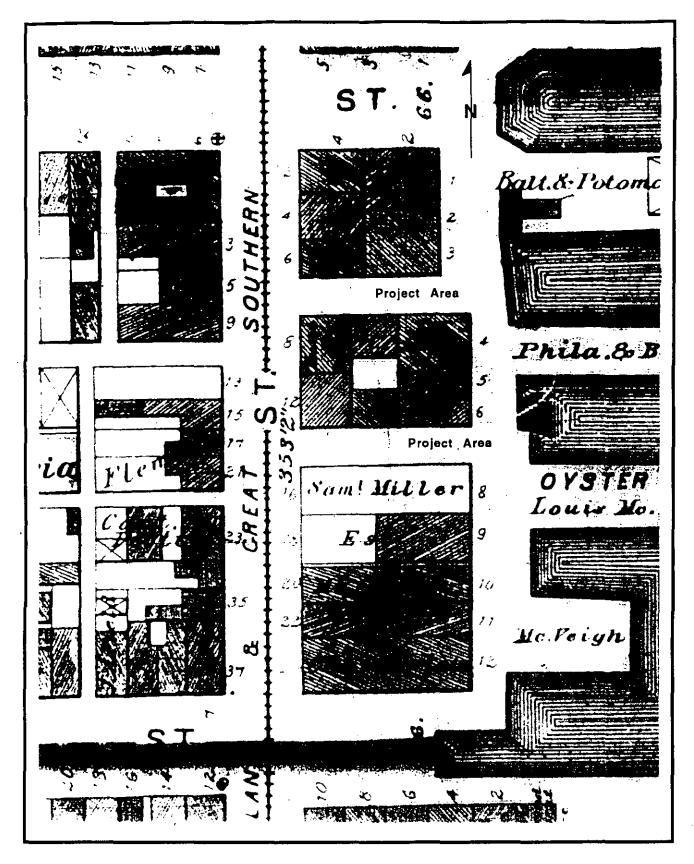


FIGURE 8
1877 Map Showing A Brick Building on the Project Area
(Hopkins 1877)

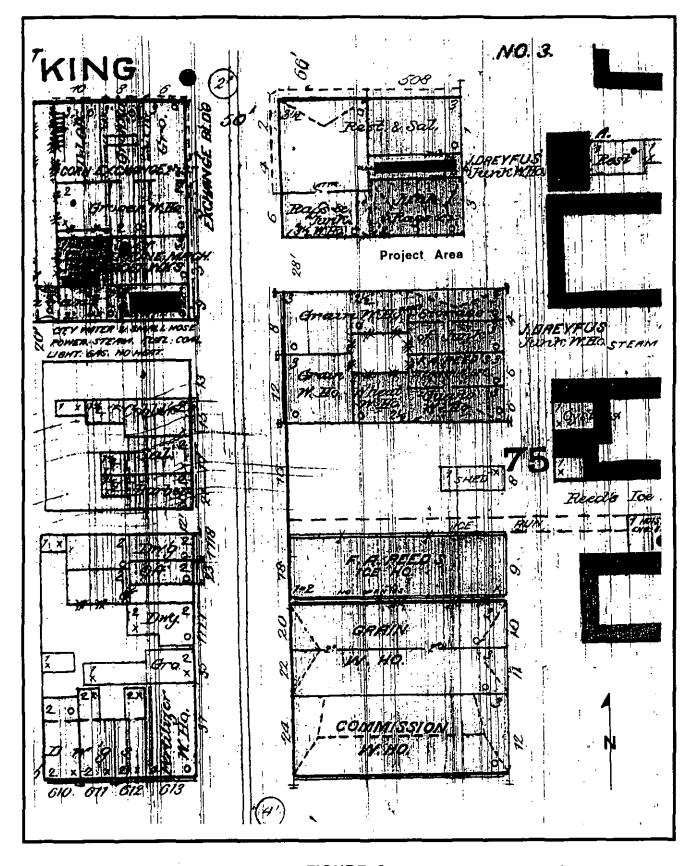


FIGURE 9
Sanborn's 1885 Map Showing a Two-Story Brick Building With A Slate Roof on the Project Area (Sanborn 1885)

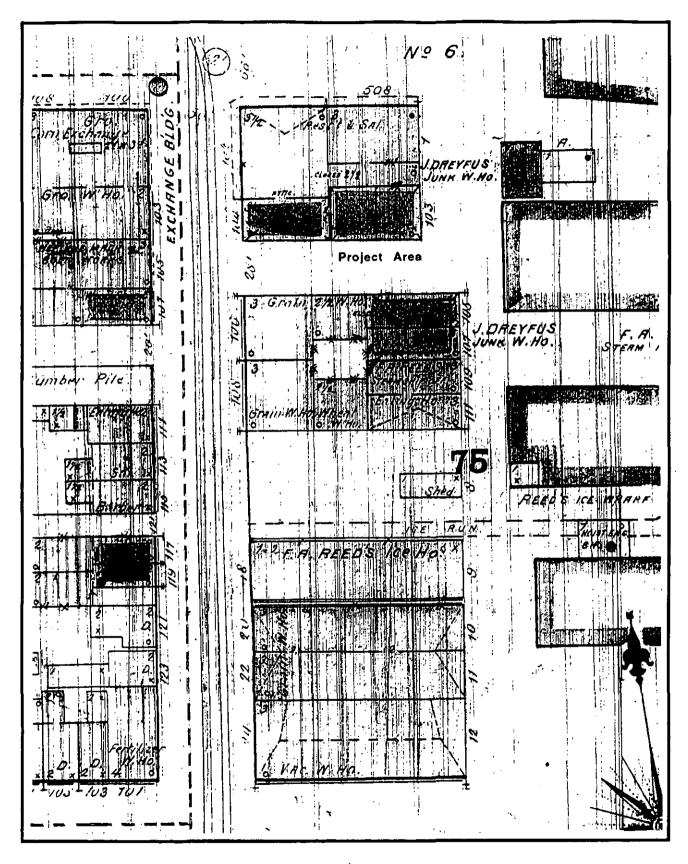


FIGURE 10
Sanborn's 1891 Map Showing J. Dreyfus Junk Warehouse
Located on the Project Area (Sanborn 1891)

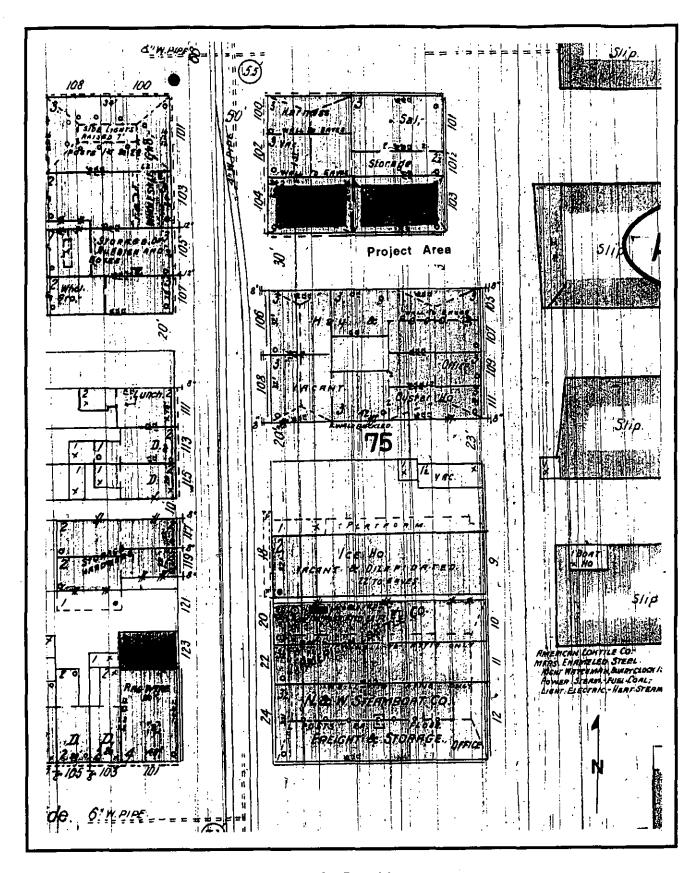


FIGURE 11
Sanborn's 1907 Map Showing the Building on the Project Area as a Junk Warehouse (Sanborn 1907)

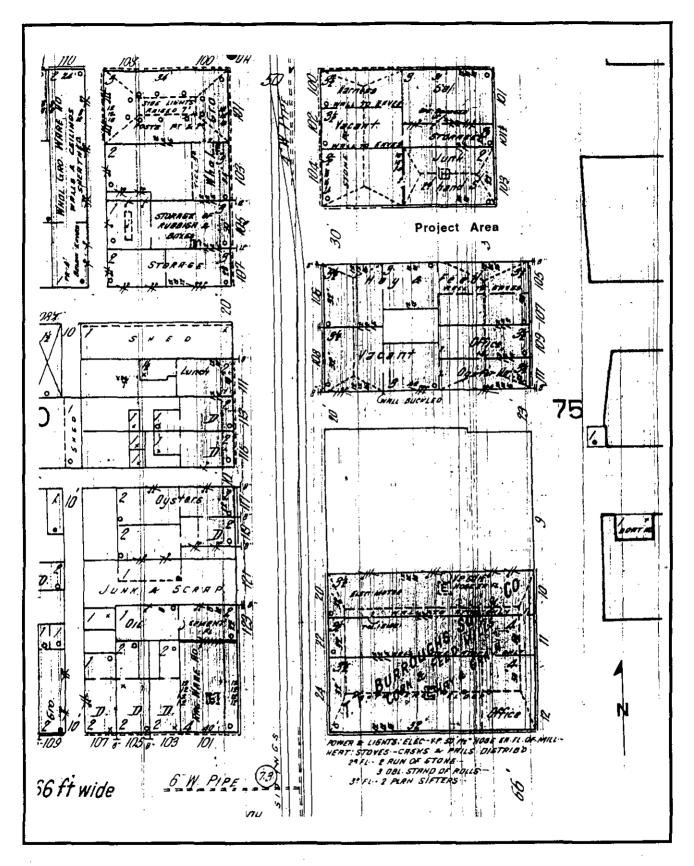


FIGURE 12
Sanborn's 1912 Map Showing the Building on the Project Area as a Junk and Second Hand Store (Sanborn 1912)

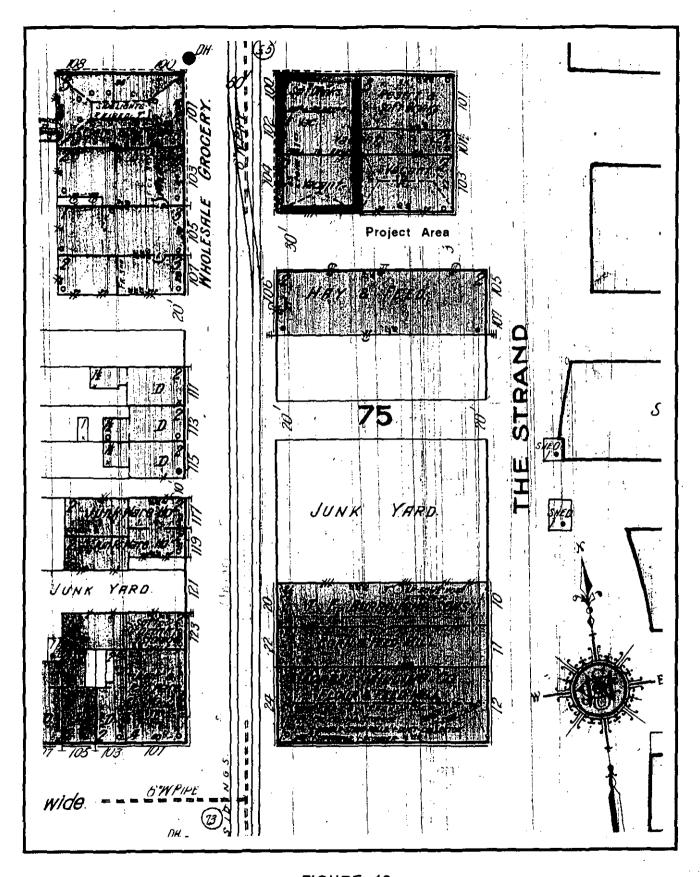


FIGURE 13
Sanborn's 1921 Map Showing the Building on the Project Area as Vacant (Sanborn 1921)

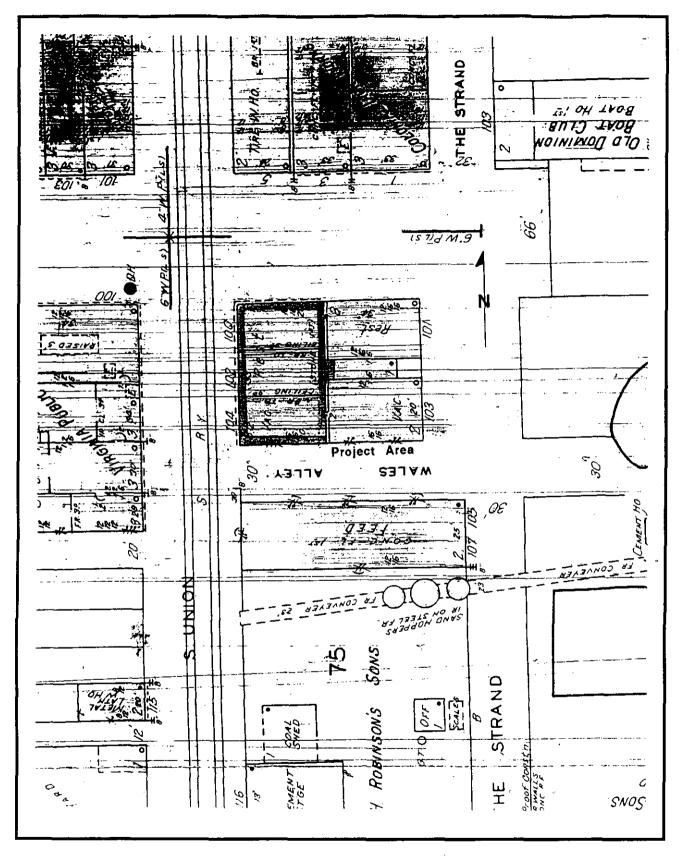


FIGURE 14
Sanborn's 1941 Map Showing the Building on the Project Area as Vacant (Sanborn 1941)

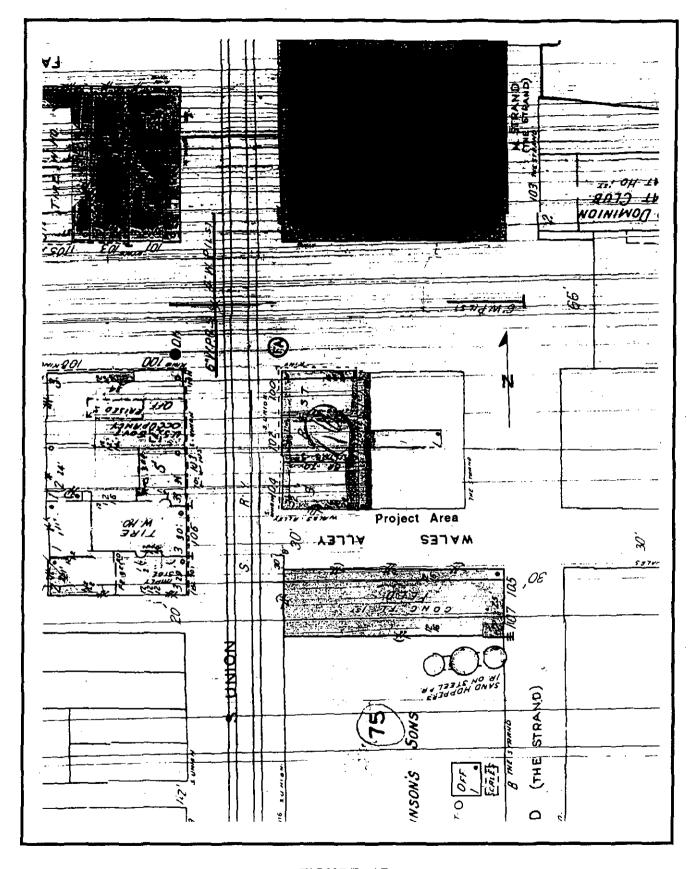


FIGURE 15
Sanborn's 1958 Map Showing the Project Area as a Vacant Lot (Sanborn 1958)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An examination of historic maps and deeds indicates that until 1782, when the Virginia Assembly authorized extensive filling along Union Street, the project area was underwater. By 1789, the project area contained a portion of a pier and a dock which were still extant in 1793. John Fitzgerald was the owner of the property at this time. A 1798 map of the area shows the project area as a dock located along the Alexandria shoreline. After Fitzgerald's death in 1799, the property was sold. An 1801 advertisement for the sale delineates three warehouses, a sail loft as well as a wharf, pier and dock. The project area still consisted of a dock at the time of the sale.

In 1802, Thomas Irwin and John Dunlap purchase the property containing the project area. In 1808, Dunlap conveys one fourth of his interest in the property to Thomas Irwin and Irwin obtained the remaining portion of Dunlap's interest in 1813. In 1827, Irwin died and his property was partitioned between his seven children in 1835. The project area was still an open dock at this time.

By the time an 1850 map was prepared, the project area had been filled in and had become suitable for building construction. In 1877, two brick buildings, which are attached to Fitzgerald's warehouse, are shown within the project area. No occupant of the building on the project area is identified in 1877.

Fire insurance maps from 1885 and 1891 show the Schneider building as separated from the warehouse by a storage shed. The building on the project area is a two-story brick structure with a slate roof. Between 1885 and 1907, the building was utilized by J. Dreyfus as a junk and rags warehouse. In 1912, the building is still occuped by Dreyfus, however, the use has changed to a second hand store.

By 1921, the building is vacant and by 1958, it has been demolished.

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