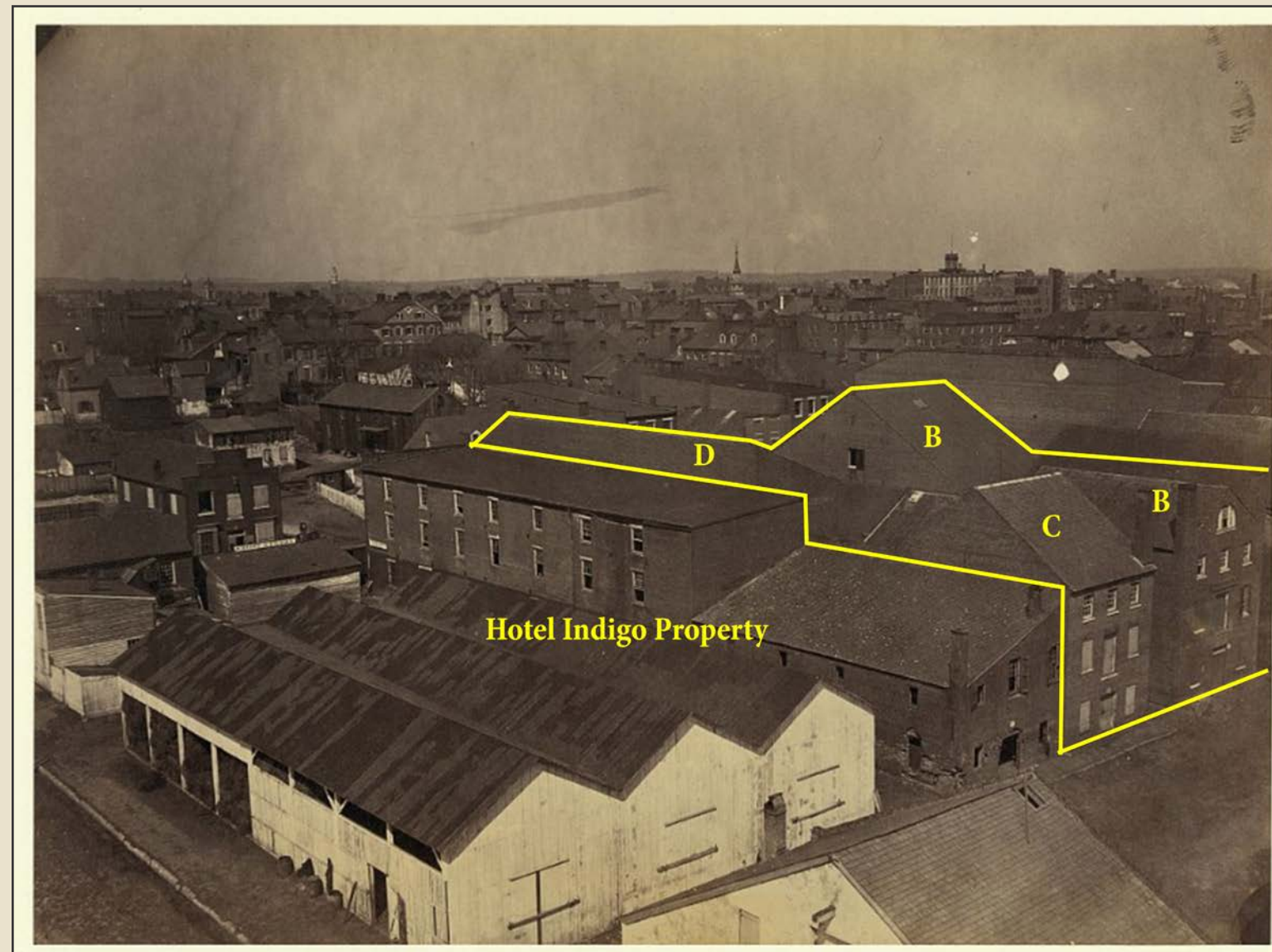


# INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE STRAND

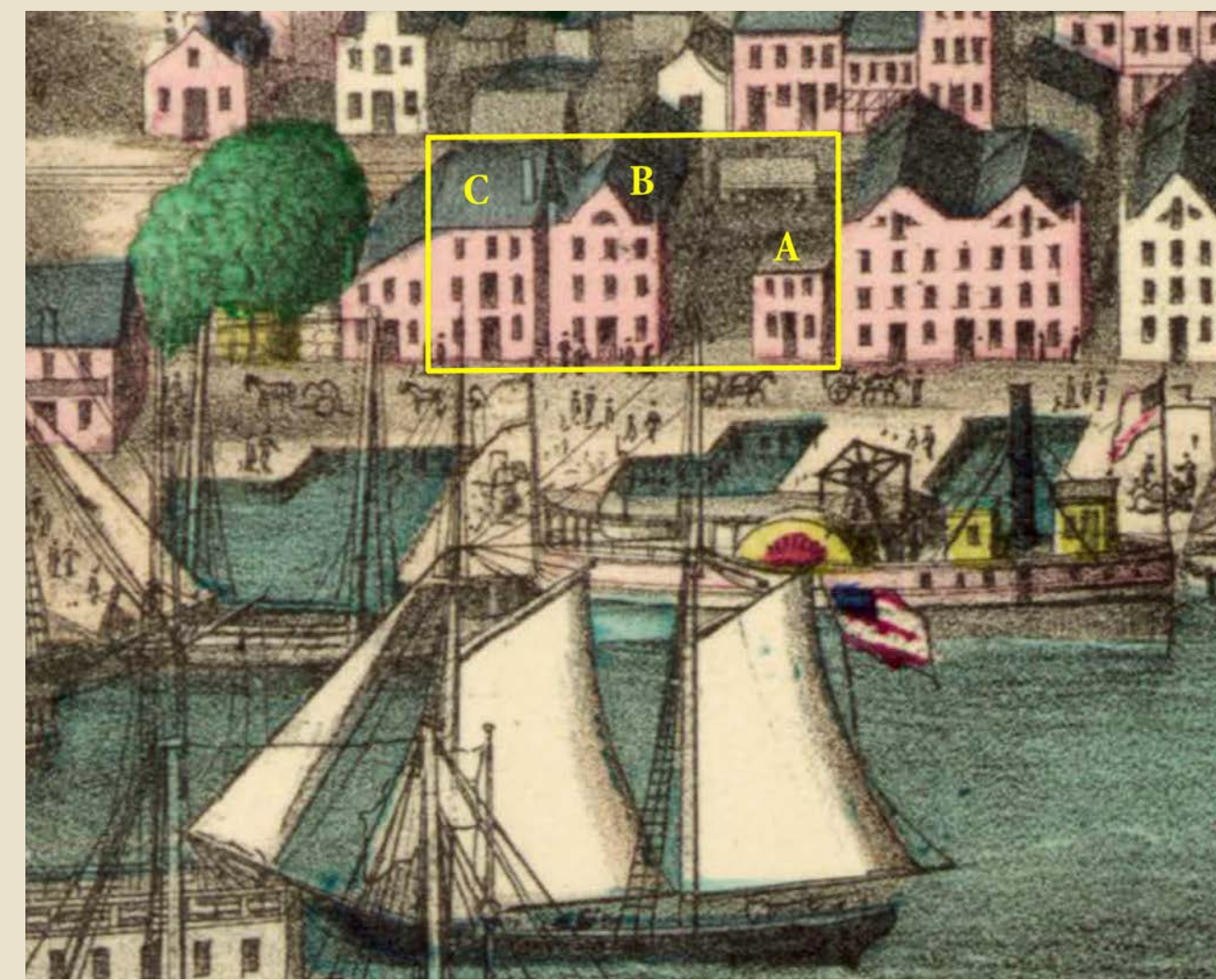
During the 19th century, numerous entrepreneurs gradually improved the lots and expanded the warehouses and wharves associated with the 200 block of the Strand. Josiah Davis owned many properties along Alexandria's waterfront and bought property at present-day 211 Strand Street specifically to open a plaster mill in 1822, which he operated until 1875, except during the Civil War. His warehouse contained a steam engine, a boiler, and machinery for grinding plaster. He was also involved in ship chandlery, the procurement of supplies for ships and their crews, and the lumber business.



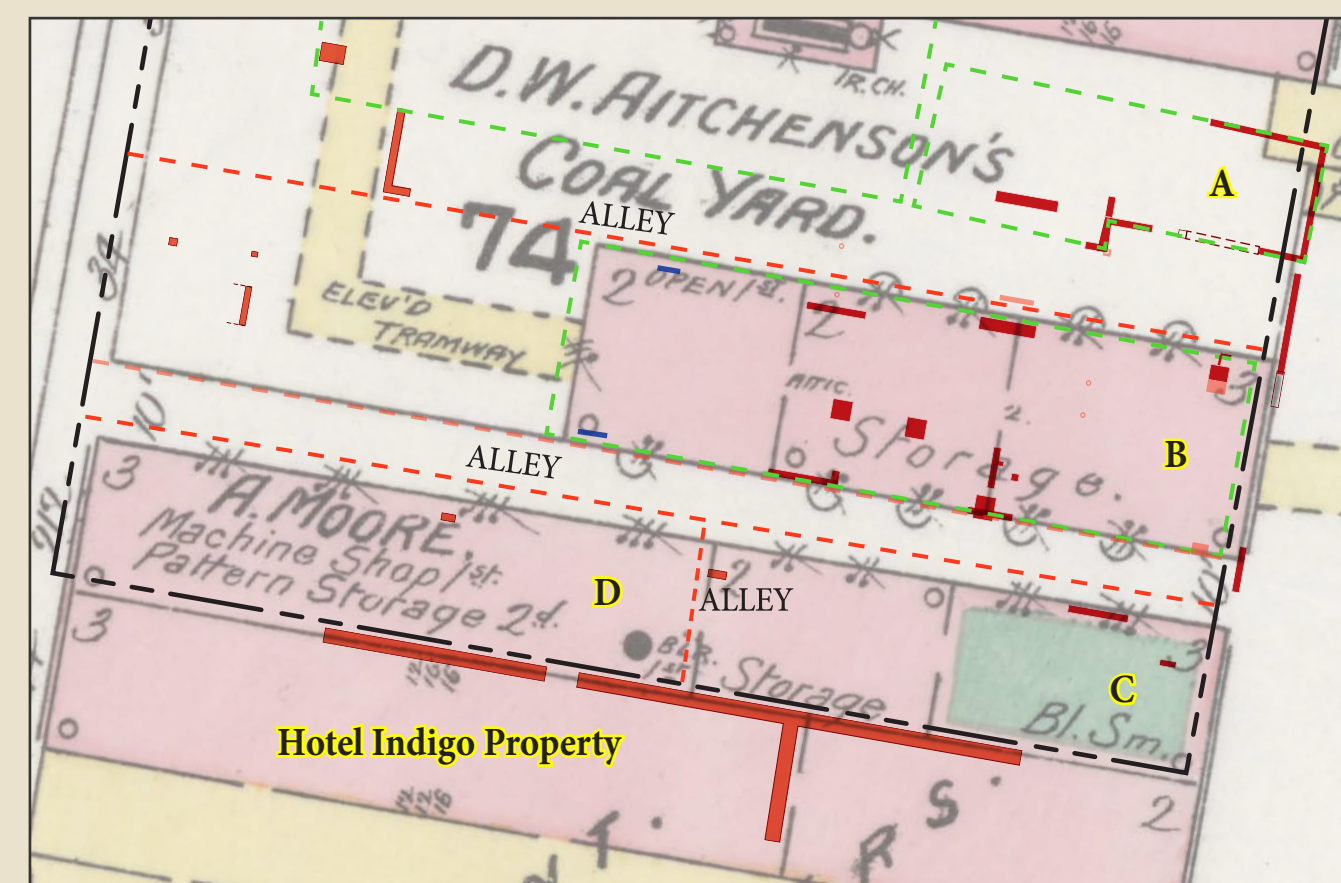
Born in Alexandria in 1821, William Moore, a councilman, operated an iron and brass foundry from 1852 to 1897 on Union Street across from this property, but his machine and pattern storage warehouses (C and D) were located here. The building consisted of four stories with patterns stored on the third and fourth floors, while his 25 employees operated lathes and other machinery on the first and second floors. He produced many kinds of iron and brass castings and had customers throughout the country. ("Alexandria from Pioneer Mill, looking north-west", March 1865 Photograph, Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

FOUNDERS AND MACHINISTS.  
**W. S. MOORE,**  
 Machinist, Iron and Brass Founder  
 SHIPSMITH AND BLACKSMITH.  
 (OLD DOMINION WORKS)  
 Nos. 59 and 65 Union street, Alexandria, Va.  
 Will furnish and repair all kinds of Machinery,  
 Iron and Brass Castings, Wrought and Cast Iron  
 Fences, Mill Work, Ship and Blacksmithing. Edge  
 Tools, Mill Picks, Facing Hammers, and all kinds  
 of Mill Work made and repaired at the shortest  
 notice, and at reasonable prices.  
 The highest market price paid for Old Wrought  
 and Cast Iron, Brass and Copper. je21

Alexandria Gazette 6 August 1888



"Birds eye view of Alexandria, Va" by Charles Magnus (1863) showing the full 200 block of the Strand. The Watermark property, outlined in yellow, contained three buildings that fronted the Strand. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).



1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria (Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF A WORKING SEAPORT

By the latter decades of the 19th century Alexandria's waterfront was becoming increasingly industrialized. Archaeological excavations uncovered evidence of some of these burgeoning industries on the property. For example, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showed four warehouses on the property in 1885, but by 1896, Warehouse A had been demolished and was used by DeWilton Aitcheson for his coal yard. Annie Moore continued to operate her

husband's business after he died in 1894. Warehouse D continued to be used for pattern storage, but Warehouse C was converted into a blacksmith shop. The warehouse foundations uncovered during archaeological excavations also defined the two alleys that historically ran between Warehouses A and B and between B and C. Historic alleyways would have given waterfront access to merchants occupying buildings across the entire property.



## THE 1897 FIRE

In 1897, a fire destroyed most of the 200 block of the Strand. It began in the engine room of Herbert Bryant's bone mill, located on the east side of Strand Street, present-day Point Lumley Park. Only one building east of Union Street survived the blaze.

"It was first supposed that the fire could be confined to the mill, which is of brick...before it could hardly be realized, the devouring element had crossed the Strand via the tramway connecting the mill with the frame warehouse on the west...in a short time the entire square was a roaring furnace...Herbert Bryant says there is no doubt in his mind that the fire was of incendiary origin". – Alexandria Gazette 3 June 1897

After the fire, DeWilton Aitcheson bought some of the newly empty lots primarily on the north side of the block to add open space to his business, the D.W. Aitcheson Coal & Wood Yard (also known as Aitcheson Fuel Co.). He cleared much of the destroyed warehouses and built a new office, new warehouses, and a railroad switch. Further improvements to the property included the addition of a stable in 1902 and a tannery in 1907. After Aitcheson's death in 1925, the property passed to Mary Williamson who owned and maintained the property and business until her death in 1962. She left the business to Beverly D. Turner, who added a gas pump for cars and air conditioning services until Aitcheson Fuel Co. finally closed in 1978.

NOTICE!  
**COAL !!!**  
 We have received notice from the whole-  
 sale coal merchants of an advance of 25c per  
 ton on coal.  
 WE WILL NOT ADVANCE  
 the price to our customers. We have a large  
 stock of the best grades on hand—CLEAN.  
 2240 pounds to the ton. GUARANTEED.  
**DeWilton Aitcheson.**  
 —OFFICE: Duke and Fairfax streets.  
 —PHONE 95. jan14,16,21,23,30

Alexandria Gazette 20 February 1899

