



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

'Colored Rosemont'

Alexandria Times, May 13, 2021

Image: 1352 Madison St. during its time as the Lincoln Lodge No. 11 of the Free and Accepted Prince Hall Masons. Courtesy Alexandria Black History Museum.

Bound by Pendleton, Fayette, Madison, and N. West streets, "Colored Rosemont" stands as a reminder of racial segregation in Alexandria, and the foresight and perseverance of its African American residents. A relative latecomer to the list of African American neighborhoods in Alexandria, the neighborhood was started in 1926 with the sale of plots to individual African American families by the real estate broker Virginia F. Thomas. Real Estate assessments show development on the block completed by 1939. You might know it as West Braddock today.

The term "Colored Rosemont" was used colloquially, which is why it's not found on period maps. Some of the original residents of the area were the Berry, Burke, Churchill, Dundas, Jackson, Johnson, Hickman, McCray, Morrison and Watson families.

Long a proponent of African American homeownership, Thomas sold the plots to both extended families and individual couples. The majority of the new residents were working-class. The moniker of "Colored Rosemont" was a reminder that Alexandria was racially segregated and prevented African Americans from owning or renting in other neighborhoods, including the nearby Rosemont neighborhood.

Given its small geographic area, perhaps it is no surprise that the neighborhood was often considered part of the Uptown neighborhood and that today it sits in the Uptown/ Parker-Gray Historic District in the National Register. Many of the buildings in this neighborhood are original.

One of the more interesting house histories in the neighborhood is at 1352 Madison St. Thomas originally sold the plot to Dennis and Lucy Lane Jackson when they were newlyweds before 1930. In 1940, Thomas bought the house and property back from a now widowed Dennis Jackson. She held on to the property until 1949 when she sold it to the Bates family.

In 1990, the family sold the house to the trustees of the Lincoln Lodge No. 11 of the Free and Accepted Prince Hall Masons whose previous location was at 1321 Cameron St. The image you see is of the house during its time as the Lodge. In 2017, the trustees sold the house to new owners.

The designation of "Colored Rosemont" as part of a National Historic District recognizes the foresight and determination of Virginia F. Thomas and the families that made it a thriving community. Whether original owners like the Jacksons or newcomers like the Bates family, the perseverance in both building a community and maintaining it is worthy of admiration.



In honor of Historic Preservation Month, Historic Alexandria is running a series on historically African American neighborhoods in Alexandria. The columns will feature both pre and post-Civil War neighborhoods.



Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia

“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by staff of the Office of Historic Alexandria and invited guests.