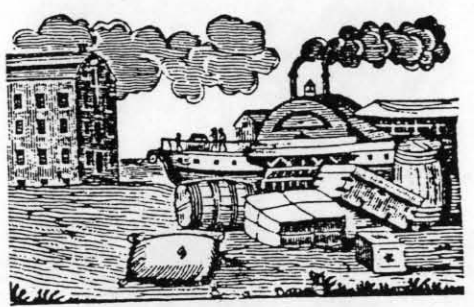


Erected in 1853-54 by the Alexandria Steam Flour Company, the Pioneer Mill was one of the largest steam mills in the United States and was situated at the foot of the south side of Duke St. on the strand. It was built of brick, had a slate roof and was fireproof. The mill fronted 122 feet on the Potomac River--"the main building was 80 feet deep--and the engine room 32 feet--making a total depth of 112 feet. It [was] six stories high, and the roof 77 feet above high water mark, or 73 feet from the first floor. It [had] 12 run-of-burr mill stones and [was] capable of turning out eight hundred barrels of flour per day. Attached to the mill [was] an elevator for taking grain from the holds of vessels, and carrying it directly into the building. Large vessels [could] be loaded directly at the door of the facility." A wharf was constructed on the north side of the building on which a switch of the Orange & Alexandria Railroad was laid so that grain could be directly brought to the mill. [AG: 3/11/1854]



Thousands of barrels of flour were manufactured at Pioneer Mill during its zenith...

Writing in 1857, a correspondent of the *Washington Union* described Pioneer Mill as "being probably unsurpassed in solid beauty of exterior architecture and exquisite style and finish of interior machinery and furniture by any establishment of the kind in the United States." [AG: 4/9/1857] During its formative years William H. Fowle was president of the milling company, James C. Nevett was clerk, and Robert F. Robert was chief miller. Thousands of barrels of flour were manufactured at Pioneer Mill during its zenith and shipped to New York and other Eastern markets. By 1860 the mill was under the charge of Mr. G.Y. Worthington of Baltimore, but it fell idle with the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1883 the Potomac Manufacturing Company established an iron works at the foot of Wolfe Street and subsequently purchased the engines of the old mill for use at their plant. Pioneer Mill, with its broken windows and timbers, was but a shadow of its former self by the 1890's. Unfortunately, it reflected Alexandria's economic decline and stagnation after the war. One year after its purchase by the Bryant Fertilizer Company in 1899, a destructive fire ravaged the mill and dozens of other commercial buildings along the strand from Duke to Prince Street. The July 2, 1900 *Alexandria Gazette* described the desolate scene as follows: "...A sorry picture was presented to early risers this morning. Over a square of the river front was a mass of smoldering ruins--impeding walls and stacks of tottering chimneys told the story--there had been a fire and it had burned over a section at one time the busiest in Alexandria's history. Nothing but charred piles were left of wharves which in times gone by were the receptacles of shiploads of West India sugar and molasses, and upon which direct importations of articles from nearly every clime had been deposited. The "Big Mill", as it was called, erected at a cost of \$50,000, which had stood as a silent monument for years to the prosperity which at one time animated the section--a time commission stores were south of the mill--was no more."



In 1899, a destructive fire ravaged the mill.

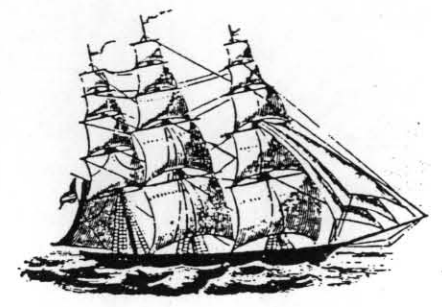


WANDERING ALONG THE WATERFRONT:

Cameron to King St.

by T. Michael Miller

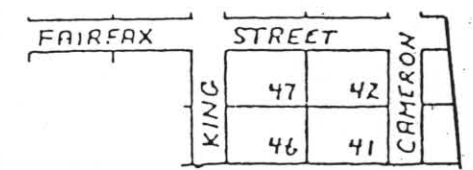
With the recent opening of the new Chart House Restaurant at the foot of Cameron Street, Alexandria has taken another progressive step forward in the revitalization of its waterfront. The hustle and bustle of the summer crowds, the clang of bells and the numerous ships tied up at the dock remind one of an Alexandria 150 years ago when the Cameron to King Street wharves were loaded with lumber, coal, and guano as dozens of brigs and schooners disgorged their precious cargoes of mahogany, silver, pewter and finished manufactured goods.



In 1749, when the town of Alexandria was established, the land which now encompasses the harbor of Alexandria in the Cameron to King Street corridor did not exist. Indeed, the Potomac River extended to present day Lee Street (Water St.) until it was eventually filled in during the last two decades of the 18th century. The steep banks and cliffs were plowed down and dirt and debris from other streets were hauled to the waterfront to reclaim the river.

The two one-half acre parcels which fronted the Potomac River at this point were designated lots No. 41 & 46 of the original town plan. Much of the early history of these two parcels are intimately interwoven with the careers of gentlemen John Carlyle and William Ramsay. Both men were wealthy Scottish factors as well as leading exponents and founding trustees of Alexandria. Between 1752 and 1753 Carlyle constructed a lovely mansion which overlooked the river and was the scene of much commercial activity in which he had a great interest. Carlyle later served as custom collector for the South Potomac District (1758), member of the Fairfax Committee of Safety (1774-1775) and was a justice of the peace for Fairfax County. [See: James Munson's, *Col. John Carlyle, Gent.*] William Ramsay (1716-1785), on the other hand, was born in Kirkcudbright, Scotland and for a time was Carlyle's business partner. A man of great energy and determination, he was on a committee to build the first courthouse in 1751; an adjuster of weights and seals at the warehouse; a Fairfax justice of the peace (1770, 1781, 1782); Alexandria's postmaster in 1772; and the town's honorary Lord Mayor in 1761.

The act to establish the town of Alexandria was passed by the House of Burgesses and signed by Governor Berkeley in May 1749. By July of the same year John West, Jr. had surveyed the real estate and the trustees were ready to sell the one-half acre parcels at public auction.



POTOMAC RIVER

From original 1749 town plan showing lots No. 41 and 46.



John Carlyle

On July 13, 1749 (in the old-style calendar; now July 24th), John Carlyle and William Ramsay were successful in their bids to purchase the valuable waterfront lots: Carlyle obtained lot numbers 41 and 42; Ramsay acquired parcels 46 and 47. Formal deeds were conveyed to Carlyle and Ramsay by the town trustees on September 20, 1749.

Ten years later in July 1759, the merchant firm of Carlyle and Dalton obtained permission from the town trustees to erect the first private wharf in Alexandria. Carlyle averred that: "...a good and convenient Landing at Cameron Street in the Town of Alexandria may be made of General utility to the Town." Tax on this facility was waived on condition that the public be granted the right to utilize one-half of the facility. In 1982, while this site was being excavated for a new condominium development, remnants of the old Carlyle wharf were discovered. The Alexandria Archaeology Center conducted salvation excavation on the site and from their study it was thought that the wharf was constructed in two stages. "Each stage extended the landing further over the flats to deeper water behind the Carlyle House." [Alexandria Archaeology, "Carlyle Dalton Landing"]

Carlyle, who was a very energetic trader, had a number of ships, brigs and schooners built in Alexandria. These included: in 1755, the snow "Alexandria", 130 tons, 4 guns, 10 men; 1757, brig "Neptune", 80 tons, 10 guns, 20 men; 1765, schooner "Swift", 60 tons, 7 men; 1770, the brig "Fairfax", 50 tons, 5 men. Many of these vessels may have been built by Thomas Fleming at his shipyard on Point Lumley (Duke Street) or by Thomas Kirkpatrick who operated a similar facility on West Point (Oronoco St.). [Thomas Preisser, "Eighteenth Century Alexandria Before the Revolution, 1749-1776," Ph.D. dissertation, Wm. & Mary College, 1977]

Upon Carlyle's death in 1780 he devised to Sara Herbert, his granddaughter, a portion of lot 42 "including his warehouse." Other portions of lot 42 were leased and the proceeds utilized to educate Carlyle Fairfax Whiting, John Carlyle's grandson.

William Herbert, president of the Bank of Alexandria and third mayor of Alexandria, inherited by marriage the wharf and warehouse on the southeast corner of Cameron and Lee Street. Under his direction, trade at this wharf flourished.

Commercial activity was still evident at the wharf in 1801 when Philip Marsteller, a noted merchant, advertised the sale of a sloop named the "Favorite." [TIMES: 12/29/1801]



Carlyle had a number of ships built in Alexandria.

RAMSAY'S WHARF: William Ramsay also loomed large on Alexandria's social, political and economic stage. Early in his career he established a wharf complex at the foot of the northeast corner of Water and King Street. In January 1785 Ramsay devised some of this property to his daughter Betty Stewart and grandsons William Ramsay and James Montgomery Stewart. In the 1780's, Ramsay had begun to bank out and fill in the Potomac River adjacent to his wharf and the newly-made land was called Fayette Street (Ramsay's Alley). By 1794 the wharf had been extended to what is now Union Street. [ADB: E:274] Upon Ramsay's death in 1785 his son Dennis inherited the wharf and its operation. Fayette Street however had never been properly laid out and Dennis Ramsay was unable to secure rents from these parcels, [ADB: F:162] resulting in the alley's obstruction and a reduction of its size from 50 ft. to 30 ft. One of the first advertisements to note the sale of real estate at King and Union Street appeared in the *Alexandria Advertiser* on September 1, 1791. Valentine Peers, who owned the property on the south side of the street, offered lots which "have very great advantages in point of situation, being in the center of the Town and contiguous to the River."

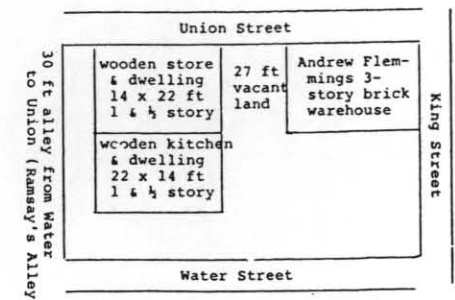
In November 1798, Marsteller and Sons, vendue masters, alerted the public to a sale at Col. Dennis Ramsay's wharf.

PUBLIC SALE ON COL. RAMSAY'S WHARF

This day at half after three o'clock, P.M. will be offered FOR SALE

Hogheads of 4th proof Jamaica Spirits of an excellent quality, immediately landing from on board the sloop Diana (and of course not adulterated) on a credit of 60 days, for negotiable notes with approved endorsers [Alex. Advertiser: 11/22/1798]

At a later date in 1805, John C. Herbert, trustee, announced the public sale of "A lot or piece of ground on Ramsay's wharf, situate on the east side of Union Street, and to the northward of King Street...fronting sixty-five feet six inches on Union Street, and seventy feet on Fayette alley." [Alex. Daily Advertiser, 4/3/1805] And, in 1813, Ramsay's son William inaugurated ship service between Alexandria and the Potomac Creek via the fast-sailing schooner "Antelope", Robert Allison, Master. The vessel would sail south from Ramsay's wharf with freight or passengers. [AG: 12/9/1813]



N.W. Corner of King and Union Streets-1805.

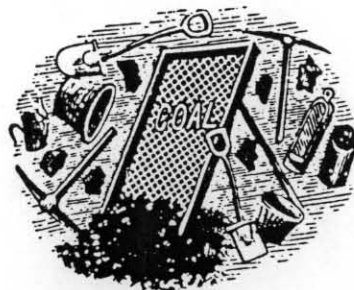


Hogshead of "4th proof Jamaica Spirits of an excellent quality" were offered for sale.

King to Cameron St. -- 1805

| Union Street | | Fayette Alley to the river | Cameron Street |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------|
| Wooden warehouse 3 stories high 31ft x 34 ft | | | |
| Wooden storehouse 1 story high 20 by 34 ft | | | |
| Wooden house - block makers shop - 1 story 10 by 34 ft | | | |
| Vacant ground Col. Ramsay's 1 story wooden store | | | |
| POTOMAC RIVER | | | |

N. E. corner of King and
Union Streets-1805.



In 1872, an extensive and
destructive fire occurred
in a large block of
warehouses on Union
Street, next to Hutton's
coal depot.

During the early 19th century several merchants established shops and warehouses along the Cameron to King Street waterfront. Among these early entrepreneurs were: Daniel McDougall, shaving shop at Irwin's store, King and Union--1804; James Dall, merchant at the northeast corner of King and Union Street, 1805; Robert and James Mandeville, grocers at King and Union, 1806; Metcalf and Baxter, merchants, 1807; Thomas Irwin, merchant, 1810; and William Herbert, who operated a bake house at Cameron and Union St. in 1812.

By the 1850's the waterfront along Cameron to King St. had evolved into one of the most extensive commercial blocks in the city. A facility erected in 1853 by Henry Daingerfield and Messrs. Anthony Cazenove & Co. was composed of five large warehouses, built for the special purpose of accommodating the railroad trade which was then fast coming to Alexandria. "Through the centre warehouse, an unusually extensive one, a railway switch from the Orange & Alexandria railroad passed, and within, the hatchways and platforms were all fitted for the easy and expeditious loading of railway cars." During the Civil War these warehouses formed the nucleus of U.S. commissary's logistical apparatus to feed and supply the Army of the Potomac in the field. After that conflict the warehouses were used for the storage of grain and fertilizer. Within this block was also a large three-story house built during the early 19th century by C. & I.P. Thompson who utilized it as a hat factory.

In 1872 a fire visited the Cameron to King St. waterfront and almost totally obliterated the harbor's epicenter. The *Alexandria Gazette* of December 31, 1872 noted:

One of the most extensive and destructive conflagrations which has ever visited Alexandria occurred this morning in the large block of three-story warehouses on the east side of Union Street, next to Hutton's coal depot...

The five warehouses were occupied as follows, beginning at the corner of Cameron street: The first by W.A. Moore as a commission house and for the storage of grain. Many Thousand bushels of wheat were stored here, some of which was not injured at all by the fire and other parcels of which were saved, but in a damaged condition. Mr. Moore who was uninsured does not estimate his loss at over \$1,500. The next warehouse was used for the storage of grain and fertilizers by R.M. Lawson, whose place of business was elsewhere. Here was stored 400 bushels of wheat and a large amount of phosphates and other fertilizers. The next large centre building was occupied by the commission house of Wattles, Knox & Co. (John S. Knox & H. Star Wattles) and was stored with

a very large amount of grain, flour etc. all of which was destroyed by the flames. The stables of the firm were also within the building and two valuable horses, with the carts, harness were burned, the stock reaching \$20,000. The next building was used for storage by Geo. R. Shinn & Co. whose place of business was elsewhere. This building contained grain and a large amount of guano, amounting to some thousand dollars, and other fertilizers. The next building, being the northern one of the block, was used as a warehouse by Wm. H. May & Co., whose place of business is on Fairfax St. Here were stored a large and valuable stock of Agricultural implements, of which but little was saved. The stock destroyed is estimated at \$18,000.

The newspaper further reported that the conflagration, although by no means the largest fire which had ever happened in Alexandria, was certainly the most extensive one which ever occurred on the river side of town.

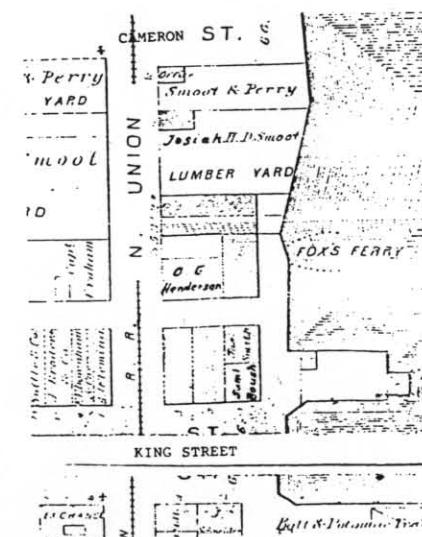
After the loss of many buildings on the waterfront, the renewal process soon began in earnest. By 1877 the Hopkins City Atlas illustrates that two lumber yards operated by Josiah H.D. Smoot and Thomas Perry were situated on the northern half of the block. Josiah H.D. Smoot (b.1831; d. 1/8/1888), a very public-spirited Alexandrian, served on the Board of Public Health and was also a fire warden. In addition to his extensive lumber business, he was president of the Mechanics Building Association and a director of the Alexandria Water Company. The Smoot & Perry Lumber yards remained in business until 1919 when the U.S. Naval Torpedo Station was erected on the site.

For many years the Ferry Tavern was located just south of the lumberyards at the corner of Fayette Alley and Union Street. Operated by William Ball, this one-story frame structure with a brick back was known as the Union Hotel and later served as a dance house. [AG: 11/7/1865] In October 1868, P.G. Henderson, a brick-layer, purchased the old hostelry and soon erected on its site a one and a half story brick building to be occupied by his son, Orlando G. Henderson, as a ship chandlery and grocery business. Orlando operated this business until his untimely death in 1879. [AG: 10/27/1868]

Another occupant of the waterfront was Samuel Boush. A native Virginian, Capt. Boush was a prosperous sea captain who resided at 212 South Pitt Street. In the mid-1840's he was master of the ship "Adams", which traveled between Mobile and New Orleans to Alexandria. For years he operated a ship chandlery on the northeast

E. B. ADDISON. DRAYTON G. MEADE
ADDISON & MEADE,
DEALERS IN
Agricultural Implements,
SEEDS, MANURES, &c., &c.,
Union street, between King and Cameron,
ALEXANDRIA, VA.
jan 27-1f

From the Alexandria
Gazette, January 27, 1853.



Cameron to King Street,
from an 1877 Hopkins
Atlas of Alexandria.

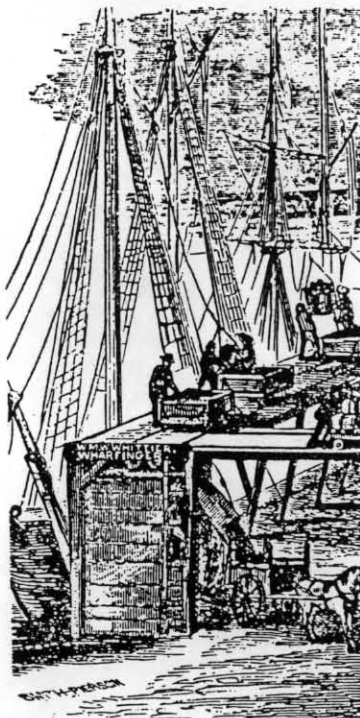


corner of King and the Strand. After the Civil War his health failed and the elder Boush transferred much of the firm's business to his son Samuel, Jr., who managed it until 1918. [Marilyn Burke, History of 312 Queen St.] During this era it appears that Union Street was not the safest area of the city since the Boush chandlery was robbed three times in a five-year span. (AG: 9/7/1865; 3/7/1868; 4/22/1870)

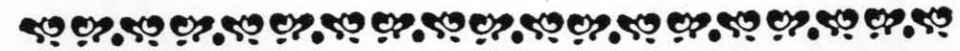
In 1922 the establishment at No. 1-7 King Street was owned by H. Kirk & Sons, Inc. who housed a complete stock of staples, fancy groceries, candies, confectioneries, flour, feedstuffs, tobacco, paints, oils, as well as automobile supplies. Established in the 1870's, this business was initially headed by Harrison Kirk, and upon his death it was inherited by his sons.

During its zenith, the Cameron to King St. corridor was not solely affected by private entrepreneurial activities. The City of Alexandria took specific measures through the years to see that Union and King Streets were properly maintained. As early as 1804 the street commissioners proceeded to have King St. paved from Union St. to the head of the dock. [Alex. Adv.: 6/22/1804] In November 1847, City Council raised the issue whether or not the board fence which obstructed the free passage to the River Potomac at the foot of King St. was agreeable to the laws of the corporation, and if not, what officer or officers should remove it. Lawrence Berry Taylor, corporation attorney, replied that the obstruction was in direct violation of an act of Council because it prevented the easy passage through the streets, lanes and alleys. Taylor further wrote:

"The docks at the foot of the streets, are public, have been admitted so to be and always have been used as such, from time immemorial. In proof of this I consider it only necessary to refer the Council to sundry reports of its committees, from the year 1800, up to the present time, and particularly to a report on the subject of the Public Docks made in the year 1804 by a committee consisting of Archibald McClean, Thomas Irwin, and Alexander Smith, the original of which is now on file amongst the records of the Common Council. In all these reports the jurisdiction of the Common Council over the Docks at the foot of the streets, as Public Docks, is clearly admitted. The effect, then, of placing the fence in question across the foot of King street, is to prevent an easy passage through that street, a public highway, in to the dock, also a public highway and is therefore directly in the teeth of the 5th section of the Act."



Placing a fence at the foot of King Street was "directly in the teeth of the 5th section of the Act".

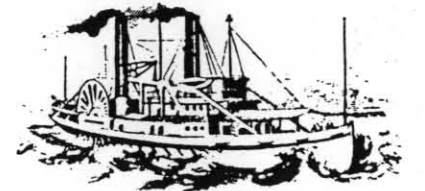


In answer to the second question, Taylor affirmed that it was the duty of the Superintendent of Police to take the fence down and furthermore that it was the duty of the Mayor to see that the Laws of the Corporation were duly executed. [IN COUNCIL, Nov. 9, 1847 in AG: 11/11/1847]

As early as 1856 a joint stock company known as "The Alexandria Steam Ferry Company" had been incorporated by the Virginia General Assembly to operate a service from the foot of King St. to Fox's Landing on the opposite Maryland shore. With the outbreak of hostilities in 1861 this service was discontinued. After the war the Potomac Ferry Company was established in 1868 and continued its operation for the next 35 years. From the terminus of King Street the twin steamers "City of Alexandria" and "City of Washington" traveled to the District on an hourly schedule. Tragedy befell the company in 1892 when the "City of Alexandria" burned while moored at King St. [Donald Shomette, Maritime Alexandria--Alex. Archaeology Center]

In 1883, C.W. Ridley, manager of the Alexandria and Washington Ferry, made application to City Council to use a portion of King St. dock which had been filled up by his company. Ridley indicated that \$300 had been spent resulting in the addition of 1200 square feet of land to the foot of King Street, making an improvement most convenient to the citizens. He further requested that Council permit a toll house to be erected on the south side of the wharf. [AG: 7/23/1883; 11/28/1883] In considering the matter, City Council reiterated that it had previously authorized market produce to be landed at the foot of King Street free of charge and on another occasion had permitted the late horse-drawn street railroad to build a turntable on the property. Thus, the public's right of access to the waterfront was reaffirmed and Council ordered the shed be removed. [AG: 2/15/1884]

A new ferry house was constructed on the King St. waterfront in 1891. B.F. Price & Son, architects, had completed plans for the new facility in August and it was finished two months later. [AG: 8/1/1891; 9/23/1891] On March 21, 1922 a fire of supposedly an incendiary nature destroyed the ferry slip and Old Dominion Boat Club. The club, formerly situated on the waterfront between Prince and Duke Streets, had purchased the ferry slip locale at the foot of King Street with plans of building a new facility there. David E. Bayliss, Sr., contractor, was given permission to construct a new building on December 26, 1922. These goals were soon realized and the club



The twin steamers "City of Alexandria" and "City of Washington" traveled to the District on an hourly schedule.



The Old Dominion Boat Club celebrated its 110th birthday this year.



"The stage driver... started to drive across the tracks when the train commenced backing."



"...Pistols, knives, razors, clubs, stones and all sort of weapons, were freely displayed..."

held its first meeting in its new boat house on June 12, 1923. The Old Dominion Boat Club celebrated its 110th birthday this year and continues to occupy the lower King Street riverfront.

Any chronicle of the Cameron to King waterfront would certainly be remiss if it failed to address the broad spectrum of human behaviour exhibited in this key region of the city. Besides the hundreds of anonymous stevedores who sweated and toiled on the docks, the area has been the scene of brawls, riots, and even murders. In September 1857 a narrow escape was reported at King and Union Streets when the Middleburg stage, which carried two ladies, some children and the driver, crossed the railroad tracks on Union Street, where the freight train was going out, and from some cause stopped when nearly across them. The stage driver, supposing that the train would move forward, started to drive across the tracks when the train commenced backing. As the stage was just on the track, it was struck, upset and nearly crushed. Fortunately, the train was stopped before further damage was done. Although very much frightened, the ladies and children escaped harm, except for a little boy who had his arm slightly hurt. [AG: 9/7/1857]

An incident of a more serious nature transpired on May 18, 1868. In a brief notice the *Alexandria Gazette* informed the public that "the lower end of King St. and that portion of Union street adjoining it, were rendered noisy and disorderly nearly all of yesterday by the fights and disturbances that occurred in that locality." [AG: 5/18/1868] Eleven months later in April 1869, considerable excitement was created at the intersection of King and Union Streets when a party of pickpockets boarded the Orange & Alexandria Railroad train, provoked confusion, and succeeded in grasping a gentleman's wallet before they were chased down the street and apprehended. [4/13/1869]

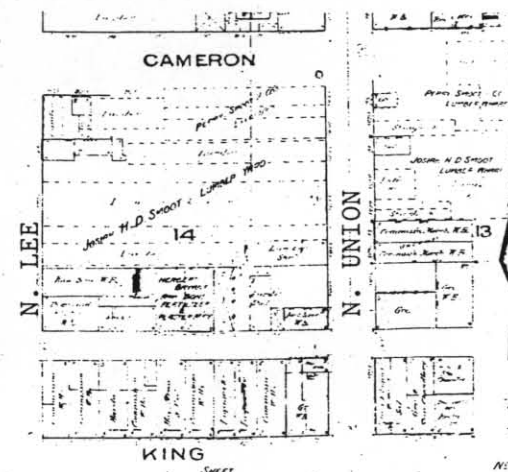
In examining the annals of lower King St., probably no event could have been more catastrophic than the near riot of May 1872. This affray commenced when a group of Washingtonians travelled to Alexandria to attend the funeral of Bachus Keith, a former lodge member and ex-slave. Upon arriving at the ferry slip on King St., the mourners marched to the cemetery accompanied by two brass bands. While at the graveyard Mr. W.S. Hough, an elderly gentleman, was assaulted. Rocks were thrown and officer Jack Nightingill was attacked in an attempt to come to his assistance. On their way back from the cemetery, one of the Washingtonians also kicked and badly hurt a son of John Devaugh. Policeman Lyles, in endeavoring to arrest him, was set upon by his friends but was successful in effecting his capture. "When the procession reached the wharf, the whole

probably have ensued which would have rivalled some of the more famous riots in the United States." About 20 persons were arrested, fined and jailed. The *Gazette* further noticed that, to their credit, "The colored people of this city took no part in the disturbance nor were any of their lodges at the wharf when the assault upon the Mayor was made...When the procession had returned to the steamboat wharf, they had become so disorderly that the greatest excitement prevailed". Former members of the 17th Virginia Confederate regiment, without official notification, assembled at the foot of King Street to assist in the preservation of order in the city. It wasn't long, however, before the rioters were quelled and order was restored throughout the town. [AG: 5/6/1872]

Not all events along lower King Street were of so serious a nature. In the Fall of 1897 a team of horses attached to a wagon loaded with cans of milk became frightened at the Ferry wharf and dashed off up King street scattering the milk cans in all directions. Near Union Street they collided with Portner's beer wagon breaking one of its wheels, scattering the kegs of beer and causing the horses to run off. Finally, after galloping two more blocks, the wild beasts were stopped on Fairfax Street between King and Prince. [AG: 10/7/1897]

During the last decade of the 19th century, Alexandria's economic health was impaired by slow growth and stagnation. Many buildings in town were in need of repair and the King Street wharf fell into a dilapidated condition and was fenced in. [AG: 2/1/1897] As if conditions were not bad enough, in April 1896 a freight train jumped the tracks at Union and King and came close to demolishing several buildings. [AG: 4/27/1896]

No event probably has had more impact on the face of the Cameron to King Waterfront than the construction of the Torpedo Plant in 1918. Work of clearing the site at the foot of Cameron Street began on October 2, 1918 and a wooden pier 330-ft. long by 25-ft. wide, and 20-ft. seawalls were constructed at a cost of \$50,350. A contract for the construction of two buildings at a cost of \$1,216,655 was negotiated on October 14, 1918. The buildings consisted of one 4-story machine shop 300-ft. long by 245-ft. wide and one 2-story storage building 245-ft. long by 114-ft. wide. Offices were first occupied on June 16, 1919 and other operations were gradually increased until the final completion of building operations was accomplished on February 5, 1920. The first order for 1008 Mark VIII Modification 4 type torpedoes was placed on January 16, 1919 by the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance and the first torpedo was completed on November 18, 1920.



From a 1902 Sanborn Fire Assurance Map.



The first order for torpedos was placed on January 16, 1919.



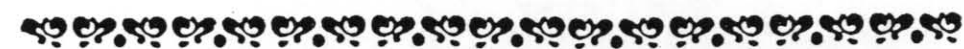
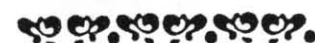
"It is pleasant to walk out along the river and contemplate the changing seasons."



FIRESIDE SENTINEL
is published monthly
by the Lloyd House,
Alexandria Library.

EDITOR:
T. Michael Miller
GRAPHICS AND DESIGN:
Barbara E. Nicely
COPY EDITOR:
Virginia Kahl

Copyright 1990
by the Alexandria
Library.
All rights reserved.



In accordance with orders received from the Bureau of Ordnance, the station ceased production on June 15, 1923 and was placed in an inoperative status under jurisdiction of the Commandant and Superintendent of the Naval Gun Factory, Washington, D.C. During the ensuing years there was but a skeleton force of approximately 30 employees engaged in the overhaul, care and preservation of the 908 torpedoes then in storage and the general maintenance and upkeep of the machinery, buildings and grounds.

On Navy Day, October 27, 1926, the Station was opened for public inspection. Torpedoes of the type manufactured in 1899, up to, and including, those of that period, were exhibited for visitors.

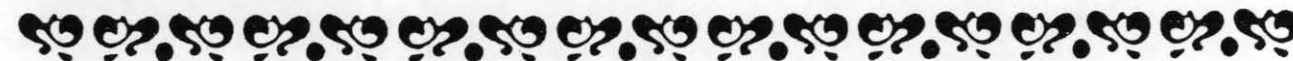
When war clouds hovered over the United States during the late 1930's, the Navy Department reactivated the Alexandria Torpedo Station again on December 1, 1937. It successfully produced thousands of torpedoes for America's W.W. II effort against Japan and Germany. [The Torp, April 1, 1946.] This was not the end of the story however. After that conflict, German war films and records were brought to the United States and housed in the Torpedo Plant buildings. Many of these records were used as evidence in the Nuremberg war crimes trial. Subsequently the buildings were occupied by the Federal Recordkeeping Center and sold to the City of Alexandria in 1969. Later, inspired by an idea suggested by Marian Van Landingham, director of the city's Bicentennial Projects and Programs, the City of Alexandria advanced \$140,000 for renovating the former munitions plant. A large concentration of artists and Art League members moved into the facility in 1974. Today the Torpedo Factory is visited by thousands of tourists and is one of Alexandria's most popular attractions.

"To all of this the waterfront itself lends a special character. It is pleasant to walk out along the river and contemplate the changing seasons. Ice and snow sparkling in winter, fresh green in spring, cool breezes in summer, and the brilliant reds and yellows of autumn. Along the river edge, with the gently lapping water of the Potomac [one is reminded of] things other than the click of typewriters, clank of machines [and the stress of a modern urban society]." [Marge Alderson, *Alexandrian Magazine*, 2/1985, Torpedo Factory Brochure]



The Fireside Sentinel

The Alexandria Library, Lloyd House Newsletter
OCTOBER 1990 Vol. IV, No. 10



JOSEPH RODGERS--Master Builder

By T. Michael Miller

The photograph below attests to the fact that Lloyd House library receives archival collections in all shapes and sizes. Librarians Yvonne Carignan (right) and Sandra O'Keefe (left) are holding a hornets' nest of fascinating documents which were recently donated by Robert MacCaslin of 222 South Fairfax Street. Lloyd House was literally abuzz with excitement when Mr. MacCaslin discovered these bills, permits and invoices impaled on a wire hanging in his attic. They once belonged to Joseph Rodgers, a well-known builder and contractor, who occupied 222 S.



Fairfax Street from 1899 to the time of his death in 1937. Among the cache of documents are prints of business houses and stores which have long since disappeared from the streetscape of Alexandria.

Born in 1854, Joseph Rodgers was the son of Lorenzo Rodgers of Fairfax County. Little is known of Rodgers' early background except that his father was a police constable who resided in the village of Accotink in 1860. Rodgers subsequently moved his family to a farm in Fairfax County about three miles from Alexandria. Joseph makes his first appearance in Alexandria in the 1876 city directory where he is listed as a carpenter who resided on Queen Street near Fairfax Street. Early in his career Rodgers was a partner in the construction firm of Lyles & Rodgers. These gentlemen performed minor repairs and built a number of buildings in town. Among the projects they initiated in 1891 were the Shiloh Baptist Church chimney; work on Edward Daingerfield's House [217 S. Washington St.]; alterations to Burke & Herbert's bank and a new paint job for the