



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Archaeology
Studies of the Old Waterfront



Fowle Warehouses 204-206 South Union Street

By Diane Riker
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Photo by Katherine Maas

William Fowle Warehouses on Union Street

Overview

In 1749, when Alexandria's first lots were auctioned off atop the bluff on the Potomac River, the present site of 204 and 206 South Union Street was under water. The land along the riverfront near the southern edge of the new town had been the property of Philip Alexander, for whose family the port was named. An early deed notes a stone wall at the top of the bluff, perhaps a relic of Alexander's occupancy.

The ground under these buildings was "created" by two leading Alexandrians, Thomas Gilpin and Jonathan Hall, who had purchased Lots 62 and 63 in 1769 and begun to cut down and "bank out" the bluff to what is present-day Union Street. Hall died in 1785 and Gilpin continued to extend his wharf until, by 1809, it reached 220 feet from Union Street into the water and bore the weight of several stores and storehouses.

It was all to become the foundation for a merchant empire as extensive as any in the young city. At the turn of the century, William Fowle, aged 17, came here to seek his fortune. He partnered with a Thomas Lawrason, son of a shipping merchant, operating out of a warehouse at the corner of Prince and Union. With Lawrason's death in 1819, Fowle began to buy up that family's properties, including those at 204-206. By mid-century, Fowle and two of his sons had built a prosperous business, with warehouses on the Strand, Prince and Union streets, and residences at 711 Prince Street and outside the town limits. They played important roles in pre-Civil War Alexandria banking, business, and government. 204 and 206 remain today as key relics of that family's legacy. In fact, William's initials are still visible, cast into the door frames at 204.

Two devastating events impacted these buildings in the last half of the 19th century. During the Civil War, the Fowle family, loyal to the Confederacy, left the city and suffered confiscation of all their properties (these were later returned in a landmark Supreme Court case). And in 1897, a terrible fire destroyed almost every structure from Union Street to the Strand between Prince and Duke streets. Other Fowle buildings were razed to their lower stories or even to their foundations, but 204 and 206 escaped with minimal damage. They are the largest relatively intact remnants left on this significant commercial block.

When the fire broke out at midnight on June 2, 1897, the buildings were being rented by Richard Henry Wattles, an agricultural supplies merchant. He bought them from Fowle heirs in 1900 and proceeded to alter them for use as a grain mill, taking down two stories at 204 and adding one at 206. What we see today is virtually Wattles' Mill on the footprint and lower stories of the Fowle buildings. This was Alexandria's last waterfront mill.

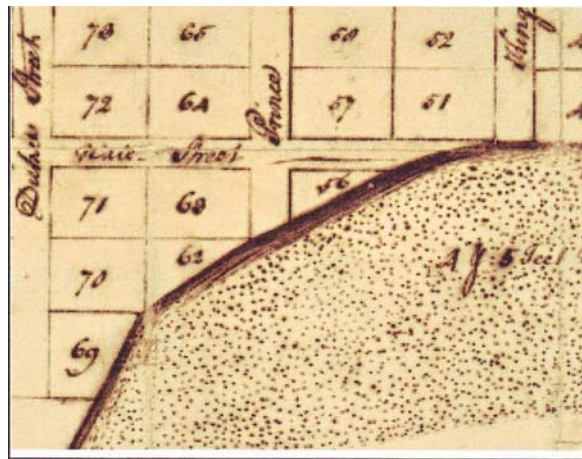
206 South Union Street is the largest pre-Civil War building to survive along the riverfront corridor. Its cavernous interior and strong utilitarian lines convey as nothing else can the significance of commerce in this city.

The Land

The cream-painted brick façades and the bricked or shuttered windows at 204 and 206 South Union Street conceal what remains of two pre-Civil War warehouses and Alexandria's last waterfront mill.

1769 The land under their foundations is fill placed there by George Gilpin and Jonathan Hall, who purchased town lots 62 and 63 in 1769.¹ Lot 62 is a quarter-acre wedge on the high riverbank. Its entire eastern boundary is tidewater.

To reach navigable water, the new owners level the high ground, using the excavated clay and marsh mud to “bank out.”



Library of Congress

A section of the 1749 plan of Alexandria

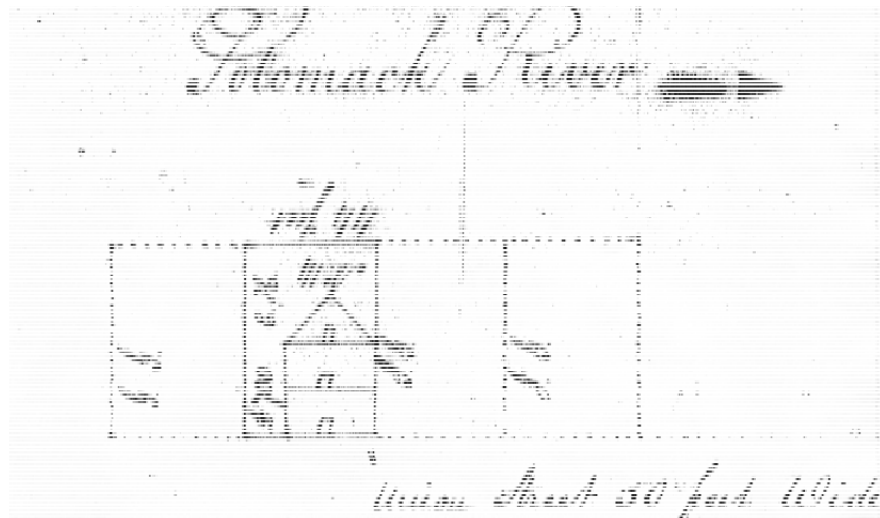
Gilpin is a leader in Alexandria commerce and politics, the town's surveyor, judge and inspector. Hall serves as town trustee from 1770 to 1775.

1782 This year the legislature grants permission to lay Union Street across the filled wetlands from Oronoco to Franklin. By 1809, Gilpin has extended his wharf 220 feet from Union into the river and erected warehouses on the southeast and southwest corners of Prince and Union.²

Most of Hall's property is on the west side of Union but he does own one slice of filled land between Union Street and the river, the future site of 204 S. Union. Evidence of an early structure is shown on this plat attached to an 1804 deed. The street-front dimension remains the same into the 21st century.

¹ *Fairfax Deed Book H*: 40; *Fairfax Deed Book K*: 5.

² *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, May 22, 1809, p.3.



"The Store on the wharf is 34 feet, part of it has three floors and part only two. The remainder of the front, say 10 feet, is left for an alley." *Alexandria Deed Book I:162* (July 14, 1804).

William Hartshorne rents the store from Hall's heirs³ and conducts a typical early merchant's business there - part hardware and part groceries - from coopers' axes to pickled oysters.

1800 Meanwhile the merchant who will build much of today's 204-206 arrives in Alexandria from Massachusetts, aged 17. He is a descendant of George Fowle, an English tanner, who left home for New England in the mid-1600s.



Fowle family crest as depicted on the gravestone of William's ancestor, Capt. John Fowle (d. 1711), Phipps Street burial ground, Charlestown, Mass.⁴

³ *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, Dec. 15, 1785.

⁴ Fowle, Eugene Chalmers. *Descendants of George Fowle*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1990.

Fowle & Co.

William Fowle goes into partnership with Thomas Lawrason, a shipping merchant, whose father, James, has acquired much of the Gilpin real estate on both sides of Union Street.

1810 On Sept. 25, fire destroys the firm's principal store at the southwest corner of Prince and Union streets. It also destroys Hall's store and dwelling, now in the ownership of Jacob Leap, grocer.⁵ Leap rebuilds the store as a two-story brick.⁶

1819 Thomas Lawrason dies in 1819. In the succeeding decades, the firm of Fowle & Co. is a major presence south of Prince Street.

Fowle is extremely successful, buying or building a network of warehouses along Prince, the Strand, and Union Street, counting among them by 1840 the Lawrason holdings and Leap's store, a collection not to be surpassed until another merchant in the 20th century (Interarms' Sam Cummings) assembles a nine-building complex, which includes 204 and 206.

T. Michael Miller in *The Fireside Sentinel*, Sept./Oct. 1993, provides a sample of the company's inventory:

*chocolate, shoes, cotton, suspenders, New York prime pork,
cheese, plaster of Paris, crockery ware, lumber, English
mustard, indigo, soap, tanner's oil and rope.*

William and his wife, Esther, have 15 children, not all of whom live to maturity. Their home at 711 Prince Street hums with activity. Two of his sons join him in the business. William Holmes Fowle enters the firm after his graduation from Harvard in 1826. George Dashiell Fowle joins them in the 1840s.

Fowle becomes president of the Old Dominion Bank and the Alexandria Canal Company. When President John Quincy Adams visits Alexandria in March 1841, he dines with the merchant.

⁵ *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1810, p. 3.

⁶ Jacob Leap. *Alexandria Will Book 2*, 1814, p. 405; *Alexandria Gazette*, May 23, 1822, p 3.



Esther Dashiell Taylor Fowle

This portrait of William Fowle's wife may well be the only likeness we have of a member of the early Fowle family in Alexandria. It is believed to be by Washington, D.C., painter Charles Bird King and is reproduced in E. C. Fowle's *Descendants of George Fowle*.

The Early History of 206

1839 Elizabeth Lawrason, who is living in Baltimore, conveys to William Fowle:

*A lot of ground and wharf on the west (east) side of Union Street, on front on Union Street as supposed forty feet six inches, be the same more or less, and extending of that breadth at right angle to Union direct into the River Potomac bounded on the west by Union Street, on the north by the lot formerly Jonathan Hall's afterwards Jacob Leap's and the said Thomas Lawrason's and on the south by the lots formerly Joseph (Joshua) Gilpin's, afterwards William Harper and on the East by the River.*⁷

1843 A two-story structure is taxed on this lot. It is valued by the assessor at \$4000, while another Fowle building and wharf directly behind it are worth more than four times that amount.

Over the years, the building at 206 has been much modified but its footprint on the land and some of its original brickwork - in the early five or even three-to-one common bond - remain. In the cavernous interior of its ground floor there can still be seen just below ceiling height the

ghosts of old floor joists for the second story.

⁷ *Alexandria Deed Book Y*, p. 316.

Building the Warehouse at 204

1837 The Leap property at what is now 204 is acquired by Thomas Lawrason from Leap's widow, Ann, and in 1837 is sold to William Fowle by Lawrason's widow, Elizabeth.⁸ But Fowle does not appear to have built his own warehouse there until 1857.

1858 The *Alexandria Gazette* provides a date for a new warehouse replacing earlier structures at the site. The third offering in this January 1859 advertisement - "the new four-storied WAREHOUSE" - would have gone up the previous year. (The fourth offering is at the present location of Chadwick's Restaurant.)



At the turn of the 20th century, the four stories are reduced to two and one half, and in the 1960s, the alley that ran from Union to the Strand is blocked to provide a connection to the Prince Street corner building.



photo by Katherine Maas

Northwest corner of 204 S. Union Street, with
10 Prince St. extension into the former alley
(off-street parking in 2008).

⁸ *Alexandria Deed Book X-2*, pp. 141 and 166.

The merchant builder has “signed” his work. Behind a weathered crust of paint and rust, the initials “W.F.” are faintly legible on the decorative door fenders at the entrances to 204. These cast-iron plates were used to protect the building’s brickwork from carts delivering or carrying out goods.



photo by Katherine Maas
19th-century initials on the southernmost door
fender at 204 South Union.

It is interesting to compare the Fowle fenders with others in Alexandria. Better preserved fenders exist at the entrances to 201 and 214 King Street. Both sets display dates: 1851 on the former’s dozen fenders; 1868 on the latter’s four. The initials in both cases refer to the owners at the time of building. The height of these fenders from the sidewalk indicates they were served by loading docks on the steeply sloped street.

The lower portions of Fowle’s fenders are buried in brick and concrete. Any date on the cast iron, should there be one, is well obscured.

FOWLE & CO.,
 IMPORTERS AND DEALERS IN ALL
 KINDS OF
FERTILIZERS,
 OFFER FOR SALE
No. 1
PERUVIAN GUANO
 IMPORTED
 DIRECT TO THIS PORT, FROM THE
CHINCHA ISLANDS,
 PUT UP IN BAGS, FURNISHED AND
 BRANDED BY THE
Agents of the
PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT.

COLUMBIAN GUANO,
 IN BAGS AND BARRELS. A VERY EX-
 CELLENT MANURE RICH IN
 PHOSPHATES,

As will appear from annexed

Analysis by Dr. R. H. Stabler:

Organic matter, yielding ammonia.....	14.55
Water.....	8.55
Phosphate of Lime.....	60.88
Magnesia.....	10
Sand and other insoluble matter.....	15.92

100

SOMBRERO GUANO,

THE RICHEST PHOSPHATIC GUANO

Fowle Warehouses, 204-206 South Union Street

Having accepted the Agency for the sale of this
 article in Washington, Georgetown, and
 Alexandria, a full supply will always

be kept on hand

Commerce in mid-century Alexandria has a
 new and pungent aroma. The product is to the
 south wharves as coal is to the north wharves.

In Peru, Columbia, and Mexico, farmers are
 harvesting the nitrogen-rich droppings of seabirds
 and millions of tons are exported to be mixed with
 phosphates as fertilizer.

Guano is arriving at the Fowles' Central Wharf,
 sometimes on two ships a day from South America.
 Fowle and Co. is the leading agent here.

Either or both of the warehouses may well have
 been used for the fertilizer.

This ad runs almost the entire length of the first
 page of the *Alexandria Advertiser* during the
 summer of 1858.

1854 Fowle's sons invest in a giant steam-driven flour mill, Pioneer Mills, which occupies the whole block from the Strand to Union south of Duke Street (now the site of Robinson Terminal South) and for which William Holmes Fowle is the general agent. During this decade the new railroad down Union carries goods for the warehouses and mill to a Duke Street spur line.

It is William Holmes Fowle who presents to the Council a resolution for lighting the city with gas and puts his own money on the table. In 1857, Fowle & Co. reports sales of \$144,000.⁹

1860 William Fowle dies.

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM FOWLE has departed! A man who, by his vigorous sense, his dignified but simple manners, and his kindly though blunt address, impressed all who came in contact with him, as a man of uncommon character. He was undoubtedly the best specimen in this section of the country, of a merchant—of the old school—a designation in itself expressive so much of probity, intelligence, and enterprise. His successful energy, his integrity, his private liberality, and his public spirit, must always be remembered in the community where he so long and honorably lived.—

Alexandria Gazette Jan. 12, 1860, p. 2

⁹ *Alexandria City Tax Ledger 1856-1857*, Alexandria Library Local History Special Collections.

The Fowles in the Civil War

*The wharves are completely deserted, and what little shipping remains is fastened to the piers, with sails furled or taken in. I did not see a single man or a sign of life there. Everywhere...the stillness of a perpetual Sabbath and the loneliness of a deserted city.*¹⁰

1861 In the four years of government occupation of Alexandria, the Fowle family fortune suffers real losses. Descendants recall that Federal troops on horseback invade and vandalize even their homes.¹¹

William Holmes Fowle moves to Richmond, while his son William III departs with the rest of Alexandria's young secessionists to join the Confederate Army. Because of his son's action, William's properties are targeted for confiscation.

George Dashiell Fowle has moved to New York City, where he continues his business, perhaps quietly supplying the Confederate Army, and is able at war's end to buy back several of his father's holdings, including the Central Wharf, for which he pays just \$25. By 1870 all the seized properties are released to the family in a landmark case before the Supreme Court.¹²

¹⁰ Correspondent for the *World*, quoted from *Alexandria Gazette*, May 16, 1861, by T. Michael Miller,

Pen Portraits of Alexandria, Virginia, 1739-1900, p. 202.

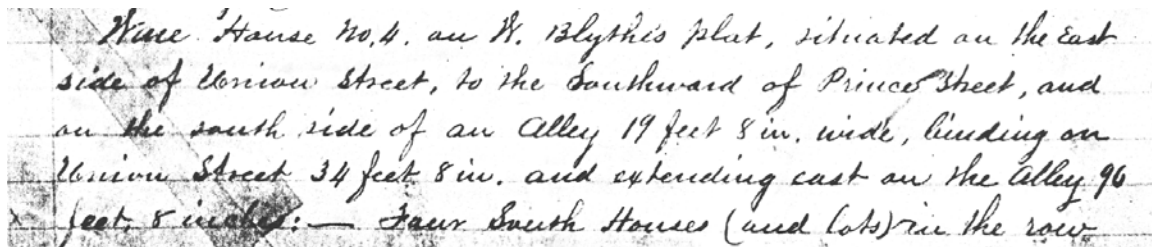
¹¹ Fowle, E. C., *op. cit.*

¹² Kaye, Ruth L. "Properties of Citizens of Alexandria City and Fairfax County Confiscated by the Federal Government during the Civil War" in *Historical Society of Fairfax County*, vol. 30, 2006, pp 18-21.

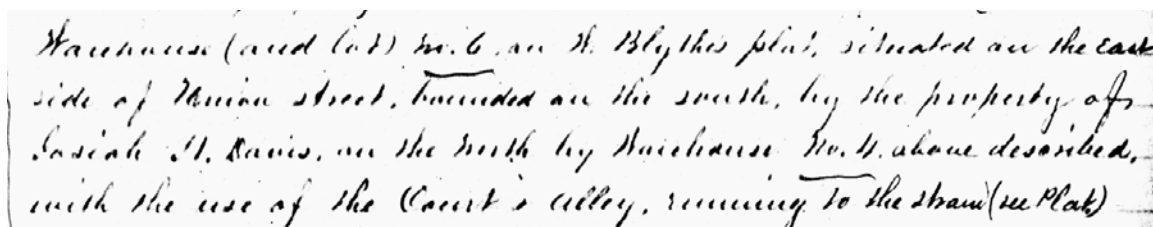
1867 When Fowle's executors and devisees cannot agree on dividing his property, three commissioners are appointed, and at its May term hearing, the Circuit Court approves their decisions. Records of this hearing, with "W. Blythe's plat," which designates 204 as Warehouse # 4 and 206 as Warehouse # 6, are referenced in every succeeding deed. The plat has not survived.

Fowle's daughter Esther Jane, the wife of John St. Clair (var. Sinclair) Brookes receives the ground and warehouses at 204 and 206.

The relevant sections of the deed of partition from Oct. 16, 1867, are below.



Warehouse No. 4, on W. Blythe's plat, situated on the east side of Union Street, to the Southward of Prince Street, and on the south side of an Alley 19 feet 8 in. wide, bounding on Union Street 34 feet 8 in. and extending east on the Alley 96 feet 8 inches. — Four South Houses (and lots) in the row.



Warehouse (and lot) No. 6, on W. Blythe's plat, situated on the east side of Union Street, bounded on the south, by the property of Joseph H. Davis, on the north by Warehouse No. 4, above described, with the use of the Court's Alley, running to the shore (see Plat)

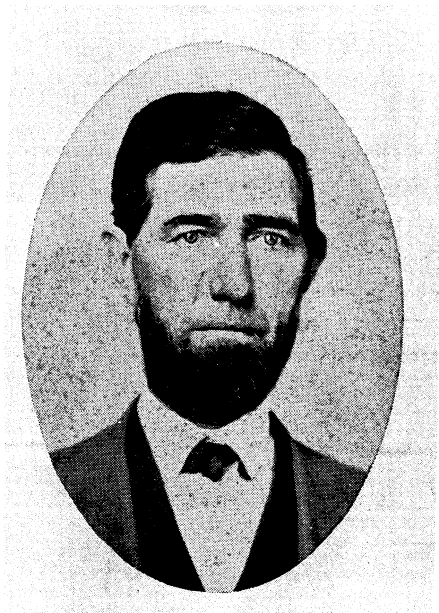
Alexandria Deed Book Y-3, 1867, p. 138

New Tenants at 204 and 206

Before the Civil War, a merchant appears on the waterfront whose family will leave its name into the twenty-first century on the town's largest warehouses (at the site of the old Pioneer Mill and at the foot of Oronoco Street).

George H. Robinson is a towering figure – literally. He stands more than seven feet tall, and while he serves as postmaster for the Confederate Army of Virginia, his superiors keep him off unfamiliar southern routes with their military pickets because of his resemblance to Abraham Lincoln.

After
needs.



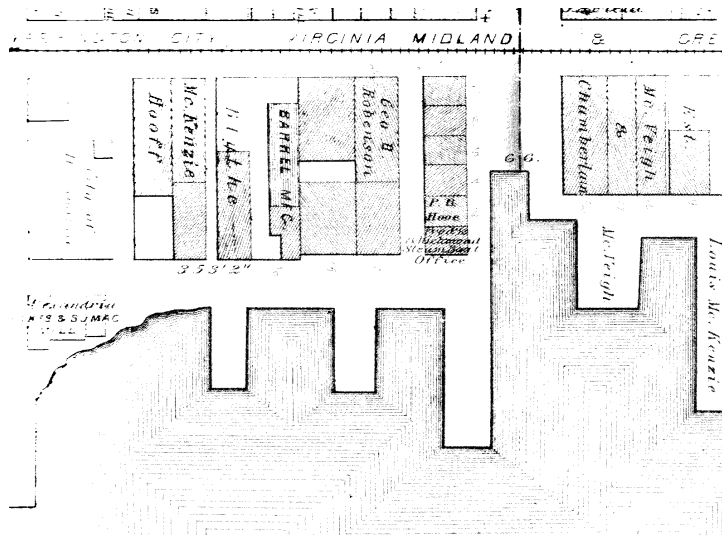
Following the war, Esther Fowle Brookes and her husband lease the warehouse at 204 to Robinson and his son John.

Beginning in the early 1850s, the senior Robinson conducts a merchant's business on the wharf, starting with groceries and adding putty, paint, lampblack and window glass. the war, the firm concentrates on agricultural

George H. Robinson

Ties, the Southern Railway System Magazine, Sept. 1958, p. 7.

Robinson's name is misspelled "Robertson" on this plat from G. M. 1877 *City Atlas of Alexandria*. The courtyard enclosed by a barrel-manufacturing plant. Our warehouses have numbers 28 and 30. These change in the 1930s to the numbering. (Philadelphia, H).



Hopkins' is street will present 1877, Plate

The warehouses retain their agricultural value for years to come.

1881 Esther Brookes dies and her three sons, William Fowle, John St. Clair, and George Holmes Brookes, inherit the warehouses. They rent them to Henry Starr Wattles, a native Alexandrian and a dealer in grain and feed.

It is his son Richard Henry Wattles, then 16 and a clerk at Herbert Bryant's agricultural store, who will leave his mark on both warehouses, making them over into what remains virtually their current appearance. Wattles opens a farm implement and hardware store on Royal Street near City Hall.

1896 R. H. Wattles submits to the City of Alexandria a request for a permit to take down the top two stories at 204 South Union.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Alexandria, Va., *Nov 28th* 1896

To the CITY ENGINEER:

The undersigned applies for a permit to
the following described building:

Description of Present Building

Where located *on Union between Pine & Duke Streets*

No. of buildings to be altered

Name of owner

Area of present building

Name of architect

No. of stories *four*

Name of mechanic

Style of roof *Sh*

Name of occupant

How is the building occupied?

If a dwelling, how many families?

What is the cost of the proposed improvement? \$ *200.00 to 300.00*

Nature of Proposed Alteration, &c.

GIVE DEFINITE PARTICULARS.

I will alter four story brick building owned by Messrs. Wm. A. John & Co. and Geo. T. Wright on the East side of Union street between Pine and Duke to a two story building

For what will the building be used after alteration? *Implement and Fertilizer business*

After alteration will the building conform, in every respect, with the requirements of the building

law? *Yes*

Signature

Richard H. Wattle

Address

Alexandria, Va.

1896 Building permit, No. 17, City Archives

The permit is granted the same day. Note the cost estimated for the project.

1897 It is not recorded whether Wattle has time to realize his plans before the Great Fire of 1897.

On June 2, "the most disastrous fire in the history of Alexandria" breaks out at midnight and for nearly eight hours devours almost the entire 200 block on the east side of Union Street. It rages from Pioneer Mills to Prince Street along the Strand, reducing to ashes the mammoth waterfront warehouses once owned by the Fowles at the northern end of the block and sending rats fleeing from the burning shell of the giant mill.

First reports from the scene have “two brick buildings” belonging to a William Brooks suffering a \$7000 loss. But, when the smoke clears, it appears that 204 at least is intact.

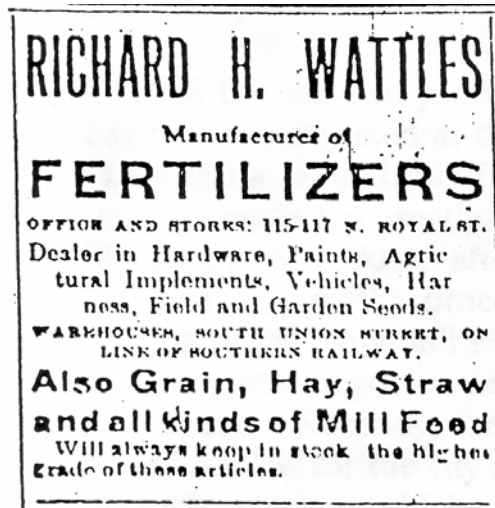
*All the buildings with the exception of the one occupied by Mr. Richard S. (sic) Wattles and owned by Mr. William H. F. Brooks and the wharf owned by Mr. William Reardon, were entirely consumed. The property of these gentlemen ignited several times, but by good management of the Fire Department was saved.*¹³

Perhaps because two of the brothers are not living in Alexandria, only William is noted as owner.

¹³ Descriptions of fire are from *The Washington Post*, June 3 and June 4, 1897.

Wattles' Mill

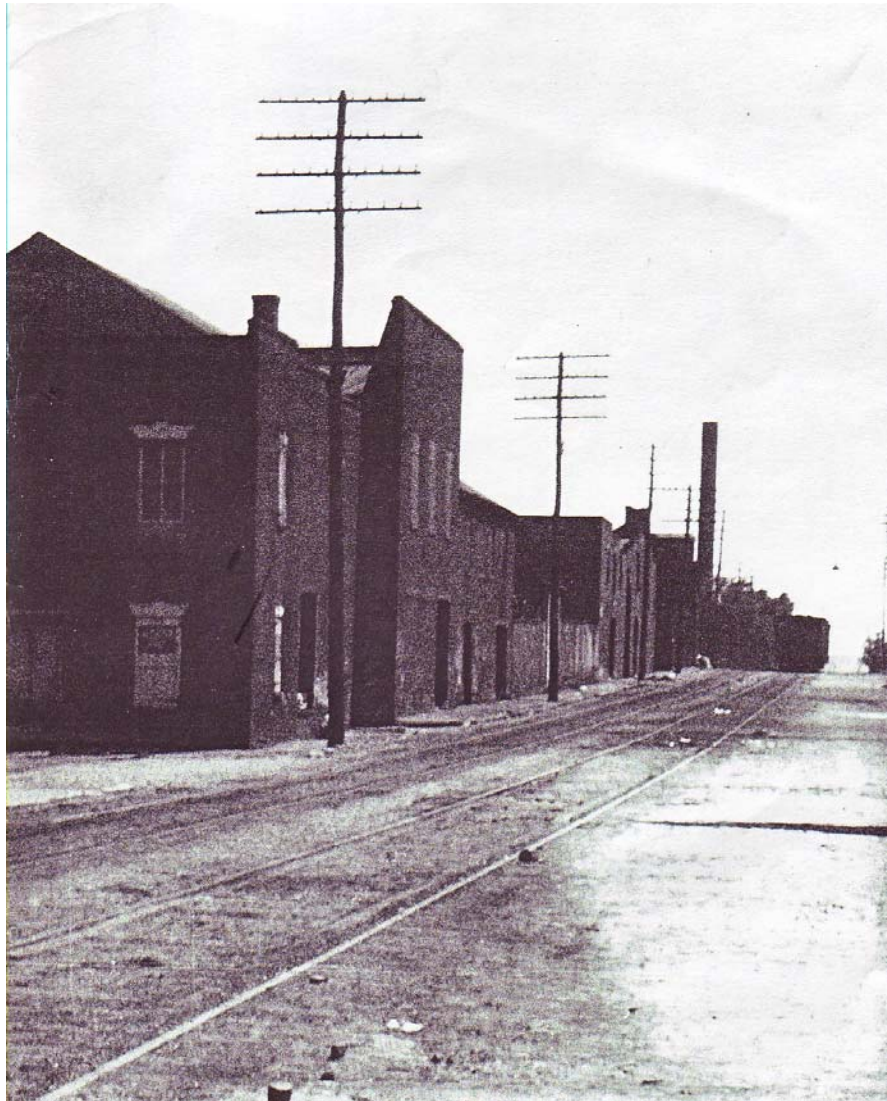
1900 On Nov. 24, Richard Wattles, 35, acquires both properties from the Brookes brothers.¹⁴



Wattles runs this ad for many years in the *Alexandria Gazette*.

The photograph on the next page, looking south along Union, provides a unique view of the warehouses early in the 20th century.

¹⁴ *Alexandria Deed Book 46, p. 247.*



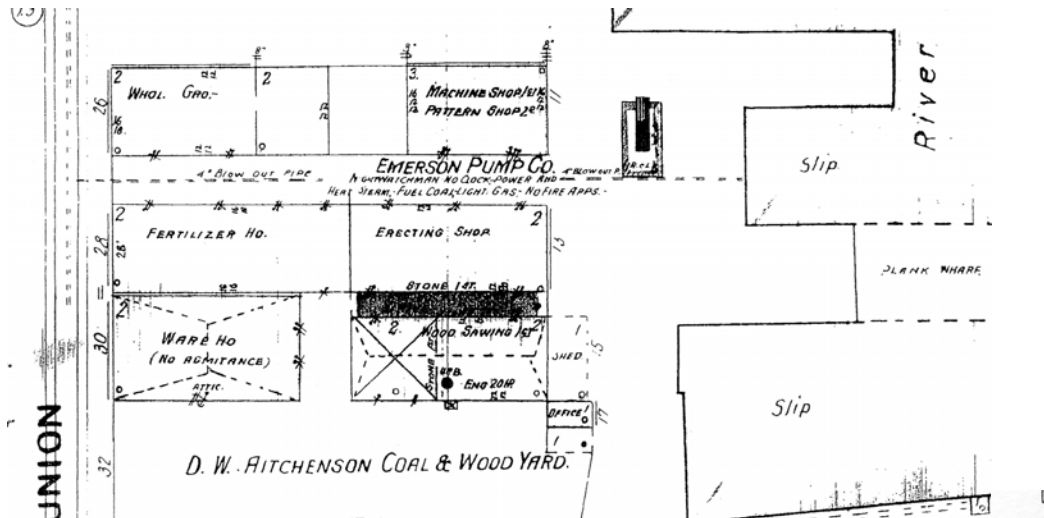
from photo #764, 1912, *William Smith Collection*
Alexandria Library, Local History, Special Collections

The building in the foreground is at the southeast corner of Prince and Union streets, then occupied by Swift & Co. Just beyond it is the opening for the alley and then the Fowle/Wattles warehouses. 204 has its odd parapet hiding an attic space, all that is left of the original two top floors. 206 is in its original form, two stories with a hip roof.¹⁵ 1912 is the year Wattles will rebuild it.

¹⁵ See *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* for 1912, map # 12.

1912 On Feb. 7, R. H. Wattles applies for a building permit.¹⁶ He will erect a new three-story “mill and warehouse” on a concrete foundation, although the “old foundation of stone [is] in part to remain.” Also remaining will be “the side walls of the present building.” The new roof will be flat and made of tin. The walls will be 17 inches thick at the cellar and first level and 13 inches thick on the second and third floors. He will install nine weight-bearing columns on the ground floor and “disc anchors” (tie bars).

The Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the years 1907 and 1912 reflect the changes in construction and contents from fertilizer warehouse to flour mill.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1907 (above) and 1912 (below), Alexandria Library Special Collections

OFFICE AND STORES
115-117 N. ROYAL.

RICHARD H. WATTLES
— MANUFACTURER OF —
FERTILIZERS

AND DEALER IN
GRAIN, HAY, STRAW AND ALL
KINDS OF MILL FEED,
SALT, &c.

Fertilizer Factory Elevator and Mills
Foot of Wolfe St. South Union St.

Alexandria Gazette, Nov. 5, 1912, p. 3.

1928 On Dec. 21, Richard Henry Wattles dies suddenly at the age of 63 at his home at 209 Prince Street. He is unmarried and leaves four sisters and one brother.

Mr. Wattles was engaged in the feed and grain business, his establishment being located at 204 South Union street. He had been in that business for more than a quarter of a century and had one of the most modern plants in northern Virginia, his business having grown in volume each year. Prior to engaging in business for himself he for many years was employed by the late Herbert Bryant. Mr. Wattles' brother, the late Charles William Wattles, died June 23 of this year as the result of injuries sustained when an automobile plunged from the wharf of the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat company. The accident occurred on June 2. At the time Mr. Wattles attempted to back the car into the wharf shed.

Alexandria Gazette Dec. 22, 1928, p. 1.

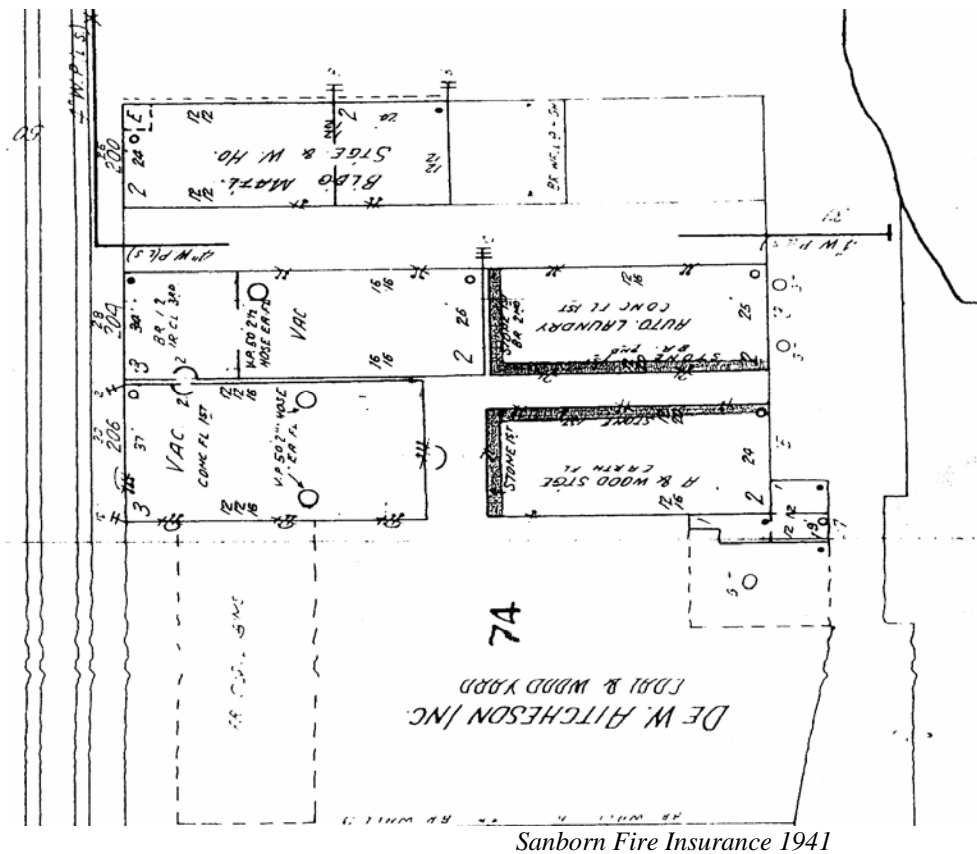
1931 The mill at 206 (30 S. Union) is not in operation and 204 (28 S. Union) is a vacant warehouse.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* 1931, # 12.

From Feed to Furniture

During the next few years Baltimore Feed and Grain Co. and then Star Food & Remedy Co., Inc., occupy both buildings, but from 1940 to 1945 the warehouses are again vacant.¹⁸

1941 On the map below, the description of the warehouse at 204 has changed. A third floor is indicated on the front third of the building. It seems unlikely that a third story would have been added during the Depression years. Is this a fine-tuning of the earlier maps?



In **1945** Aircraft Components, Inc., moves in. The City Directory for 1950 still lists the aircraft firm as occupants, although both warehouses are bought in 1949 for a furniture-assembly shop.

¹⁸ *Alexandria City Directories.*

Harris Pine Mills

It is difficult to imagine two entrepreneurs with more dissimilar personalities than the men who will next own the warehouses.

1949 Oct. 24, Harris Pine Mills, Inc., purchases 204 and 206 South Union for a furniture-assembly shop.¹⁹

Founder and president of the firm is a carpenter, Cyrus H. Harris, who in 40 years has built a box-assembly shop in Pendleton, Oregon, into an unfinished-furniture business with annual sales variously estimated at five to seven million dollars and a payroll of \$2.5 million. The company owns assembly plants in Chicago, Illinois, and Cleburne, Texas, as well as in Alexandria.

The conveyor belt, which originates in the half-story at the top of 204 and travels through a second floor doorway into 206 and down to ground level, was probably installed by the firm. The pools of congealed glue on the masonite floors of the second level were left by the assembly workers.

1953 In January, Cyrus Harris stuns the business world by turning over the firm to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. *Time Magazine* headlines the donation as the “\$5,000,000 Tithe.”

Through the years Adventist Harris, like most others of his faith, regularly tithed, i.e. gave 10% of his income to the church. But he wished to do even more. Recently, after talking things over with his wife – they have no children – he decided to turn over Harris Pine Mills, Inc. lock, stock and boards to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Said Harris: “I feel that all the talents we have belong to the Lord. We should return these talents to Him before we die.”²⁰

¹⁹ *Alexandria Deed Book* 289, p. 138.

²⁰ UU<http://www.time/magazine/article/0,9171,889669,00.html>

Interarms

1958 On May 28, the Oregon Corporation of Seventh Day Adventists conveys 204 and 206 South Union to Samuel Cummings. ²¹

Cummings has already a bigger-than-life presence on the Alexandria waterfront. For five years he has been accumulating properties along South Union Street to house the goods for his international gun dealership, and 10 Prince Street for the firm's office.

As a student at Oxford, he tours the armament-strewn World War II battlefields and resolves to become a dealer in weapons. After service with the CIA as an Agency gun purchaser, he establishes his own import/export business, Interarmco, later changed to Interarms as the result of a lawsuit by Armco Steel Corp. He is profiled on Sixty Minutes in 1978 and is the subject of countless newspaper articles.

Cummings lives in Monte Carlo in relative anonymity but is in touch with his Alexandria office almost daily, overseeing the complicated logistics of selling deadly missiles to dictators and revolutionaries, to the U.S. government and to U.S. enemies.

"The arms business," he tells an interviewer in 1989, "is based on human folly, and folly has yet to be measured nor its depths plumbed." He was, says the *New York Times* at his death at 71 in May 1998, "a genial man who was an unabashed merchant of death."²²

All that remains of Interarms' empire today are the Prince Street office and these two warehouses, which in 2009 are rented to three firms. Cummings' Investment Associates (note the acronym) is also here; as is the firing range he installed along the eastern wall of 206.

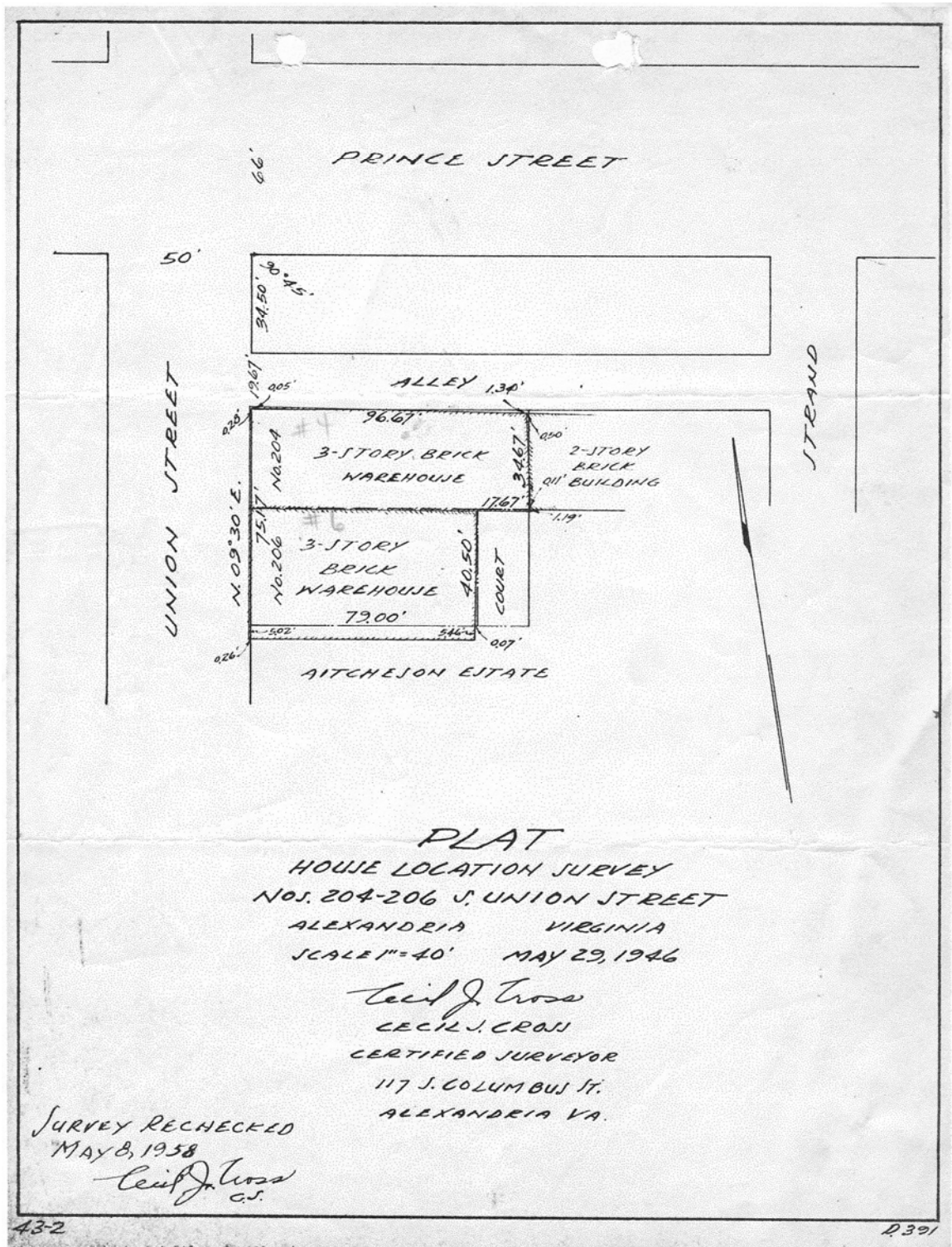


The New York Times, May 5, 1998
Samuel Cummings

The arms dealer holds a submachine gun during an interview in his Prince Street office in 1996.

²¹ *Alexandria Deed Book 470*, page 83.

²² *New York Times*, May 5, 1998, section A, p. 29.



Courtesy of Cummings Investment Associates