



The Fireside Sentinel

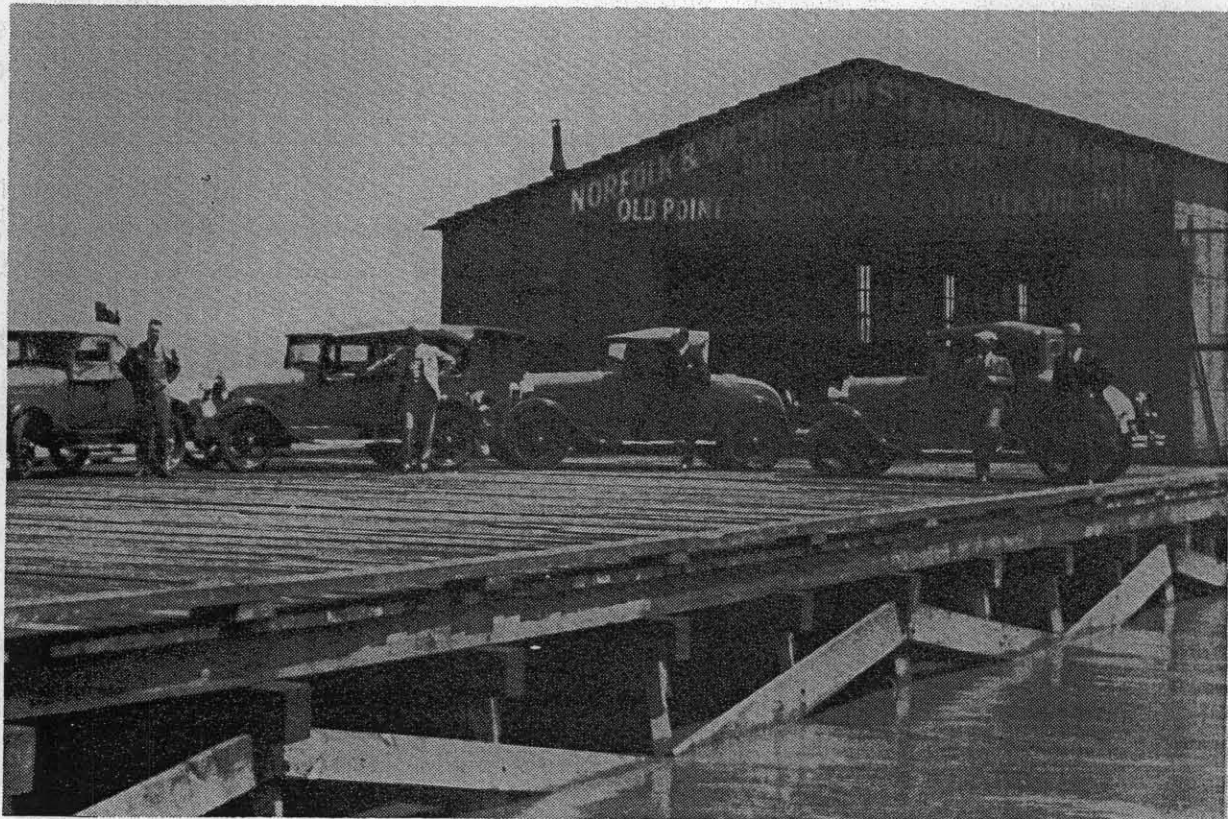
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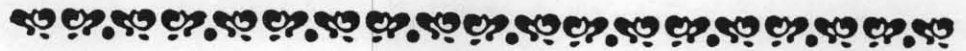
THE PRINCE TO DUKE STREET WATERFRONT Part II

by T. Michael Miller

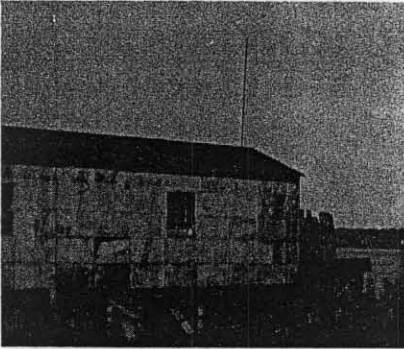
Throughout its history, the Prince Street pier has pulsed with activity as hundreds of ships docked at its wharf and off-loaded their cargoes of guano, manufactured goods and agricultural commodities. It has been the scene of vibrant mercantile enterprise as Alexandria's merchant princes basked in the sunshine of economic prosperity.



Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company wharf, 1920's.
[Alexandria Library, Lloyd House, Loeb collection]



From time to time the area fell into the economic doldrums as wharves rotted and the massive old warehouses crumbled into a state of disrepair. Unfortunately, the Prince Street wharf was not always kept in a sanitary condition. In August 1797 the *Alexandria Times* reported that the region was in a putrid and nauseous state:



Prince Street dock
[Alexandria Library, Lloyd
House, Gamble Collection]

The dock on Prince Street is a receptacle of filth alone sufficient to breed a pestilential contagion. At low tide it is entirely bare, and the vegetable and animal substances swept down by the gutters, and the melon rinds, etc. thrown from the boats, lay exposed to the rays of the sun. The stench produced from it is intolerable and the pernicious consequences which may result are incalculable [and may endanger the health of the neighborhood.] [Alex. Times: 8/22/1797] [See also AG: 6/29/1844; 3/26/1853]

The wharf deteriorated due to its frequent use by shippers and constant exposure to the elements. After silt clogged the harbor, dredging operations were undertaken in April 1868. In June 1882, the Prince Street dock was filled in, the street repaved and the work of widening and repairing Union Street commenced. Several years later in August 1899, the Rodgers brothers, who were local contractors, successfully bid on a contract to repair and extend the Prince Street wharf to the Port Warden's line. It was then anticipated that the steamer *Kent*, which had been purchased by the Young Men's Christian Association of Washington, would use the new facility on its trip down river. [AG: 4/17/1868; 6/16/1882; 7/14/1886; 8/23/1899]

The riverfront has also served as a major source of entertainment for Alexandrians. Crowds frequently gathered at the Prince Street wharf to view the arrival of steamboats and other excursion vessels. On December 11, 1878, the new steamer *W. W. Corcoran*, handsomely fitted up, moored there and was greeted by an enthusiastic throng of well-wishers.

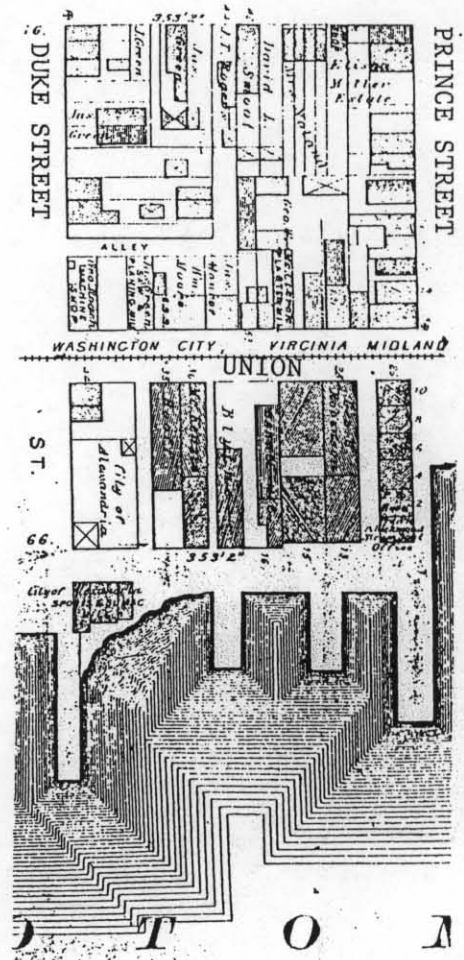
"The wharf deteriorated due to its frequent use by shippers and constant exposure to the elements."

On occasion, an orgy of violence erupted on the river as denizens engaged in brawls and fisticuffs. During the Civil War, on November 18, 1863, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported that two regiments of the Federal occupation army became embroiled in a spirited skirmish on lower Prince Street:

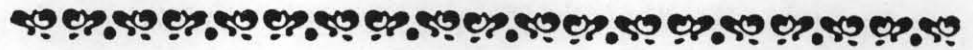
A disturbance took place last night between some members of the 164th N.Y., and the 1st District of Columbia Volunteers, which eventuated in a fight, in which pistols and stones were freely used. During the melee a member of the 146th was shot through the breast, the wound inflicted being, it is supposed, mortal, and another of the same regiment received a slight wound in the top of his head, also, from a pistol ball. Mrs. Webster, an old lady of upwards of 60 years, who was at Mrs. Vacari's residence, and went out to shut the window blind, received a shot through the left shoulder, the ball passing around and lodging near the surface below the shoulder blade. The ball was extracted but her condition is considered very critical.

Mary Surratt, the boarding house keeper who befriended John Wilkes Boothe and was subsequently hanged [July 7, 1865] for her alleged role in the Lincoln assassination, also figured in the history of the Alexandria waterfront. After her death, the door to Mrs. Surratt's cell in which she had been confined was brought to Alexandria and used as a gangway plank at the Prince Street wharf. [AG: 6/20/1872] [Prior to the Civil War, Mary (Jenkins) Surratt had attended classes in Alexandria as a young girl at the Sister of Charity's school on the S.W. corner of Duke and S. Fairfax Streets]

Probably one of the most solemn incidents associated with the Prince Street wharf occurred in October 1883 when the bodies of 107 North Carolina soldiers who had been exhumed from Arlington Cemetery were loaded onboard the steamer George Leary for passage to Norfolk and subsequent reburial in their native state. "The scene as the procession moved slowly down King street was solemn and impressive; the funeral march by the band, the folded colors and



Prince to Duke Street
waterfront [1877
Hopkins City Atlas]



reversed arms of the military, the escort of veterans, and the streets crowded with sympathizing spectators, all contributing to render it one to be remembered." [AG: 10/15/1883]

The Prince Street dock has been the scene of several accidents and drownings through the years. For instance, in January 1857 a young man "while skating on the river, opposite the foot of Prince Street, broke through the ice and for some time his situation was very perilous. After several unsuccessful attempts to rescue him, a sailor from a vessel, lying at the wharf, succeeded in getting a rope to him, and he was pulled out, much exhausted and nearly frozen." [AG: 1/12/1857] Considerable excitement was also occasioned in 1895 when Mr. Charles Howell, his wife and child, while attempting to exit the excursion steamer *City of Richmond*, fell off a gangplank and plunged into the Potomac. Four years before, a Miss Dove had drowned on the 4th of July 1891, at the same dock while deplaning the steamer *George Leary*. [AG: 6/27/1895] In November 1927, A.T. Jackson barely escaped disaster as he drove his car down Prince Street and mistook the green light on the Norfolk and Washington steamer for a traffic signal. While the boat was taking on freight Jackson proceeded at full throttle for the wharf, where he jumped the 5-foot seawall before his car, a Hudson, stopped 10 feet from shore under the Potomac River. Fortunately, he escaped a watery grave as a large crowd gathered to watch the Belle Haven tow truck pull his car to shore. [AG: 11/28/1927]



On May 30, 1868, Capt. Enoch Davis of the sloop Mary E. Butler was the victim of an unprovoked attack at the Prince Street Wharf by an unknown assailant from Washington, D.C. Luckily, Davis, who had been disabled since infancy, was accompanied by friends who assisted him.

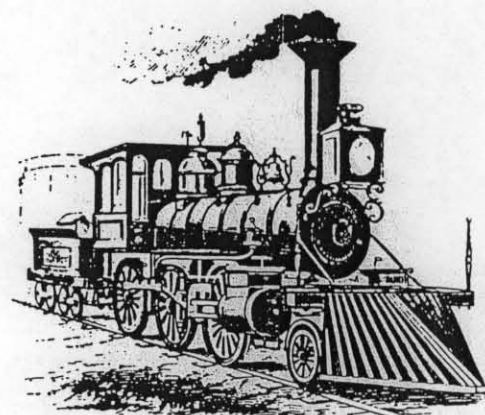
Railroads have played a seminal role in the commercial development of the Union Street corridor. From 1851 to the early 1960's, the tracks of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad connected Union Street merchants to the rich agricultural hinterland of Virginia. Life along the waterfront was punctuated by the sounds of hissing locomotives, shrill whistles, the clank of bells and the rattle of freight cars as they moved slowly along the tracks. These iron horses transported passengers and freight including guano, plaster and groceries into the heartland of Virginia. Although not numerous, train accidents did cause fatalities among Alexandrians. "As a freight train of cars was coming down Union Street [on February 27, 1856], a wagoner attempted to drive his team and wagon across the track, at the foot of Prince Street, but when on the track, one of the horses fell,

and before the wagon could be removed, "the engine struck the vehicle and smashed it to pieces. Fortunately the owner escaped with his life." [AG: 2/28/1856].

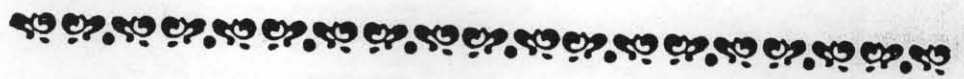
Such was not the case with William Meade and Ernest Travers who suffered serious accidents while playing on the 200 block of S. Union Street. Meade, the nephew of Ruth Vacarri of the 100 block of Prince Street, had his legs and feet terribly mangled when he fell from a railroad car while hanging on the train. Ernest Travers, another victim, was nearly killed in March 1890. While skylarking on the railroad cars on Union Street, between Prince and Duke, he fell under the train while in motion, "by which his entire left arm was crushed into a shapeless mass from the shoulder to the tips of the fingers. The unfortunate youth was one of a number who are rash enough evening after evening to hang on to moving trains as they pass up or down Union street, and despite the efforts of the trainmen, are heedless of the warnings which are given them of the danger they run of falling under the wheels." Sixteen cars had passed over Travers' limb before the train could be stopped and a carriage summoned to transport him to his parents' home on N. Lee Street. [AG: 3/19/1890]

City officials received many complaints regarding the noisy and dangerous freight trains which traversed the S. Union Street tracks. On September 23, 1948, Vivian Branch, a resident of lower Prince Street, published the following diatribe in the *Alexandria Gazette*:

"...the big iron horse locomotive really cut capers. Alone with no cars attached, the engine seesawed back and forth across Prince Street, within that small area...about ten times. I wondered when Prince Street had become the round house or train yard--what with such atomic-sized puffs of black smoke and horror noises...noises worse than the screech of a wild hurricane wind. Needless to say, I had to put down all the windows to keep the layer of cinders from the draperies and clean counterpanes. Later I saw that the whole end of Prince Street at Union was covered with a layer of big black cinders."



"...I wondered when Prince Street had become the round house or train yard -- what with such atomic-sized puffs of black smoke and horror noises..."



19TH AND 20TH CENTURY BUSINESS HOUSES ALONG THE PRINCE TO DUKE STREET CORRIDOR

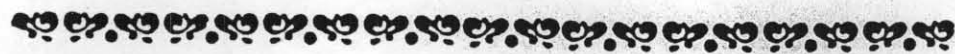
Numbers of business and commercial houses dotted the Prince to Duke Street corridor during the 19th and 20th centuries. The *Alexandria Gazette* of August 3, 1853 described Union Street as "especially improved by some spacious new warehouses . . . In a few years the whole appearance of things here will be changed." During this era "nearly all the trade of the city was concentrated on that thoroughfare and the Strand." [AG: 7/30/1895] The following is a partial listing of business firms that have been gleaned from local tax and land records, maps, directories and newspaper advertisements:

LAMB'S TAVERN/UNION TAVERN: Lamb's Tavern, a large three-story frame building, with a high porch in the front was located on the N.W. corner of S. Union and Duke Streets. It had the distinction of being the first meeting place of the old Alexandria Washington Lodge. On February 25, 1783, a warrant was read from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, which appointed "Robert Adam, Michael Ryan, and William Hunter, Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, respectively of a Lodge, No. 39, to be held in the Borough of Alexandria..." Many of these early masons were intimate friends of George Washington and had served in the Revolutionary War with him. [Dr. Elisha C. Dick, Charles Litle, George Gilpin, George Deneale, Dennis Ramsay, Charles Simms, Samuel Hilton, Roger West, etc.] [Robert Brockett, The Lodge of Washington, p. 34; AG: 6/3/1875]

In 1796, John Gadsby, Alexandria's renown boniface, announced that he had fitted up a large and convenient tavern well provided with a large stable and the best hay, oats on the N.W. corner of Duke and S. Union Streets. Samuel Hilton, famous for his turtle soup, oysters, fish and wild fowl, subsequently became the proprietor from 1796 until November 1799. During Hilton's tenure, several itinerant entertainers performed there including Andrew Conrense, a magician from Italy. Located under the tavern, John Myers & Company also marketed the best Philadelphia porter and beer on Union Street in May 1796. [Col. Mirror: 5/31/1796]



Horace Field established a nailery in 1806 in the 200 block of S. Union Street. He kept on hand brads, springs of every description; solid brass and iron butt hinges, pad locks, cork screws, plough plats, German and crowley steel. [AG: 9/27/1806; 9/11/1807; 4/5/1809]



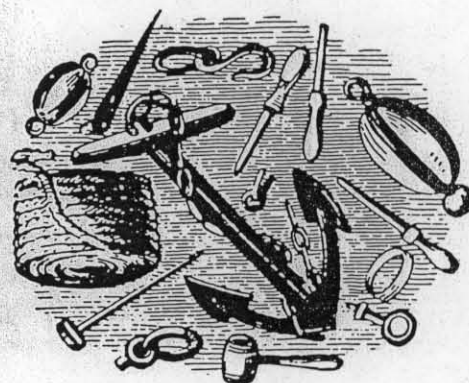
Dwindling patronage perhaps induced Hilton to lease the tavern in February 1798. By December 1799, William Buel informed the public that he had rented the facility where he offered to board six or eight gentlemen. The tavern was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1803. Subsequently, the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* of April 14, 1804 announced the public sale on the 19th of "a quantity of brick & stone, the remains of the Union Tavern, the property of the late William Hunter." [Col. Mirror: 2/25/1796; Adv. Times: 3/7/1798; 12/24/1799; Alexandria Hustling Court Deedbook: L, p. 46, 319]

THOMAS PRESTON: A carpenter and joiner, Preston was the proprietor of a lumberyard near Point Lumley during the late 18th century. Among the items he offered here in 1798 were choice rafters, scantling, pine and oak, white oak sills, girders and wall plates, laths, window glass, shingles, locust posts, brick, lime, hair and New England plank. [Alexandria Advertiser: 1/1/1798; 2/2/1798; 2/27/1798] In May 1809, the City Council ordered that the Duke Street dock be leased out for two years or until Preston's lease had expired. Unfortunately, Preston suffered severe losses when the 1810 fire consumed the waterfront.

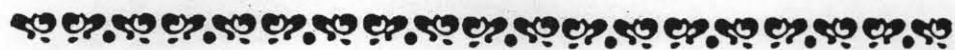
In 1818, Preston leased a house and lot at Point Lumley to William B. Stewart, a tavern keeper who established a new livery stable there and offered to hire out hacks, gigs, and horses. [AG: 10/28/1818; 7/11/1820]

THOMAS WILSON, a member of the Society of Friends, operated a business at Duke Street and the Strand. A resident of Strawberry Hill, a farm about 3 miles west of Alexandria on Duke Street, both Wilson and his wife Mary died in August 1819 and were probably interred at the Quaker Cemetery at 717 Queen Street... [AG: 8/24/1819]

COHAGAN & WHITTLE: Proprietors of a fireproof store on the S.W. corner of Union and Prince Street, these merchants were active in the 1820's. They sold Irish whiskey, sugar, candles, cider vinegar, Holland gin, coffee, etc. [AG: 1/17/1828]



Capt. Benjamin T. Fendall operated a grocery and ship chandlery on the S.E. Corner of Prince and S. Union Street in 1845. [AG: 11/3/1845]



WILLIAM CLEARY: Prince & Union Street. As agents for the Powhatan Seine Manufacturing Company, Cleary sold shad and herring seine twine. [AG: 3/12/1831]

JOHN HART'S PUMP MAKER'S SHOP: "Sale of valuable Real Estate...on Union street, directly opposite the new store of Robert G. Violet, and now occupied by Mr. John Hart as a block and pump maker's shop beginning on the west side of Union street, 59 feet, 9 inches north of Duke street, thence north on Union street 29 feet 9 inches, thence west parallel with Duke street 70 feet to an 18 feet alley, thence south on alley the length of front line, thence to the beginning with the right of way over said alley. The improvements on said lot, consist of a large and substantial brick building, two stories high and covered with slate, and it has been built expressly with a view to the storage of heavy goods. This property is a desirable location for a merchant commencing business, being directly on the railroad and in the business part of the city, within a few yards of the wharf and in the immediate vicinity of the extensive Flour Mill of Messrs. Fowle & Co. [AG: 3/25/1854 p. 3.]

WILLIAM FOWLE & COMPANY: S.W. corner of the Strand and Prince Street: This enterprise was in operation as early as 1819 and sold, hemp, sugar, lumber, potatoes, Madeira wine, brown soap, beef, etc. In bygone days Fowle & Co. was the agent of the Peruvian government for the sale in Northern Virginia of Peruvian guano. At times, two ships from the Chincha Islands could be seen unloading guano at this dock. [AG: 4/4/1918] In 1851, the firm was an agent for the Mt. Savage Fire Brick company. In January 1859, William Fowle & Co. leased several buildings on the 200 block of South Union Street: the three-storied warehouse, corner of Prince and Union Streets, at present occupied by Messrs. Hill, Brown & Partlow; the Warehouse on Prince Street, a few doors east of Union Street, at present occupied by Messrs. Ford & Wickliffe; The new four-storied warehouse on the east side of Union street, two doors south of Prince Street, corner of an alley; the Warehouse on the wharf, immediately east of the last named... [AG: 4/17/1851; 1/22/1859]

THOMAS HILL, JR. AND JAMES F. BROWN of Culpeper County, and M.Y. Partlow of Alexandria formed a co-partnership for the purpose of conducting a general grocery, produce and commission

TOBACCO, SEGARS, AND SNUFF.—Just received, and for sale, by the subscriber, at low prices—
 10 boxes superior A lbs. lump Tobacco, Lily of Virginia Brand
 10 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 2 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 48 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 20 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 5 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 5 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 10,000 Superior Spanish Segars, Havannah and
 10,000 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 50,000 Half Spanish
 10 Boxes Pipes
 30 Jara Rappee, Maccubau Snuffs
 Garretts Bonna Scotch Snuff, in bottles and
 Smoking Tobacco in papers
ISAAC BUCKINGHAM,
 mh 9—dtf Corner of Prince and Union-sts.

Isaac Buckingham's
 Tobacco Store, corner of
 Prince and Union
 Streets, sold "Tobacco,
 Segars and snuff...smoking tobacco in papers, 30 jars Rappee, Maccubau snuffs, Garretts Bonns Scotch snuff in bottles."
 [AG: 3/16/1846;
 12/13/1850]

FISHBACK & BRO.
 EDWARD FISHBACK. W. G. FISHBACK.
 Grocers and Commission Merchants,
 PRINCE STREET DOCK, ALEXANDRIA, VA.,
 RESPECTFULLY solicit consignments, and
 pledge themselves to give entire satisfaction to every one entrusting business to their
 care.
 GOODS for country merchants received and
 forwarded with despatch, on very low terms.
REFERENCES.
 Baltimore, Md.—Messrs. Hammond, Pollard
 Lawrason; Russell, Werdebaugh & Co.; Wil-
 son, Young & Co.; Coale & Hopkins; Byrd,
 Smith & Tiffany.
 Culpeper, Co., Va.—Hon. J. Morton, Wm.
 Winston, J. J. Halsey, P. P. Nalle.
 Orange, Va.—Col. J. A. Porter, George Pan-
 ill, E. E. Gibson.
 mh 8

[AG: 11/7/1851]

business in March 1854. They kept on hand groceries, lime, plaster, salt, guano, clover seed, and took consignments of flour, wheat, corn, etc.[AG: 3/20/1854]

FISHBACK & BROTHERS: Grocers and commission merchants at the Prince Street dock--"Respectfully solicit consignments and pledge themselves to give entire satisfaction to every one entrusting business to their care. Goods for country merchants received and forwarded with despatch, on very low terms." [AG: 11/7/1851, p. 1.]

WILLIAM S. MOORE'S MACHINE & PATTERN SHOP: William S. Moore, a City Councilman, owned the iron and brass works at 212 S. Union Street. Born in Alexandria, November 21, 1821, Moore commenced his foundry business in 1852 and worked diligently to advance his business fortunes.

"His machine works consisted of a four-story building, 35 x 170 feet. It was four stories high and he employed an average of twenty-five men. On the first floor were the turning lathes and all classes of machinery; second floor the same, and on the third and fourth floors patterns were stored."

Moore made all kinds of castings in iron and brass and his business extended all over the United States. The government furnished him with large contracts as did the manufacturers of brick throughout the States. [AG: 9/16/1893] There was a minor fire at Moore's foundry on October 30, 1888.

WILLIAM R. GLASSCOCK: General commission and forwarding merchant, corner of Prince and Union Streets on the railroad. "ATTENTION FARMERS--subscriber respectfully solicits consignments of Flour, Grain and produce of every description, promising all the satisfaction which a diligent and faithful attention to the interests of his patrons can ensure." [AG: 10/23/1854, p.4.] Glasscock took over Kincheloe's & Smith's business. [AG: 6/19/1854]

ROSENTHAL SUMAC MILL and SPOKE FACTORY (1860's): S. corner of Duke and S. Union Streets [not in operation at present]; "Mr. Emil Rosenthal, who leased the old Rumney's wharf property from the City of Alexandria, started into operation a steam

HOOE & WEDDERBURN, INSURANCE AGENCY,

No. 2, Prince street,

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

FIRE, LIFE, & MARINE INSURANCE.

LIVERPOOL & LONDON & GLOBE
INSURANCE COMP'Y.

Assets (Gold).....\$16,000,000
In the U. S. 1,500,000

FIRE AND LIFE INS.
46, WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

POLICIES ISSUED, PAYABLE IN GOLD, STERLING,

OR CURRENCY,

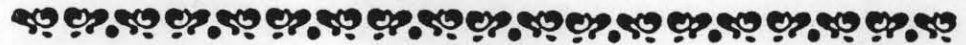
Shareholders personally responsible for all
liabilities of the company.

All Directors Must Be Shareholders

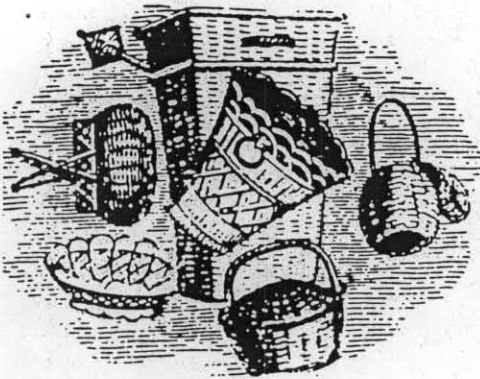
Directors in New York:

F. Cottonell, Henry Grinnell,
Jos. Gaillard, Alex. Hamilton, Jr.,
M. M. Archibald, E. F. Sanderson,
H. B. M. Consul,
Alfred Fell, Resident Secretary.

[AG: 7/13/1866]



manufactory of wagon and cart wheel hubs, spokes and felloes, which is expected to turn out 1,500 to 2,000 spokes per day. In conjunction and propelled by the same engine (which is thirty horsepower, and made in our own city by our accomplished machinist, Mr. W.S. Moore) will be run a sumac mill. Mr. Rosenthal has established these mills at a cost of, I think, \$25,000." A fire caused a small amount of damage there in March 1868. Emil Rosenthal died in Washington, D.C. on April 3, 1900. [AG: 6/27/1866; 9/22/1866; 11/21/1866; 3/7/1868]



Joseph Schlevogt established a willow ware manufactory in October 1870 at the corner of Union and Prince Street, making baskets, cane seats, etc. [AG: 10/5/1870]

HOOE & WEDDERBURN: Philip Hooe and Alexander Wedderburn, commission merchants, at the S.W. corner of the Strand and Prince Street: "Wholesale Dealers and Importers in all kinds of fertilizers, plaster, salt, tobacco, grain, flour, syrup, fish. We purchase, on commission, all description of grain, wheat, corn rye and oats and have constantly on hand a large supply of Cumberland & Bituminous coal for sale by the Cargo; We shall also be prepared to fill orders from our friends throughout the country, for fish of every kind and grade, including Potomac Herring, shad and the Eastern fish; we make liberal advances on all consignments to our friends in Baltimore, New York, Liverpool and London and attend promptly to the forwarding of all goods reconsigned to us through us." [AG: 7/13/1866] In August 1866, Hooe & Wedderburn offered to lease their store house on the S.W. corner of Prince and Union streets, now occupied by M. Eldridge & Company. [AG: 9/4/1866] Manchester Eldridge and F.A. Reed were commission merchants and agents for the Washington, Alexandria and Philadelphia Steamers.

Hooe & Wedderburn were also engaged in a number of other enterprises. As agents for a line of steamers which sailed between New York, Alexandria and Georgetown, they offered both freight and passenger service from their wharf at the foot of Prince Street. [AG: 6/28/1866] In addition, these entrepreneurs operated an insurance company which offered fire, life & marine insurance at Number 2 Prince Street. [AG: 11/3/1866, p.4.; 4/4/1918, p. 1.]

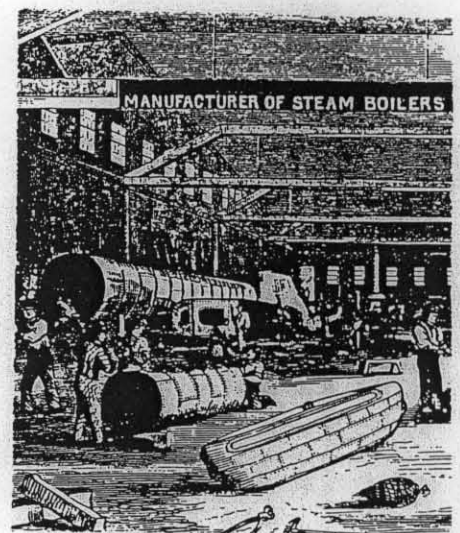
THE OLD DOMINION BOAT CLUB (1880's) "has long been associated with the Alexandria waterfront. Formally chartered on May 20, 1881, the organization first leased property on the Strand between Prince and Duke Streets on May 1 that year. By 1883 members

had constructed a building and purchased the site. The club was composed of representative young men of the city, who devoted considerable time to their favorite enjoyment. Early members included President George A. Mushback; Vice President and Captain, L.E. Uhler; Secretary M.B. Perry; and J.E. Blackwell, secretary." During the Gay Nineties members rowed barges down the Potomac River and picnicked at a farm below Marshall Hall, then an amusement center. Misfortune befell the organization in July 1895 when its boat house was destroyed by fire resulting in the sale of the property.

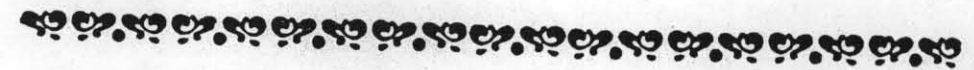
The club was later reorganized and the following officers were elected to serve for the term 1895-96: President, Albert Bryan; Vice President Nicholas P. Burke; Secretary, J.F. Peyton; Treasurer, H.R. Burke; Captain, L.E. Uhler; 1st Lt. J.L. Perry; and 2nd Lt. Gardner L. Boothe, Sr. The former property was subsequently repurchased and a new boat house constructed. Unfortunately the Strand was once again visited by fire on June 3, 1897 and in one of the city's most destructive blazes eleven businesses and many warehouses were destroyed.

On March 8, 1898, a committee was appointed to have the club rebuilt at a cost of not over \$2,000. The club was the scene of many social activities during these halcyon days at the turn of the century and frequently there were dances, minstrel shows and spirited regattas. Ray Gallagher writes that in the late teens and twenties, "the club boasted 62 canoes and it was not unusual for several canoes, filled with camping gear and Club members with their ladies, to take off for a week and travel as far away as Lynchburg, Va., utilizing every stream available enroute and camping overnight along shores and cooking meals sometimes made up of fish caught along the way."

Two fires, one on November 18, 1919, in which eighteen boats and shells were destroyed, and another blaze on March 21, 1922 at which time over 50 canoes were destroyed and \$15,000 worth of damage incurred, finally terminated the boat club's existence on the Prince to Duke Street waterfront. In 1923, the Old Dominion Boat Club removed to the site of the old Alexandria-Washington Ferry Building at the foot of King Street where it constructed a new facility which continues in operation today. Highlights of the building's dedication on June 12, 1923, included a performance by Maggie Bale's six-piece



In 1883, Gorman and Pettit were proprietors of the Alexandria Boiler Works, the only establishment of its kind in the City. It was located on Union Street between Prince and Duke Streets.



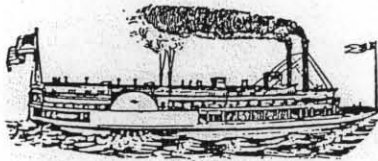
orchestra with a performance by the "Songbird of Cherrydale," Miss Kate Smith, later the nationally-famous singer. [Raymond Gallagher, editor, The First Hundred Years: Old Dominion Boat Club, 1880-1980]

NORFOLK AND WASHINGTON STEAMBOAT COMPANY:
Established in 1890, this company offered both freight and passenger service from the foot of Prince Street. Mr. C. W. Wattles, the company's agent in Alexandria, worked out of an office at the foot of Duke Street. Other company officers included Mr. Levy Woodbury, president; Messrs. C. F. Normert and D. J. Callahan, vice presidents; the latter being also general manager; Mr. Odell W. H. Callahan, traffic manager and Mr. J. A. Riordan, auditor.

In July 1908, the Washington and Norfolk constructed an office and waiting room on the Prince Street wharf. "The building of this addition was intended for a dual purpose, the first for the convenience of passengers and the second to keep off the wharf at night the large numbers of people who congregated there, much to the inconvenience of the men loading the freight." Julian D. Knight received the contract for the project. [AG: 7/24/1908]

Many Alexandrians still speak nostalgically of the wonderful experience of travelling to Norfolk aboard the *Northland*, *Southland* or *Midland*, three fine steamboats which plied the waters of the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay. The *Northland* had 157 rooms, the *Southland*, 157 and the *Midland* 120. Furnished in various styles, these chambers were comfortable and pleasant. During its heyday thousands of passengers enjoyed the luxury of boarding a vessel at Alexandria in the evening and the subsequent arrival at Norfolk in the morning. As better roads and truck transport began making inroads into the waterborne business and causing unprofitable runs, steamboats curtailed their trips, and in 1934 the last Baltimore steamer visited Alexandria while the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company continued to provide service until the early 1950's.

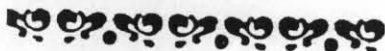
[To be continued in next issue]

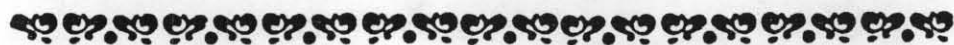


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said the plans would first have to meet the approval of the residents in the neighborhood of the Windmill Hill city playground. [AG: 2/20/1956]

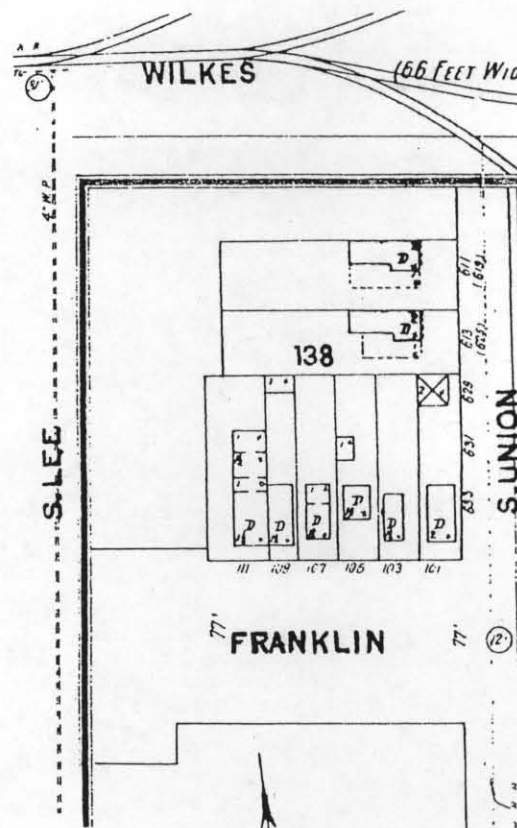
Within the last two years, a new development called Harbor Place has been constructed at the end of Wilkes Street. With its tasteful landscaping and beautiful reproduction Georgian and Federal townhouses, it has greatly enhanced the aesthetic quality of life along Union Street. Also, after many years of litigation, the City of Alexandria is in the process of securing possession of the derelict Marina below Windmill Hill. The city has clear title to the property but must now negotiate an agreement with the Federal government for its use. Recently, the Northern Virginia Park Authority completed a study for the city and suggested that a low-key marina might be built which would be "oriented toward small sailboats, aquatic sports and to a lesser extent powerboat cruising." It is estimated such a project could cost between \$4.3 to \$5.6 million. "A 3,600 square foot building, about 85 parking spaces, landscaping and underground fuel tanks are proposed." [The *Washington Post*: January 6, 1994]

Whatever the future may bode, Windmill Hill remains a wonderful recreational oasis in the midst of a dense urban environment. On a quiet day, if you listen carefully, you can still hear the boom of the old cannon and the huzzas of the crowd.

THE PRINCE TO DUKE STREET WATERFRONT Part II (Continued)

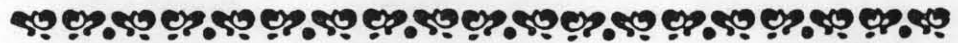
MAY & SON'S IRON FOUNDERS & AGRICULTURAL WAREHOUSE (1890's): "Messrs. W.H. May & Son will soon begin the erection of a large storehouse and fertilizer manufactory on Union Street, between Prince and Duke. [AG: 5/17/1892] Mr. F.S. Hammersley, the contractor for the erection of the large three-story fertilizer manufactory and warehouse of Messrs. W.H. May & Son, on South Union Street, began work today." [AG: 6/11/1892]

The May's Agricultural Implement business was started in 1852 and by 1883 it was the largest implement manufacturing business in the state.

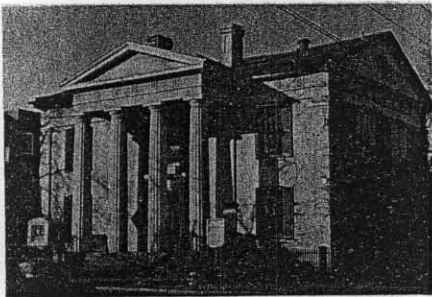


Plat of Windmill Hill.

WM. H. MAY & SON,
MANUFACTURERS OF
PLOWS, CASTINGS, FERTILIZERS,
AND DEALERS IN
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS,
FIELD AND GARDEN SEEDS,
No. 11 North Fairfax and 38 South Union Sts.,
Plow Works, Fairfax St., Between Queen and Princess.
ALEXANDRIA, VA.,



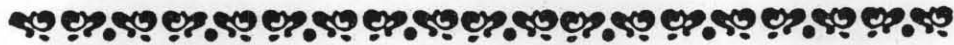
PHILIP B. HOOE'S BRICK WAREHOUSE: Born in September 1833 at the S.W. corner of Royal and Duke Streets, Philip Hooe, son of Bernard Hooe, was one of Alexandria's leading merchants. "In early manhood he became a member of the well-known firm of Fowle & Co., when these gentlemen were the agents of the Peruvian government for the sale [of guano]. He, with the late George Fowle and others, conceived and had established the steamship line (Mount Vernon and Monticello) which began running between New York and this port in 1859." During the Civil War, Capt. Hooe enlisted in the 17th Virginia Regiment and served honorably in the Confederate Army. Subsequently he returned to Alexandria where he married Mary Daingerfield and made his residence at 201 S. Washington Street, now the Alexandria History Museum. Hooe's warehouse was situated on the corner of Prince Street and the Strand. It suffered damage in the great flood of 1889 that inundated so much of the Alexandria waterfront. [AG: 6/3/1889; 7/5/1895]



Philip B. Hooe's home,
201 S. Washington
Street, now the
Alexandria History
Museum.

VIRGINIA BEEF EXTRACT COMPANY: In June 1896, the building formerly occupied by the late Capt. P.B. Hooe at the foot of Prince Street was leased to the Beef Extract Company. Officers of the newly-established company included James C. Keer, ex-clerk of the House of Representatives, president; E.L. Whitford, treasurer, and L.B. Clark, secretary. The firm, which was controlled almost exclusively with local capital, intended to remodel the building and therein to install the latest equipment. Destroyed by fire in 1897, the Beef Extract Company awarded J.R. Haynes the contract to do the brick work on their new building to be erected on Prince Street and the Strand. "The new structure will front 58 feet on Prince Street and 36 feet on the Strand and 40 feet or four stories high." [AG: 6/15/1896; 6/23/1897]

DEWILTON AITCHESON: On June 22, 1897, DeWilton Aitcheson received permission to construct a side track to connect with the Southern Railway Company on Union Street. [James R. Caton, Legislative Chronicles of City of Alexandria, p. 168] After the terrible 1897 fire, Aitcheson announced that he would rebuild the old wharf just south of Prince Street for the use of his wood and coal business and would also accommodate such vessels and steamers as may wish to stop there. [AG: 7/2/1900]

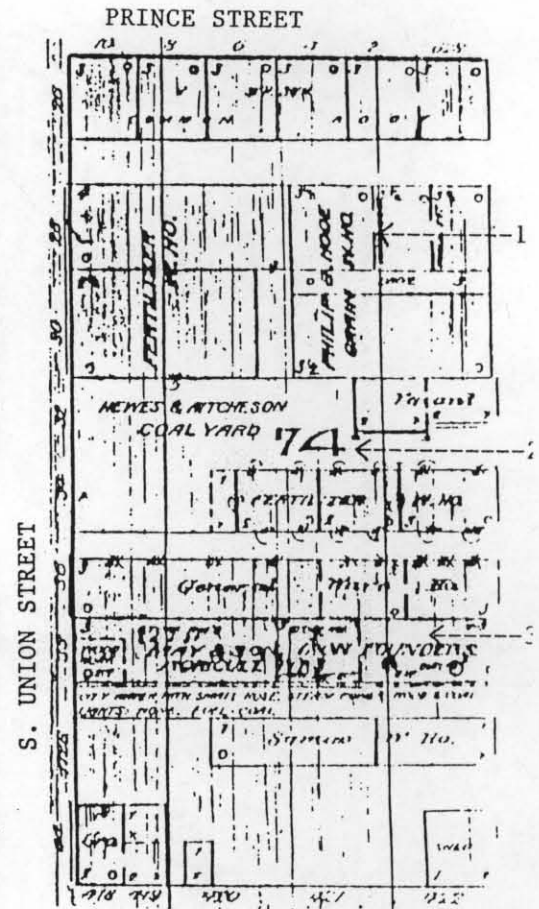


THE HERBERT BRYANT FERTILIZER COMPANY (1920s): On June 28, 1892, Herbert Bryant was given permission by the City to construct a railroad track from his business at the foot of Duke Street to the Washington Southern Railway.

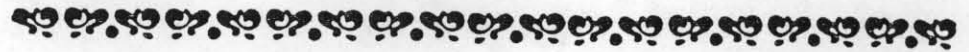
"On Sunday, August 13, 1922, a fire was discovered shortly before 1 o'clock in the morning at the Bryant Fertilizer plant. The attempt to set fire to the building was discovered just in time by Policeman Julian Rawlett and Special Watchman W.H. Travers. While a fire alarm was being turned in by Travers, Policeman Rawlett smothered the flames with dirt. When the fire department arrived on the scene the fire was under control and chemicals were used by the firemen. ...Had it not been for the timely discovery of the blaze, not only this plant would have been destroyed, but in all probability many other business and manufacturing firms nearby also would have been menaced by the fire. The police say that this is the first time for a long while that firebugs have been at work here and every effort will be made by the authorities to check their operation." [AG: 8/14/1922]

AITCHESON BROTHERS PLANING MILL: On October 26, 1915, a terrible fire consumed the lumber, sash and blind factory of Peter and Robert P. Aitcheson Brothers Company at 215-221 S. Union Street. The Aitchesons had no insurance on the structure and suffered \$30,000 worth of damages. Mr. Alpheus Robey, a private watchman, and William H. Simmons discovered the blaze. By the time the fire department reached the scene "the tinderlike contents of the mill and the floors soaked with oil, burned fiercely, sending up great columns of smoke and fire and carrying embers for blocks in each direction." As the blaze ripped through the building it burned many electrical wires of the Alexandria County Lighting Company [at the foot of Wolfe Street] which supplied power to the town. [AG: 10/27/1915]

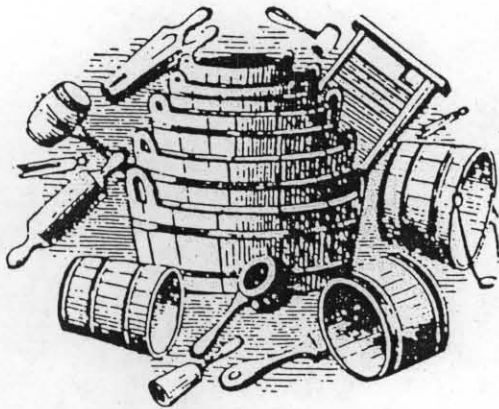
The old planing mill had caught fire previously on April 5, 1893, and it just barely escaped the famous conflagration of 1897 which destroyed the Pioneer Mill and much of the Strand. In the 1820's, the building that stood on this site served as a hotel, or more properly a sailors' boarding house with a bar room attached. Several pubs and dram houses occupied the neighborhood and "following the English



1. Philip B. Hooe Grain Warehouse
2. Hewes & Aitcheson Coal Yard
3. May & Son Iron Founders



fashion, when few persons could read, such places were designated by paintings of animals or birds upon the doors or window." Many occupants of this rum house died when yellow fever visited Alexandria in the first third of the 19th century. Later, a group of Washingtonians came to Alexandria one evening and set fire to the structure. It was subsequently rebuilt and was known as Monroe's Cooper Shop. Stephen Shinn, a successful commission merchant, was the occupant of the building before the outbreak of the Civil War. [AG: 10/9/1884; 4/6/1893; 10/27/1915]

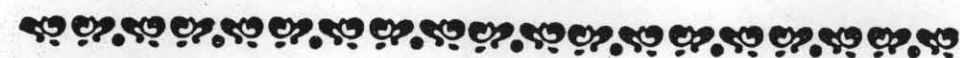


A group of Washingtonians came to Alexandria one evening and set fire to a structure that was subsequently rebuilt and known as Monroe's Cooper Shop.

EMERSON PUMP COMPANY erected the present building at the S.W. corner of the Strand and Prince Street. "Few Alexandrians realize what this concern, which began business in 1904, is doing in not only bringing foreign money to this city, but in carrying the name of Alexandria into other States and countries. The officers of the company include W. R. Emerson, general manager; Samuel H. Lunt, treasurer; R. Bruce Emerson, secretary, and James R. Caton, attorney. The pump, the joint invention of the Emersons, father and son, is simple in construction and possesses so many good qualities that to enumerate them would be to fill a column of our space. Many complications and multiplicity of parts common to other pumps have been eliminated in the Emerson pump. A handsomely illustrated catalogue tells in a most convincing manner of its superiority, while letters in the hands of the company from engineers, builders, contractors and U.S. Government officials bear testimony to its excellencies. A letter written in Germany and addressed to "The Emerson Steam Pump Co. Alexandria" reached here not long ago.

There has been very little slack time at the factory since it started and plans are under way for enlargement. The Emerson pumps are now busy at work on every continent: Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and South America, and each bears in bold letters the inscription, "Emerson Steam Pump Company, Alexandria, Va., U.S.A.". The advertising of the company is extensive in both home and foreign publications. The Emersons are Baltimoreans, and on being asked why they located here replied:

"Because we consider Alexandria one of the great shipping points of the country. In front of us is the Potomac and we can put our goods right on vessels and send them direct to foreign lands. Railroad

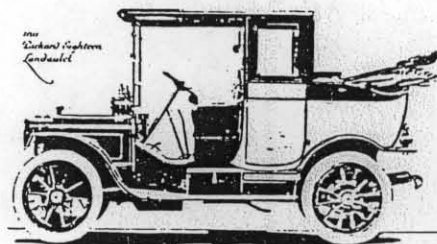


tracks in the rear of our works connect us with the principal systems of the East and South. Living expenses here are not as great as in New York and other of the large cities and we have consideration for our workmen and we have good ones. There is a chance for them here to get homes of their own within convenient distance of the factory. We believe in the future of Alexandria, and are glad we came here. This side of Potomac--opposite Washington--is destined to be a regular hive of industry, and we expect to be part of it."

Between 1907 and 1912 the Emerson Pump Co. moved to the site of the old Pioneer Mill ruins at the foot of Duke Street. By March 1917, the plant formerly occupied by the Emerson Company had been sold by Donald Woodward of Washington, D.C. to another concern. [AG: 5/20/1908; 6/29/1912; 3/26/1917]

Another Emerson and equally inventive and ingenious, Victor L. has recently established himself at the pump factory and intends to manufacture automobiles and launch engines a little later, in a factory building here of his own. He came here from Cincinnati, where he built his first automobile and tested it by thousands of miles of hard traveling and winning first place in a number of racing events. He calls it the "Military." It has a locomotive finish, all parts being steel, and is steel blue in color. It has fewer parts, is lighter and yet possesses more power than any other so far designed. The machine is a model of symmetry and beauty, and like the pump is destined to help Alexandria, as well as its enterprising inventor and manufacturer."

SWIFT MEAT COMPANY: Located on the S.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets, the Swift Meat Company was a familiar landmark to residents of the waterfront during the early 20th century. On March 28, 1926 a fire destroyed the Forbes Milling Company and Walter Roberts, Inc. grist mill located on the Strand between King, Prince and Union Streets. It was reported that the "building of Swift and Company was considerably scorched by the heat and a stream of water was played on the front of this building which was somewhat damaged. Glass in the windows of this building cracked as a result of the blaze. All that remained of the two large three-story brick buildings to the north was a pile of wreckage." [AG: 3/29/1926]



According to reports, "the first automobile made in Virginia was brought out of the Emerson Engine Company in this city today and given a demonstration. Everything in connection with it worked admirably." [AG: 4/9/1910. The Emerson Engine Company was located at the S.E. corner of Prince and Fairfax Streets.]

RICHARD H. WATTLES

Manufactures of

FERTILIZERS

OFFICE AND STORES: 115-117 N. ROYAL ST.

Dealer in Hardware, Paints, Agricultural Implements, Vehicles, Harness, Field and Garden Seeds.

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Also Grain, Hay, Straw and all kinds of Mill Feed

Will always keep in stock the highest grade of these articles.

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RICHARD H. WATTLES CORN & FEED MILLS: Richard Henry Wattles was engaged in the feed and grain business at 204 South Union Street. The son of Henry Starr and Carolina Claggett Wattles, Henry resided at 209 Prince Street where he died unmarried on December 21, 1928. For more than a quarter of a century he had conducted one of the most successful feed concerns in Northern Virginia. Charles Wattles, Henry's brother, was well known to steamboat navigators and local shippers, having spent 38 years on the Alexandria waterfront. He was a member of the school board and served on City Council for many years. [AG: 12/22/1928; 6/25/1928]. Tragically, Charles suffered a severe trauma when he attempted to back a Ford onto the Norfolk and Washington wharf and fell into 30 feet of water. Despite the fact he was able to extricate himself, the shock of the accident led to his death on June 23, 1928.

HEARST PINE MILLS: Located next to Aitcheson's Coal yard on the east side of the 200 block of Union Street, this firm manufactured an assortment of pine furniture.

BEACHCOMBERS RESTAURANT: Constructed in 1947 by Thomas Hulfish Jr., this restaurant was built on piles and extended into the Potomac River. Thomas Hulfish III, the owner's son, states the restaurant was laid out in the following manner: "The main dining room was situated on the second floor and there was a roof terrace with lights where guests could enjoy culinary treats and enjoy the panoramic view of the Potomac River. Alice Roosevelt, President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, visited the restaurant quite frequently and enjoyed the lily pads and aquatic plants, which served as a backdrop. The front door was reached by a gang plank which extended from the seawall at the Strand. "Restaurant guests were serenaded by black stevedores who sang sea chanties as they loaded freight onto the old steamers," said Mr. Hulfish. The business remained viable for three or four years, after which John Richards leased the building, although he continues to operate his Potomac Arms gun shop on the site.