

Wandering Along the Waterfront, Queen to Cameron

By T. Michael Miller

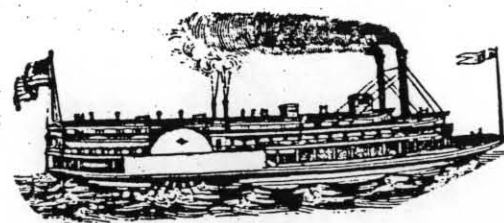
During the 19th and 20th centuries the landscape along the Alexandria waterfront from Queen to Cameron Street was populated by numerous business establishments and industrial concerns. The following is a brief sketch of these facilities:



Andrew Jamieson's wharf -- Jamieson, a prominent baker who commenced business in Alexandria in 1785, owned a wharf and warehouse at the foot of Queen Street. (Va. Jour. & Alex. Adv.: 12/15/1785) He offered to lease this site in May 1814. (Alex. Gaz.: 5/19/1814) Andrew Bartle either leased or purchased the same about this time. Engaged in the bridge and wharf building business, he had constructed two substantial bridges across the Great Choptank River, one at the Dove Ferry, the other at the town of Denton, Md. In 1812 he returned to Alexandria and informed the public that he would be available to contract for any business in his line including house work, wharf, or bridge building. (AG: 1/16/1812) In 1816 he advertised wood for sale at his wharf on Queen Street.

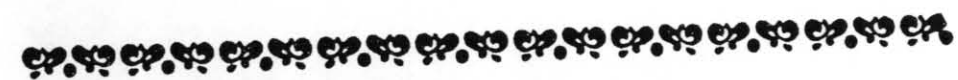
During the 19th century several steam ferryboats plied the Potomac River from the Alexandria waterfront to Washington and Norfolk. On March 17, 1817, the Alexandria Gazette announced:

The Union Team Boat (powered by horses on a treadmill turning paddlewheels) has commenced running her regular route from Georgetown to Alexandria--starting from the former place at nine o'clock a.m. & from the latter place at four o'clock p.m. ...This boat is fitted up at an expence and in a style of elegance not equalled by any similar passage boat in the United States...This boat will start from the wharf at Messrs. Smith and Pickrell, lower end of Jefferson street, Georgetown and from the wharf of Mr. Andrew Bartle, Alexandria.



By 1822 numerous steam ferries including the Dandy, Surprise, and the Robert Taylor offloaded passengers at Alexandria. The Independence made two runs a day from Johan Thompson's wharf to Bradley's wharf in Washington. (Donald G. Shomette, "Maritime Alexandria," (Alex. Archaeology), p. 140)

Sanderson's Wharf -- situated between Cameron & Queen Street and occupied by James Sanderson. In 1800 Capt. Sanderson is listed as the proprietor of a wholesale store at the corner of King & Fairfax Street. There he sold such items as: calicoes, silk waistcoats, cotton checks, shovels, spades, broad hoes and ironware. (AG: 4/16/1803.) Sanderson also maintained a warehouse on Tucker's wharf in addition to a large brick warehouse at the corner of King and West



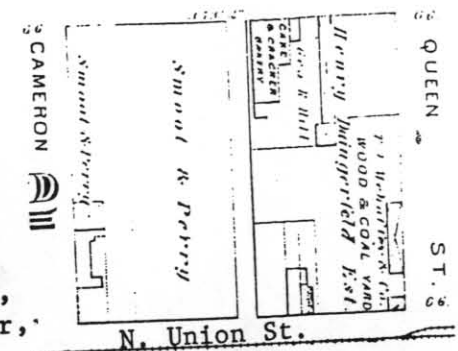
Streets (AG: 5/24/1820).

Sanderson died 5 December 1830 in Nashville, Tennessee. (AG: 12/23/1830) His business account book dating from 1800 is now housed in the Lloyd House manuscript collection. It provides fascinating details of his commercial accounts including wharfage and collector of customs fees. His customers included such notables as: Martha Washington, Philip Wanton, Philip Marsteller, Robert Young, James Patton, Richard B. Lee, Alexander Henderson, John Rumney, John McIver, etc. (See also: AG: 6/6/1818; 4/20/1820)

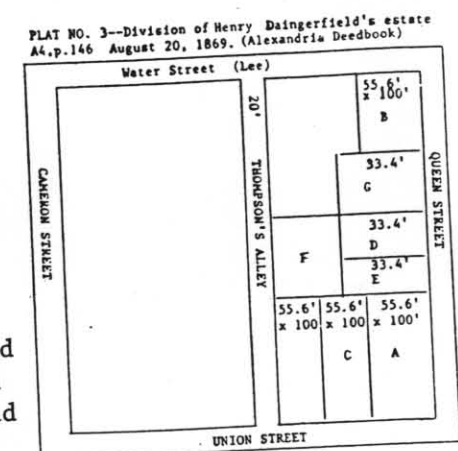
Henry Daingerfield's wharf -- One of Alexandria's most prosperous merchants, Henry Daingerfield purchased several parcels in this region in the 1840's and 50's. By the time of the Civil War he literally controlled the entire Queen to Cameron Street waterfront. In addition, he owned several warehouses and a wharf at the foot of Queen Street. Fire broke out here in February 1852 and September 1856:

Last night about 7 o'clock, a fire broke out in the large frame warehouse, near the corner of Queen & Union streets, owned by Henry Daingerfield. The warehouse was stored with guano, pressed hay, and other articles, owned by T.M. McCormick & Co., S.S. Masters & Son and Wm. L. Powell & Son--most of the goods held on commission, and insured. The warehouse with its contents was burned. The adjoining property was in considerable danger, but with the exception of some out-houses, no other building but the warehouse was destroyed. The firemen deserve great credit. The fire was in the immediate neighborhood of a number of frame buildings, and close to Jamieson's bakehouse, and if it had progressed any farther would have caused great destruction. We regret to add that it is believed to have been the work of an incendiary. (AG: 2/26/1852)

FIRE--A fire broke out yesterday morning between one and two o'clock in the kitchen of a frame dwelling house on Queen street near the corner of Union, which soon spread and totally consumed two frame dwellings and the large frame warehouse adjoining. The progress of the flames was so rapid that, notwithstanding the most strenuous exertions of the firemen, the buildings were destroyed before they could be extinguished. The buildings all belonged to Mr. Henry Daingerfield and the loss is estimated at a little over \$1000. The warehouse was empty at the time--but the frame dwellings were occupied by several families. The fire was no doubt the work of an incendiary. (AG: 9/16/1856)



Henry Daingerfield's Estate (Hopkins 1877 City Atlas).



- PLAT NO. 3--Division of Henry Daingerfield's estate
A4.p.146 August 20, 1869. (Alexandria Deedbook)
- A. J. Lloyd & ux to HD (Henry Daingerfield) June 14, 1852 (N3-344). (Alex. Deedbook)
 - B. Mary Herbert to HD--March 15, 1851. (M3-461)
 - C. Jos McLean & ux to HD--Oct. 2, 1845. (G3-60)
 - D. J.P. Coleman & John Eveleth & ux (heirs of H. Caroline to HD)--Nov. 3, 1870--(H-142).
 - E. C.F. Stuart et ux to HD--Feb. 26, 1845. (F3-351)
 - F. Coleman & Eveleth & ux to HD--Dec. 13, 1847. (13-575)
 - G. L. McKenzie to HD--April 21, 1845--(F3-417)



"A modern coal yard,"
from an ad for Zimmerman's Coal Yard.

The New York & Virginia Screw Steamship Company

STEAMSHIP DEPOT -- Messrs. Fowle & Co. are having erected on the wharf property near the corner of Water and Queen streets owned by Frederick L. Barreda, esq. of New York, a handsome and extensive Depot for the New York and Virginia Steamship Company. The building will extend 142 feet on Union street, and about 350 feet to the end of the pier fronting on the river. The wharf which is now 26 feet wide, is to be made 40 and workmen are engaged on that portion of the work. In the centre of the main building will be an office for the agent of the Company and several switches of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad are to be laid to facilitate the shipment of goods. The contractors are for carpenter's work, Wm. H. McKnight; brick work, Emanuel Frances; wharf building, H.K. Bradshaw & Co. (AG: 7/27/1859)

T.J. Mehaffey & Company's Wood & Coal Yard -- Mr. Mehaffey did extensive trade in Coal and Wood at his wharves and yard at the foot of Queen Street. In August 1872 while digging for an engine house at Mehaffey's coalyard (S.W. corner of Queen & Union Street) workmen came upon a brick vault, 5 feet below the surface, containing portions of what supposed to be human bones. In digging a well in the same lot a brick foundation was discovered 8 feet below the surface. (AG: 8/9/1872. Mr. Mehaffey died in 1886.

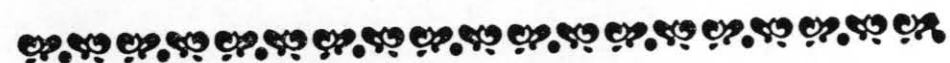
J.R. Zimmerman's Coal Yard -- "Prominent among the wholesale trade, as well as the retail trade of the city, is Mr. J.R. Zimmerman. He is a native Alexandrian and a live, progressive businessman, always awake to every interest that can be of benefit to the home of his birth.

Born in 1838, he attended the local schools, engaging in mercantile pursuits first in 1854, as clerk for Mr. C.C. Berry in dry goods and notions. After two years of service with Mr. Berry he associated himself with Mr. James M. Stewart, the dry goods merchant on King Street, and remained with him until the breaking out of the war. He then went South with Company A of the 17th Va. Volunteers, and was in all the engagements with his regiments, being at Appomattox at the time of the surrender of Genl. Lee.

His next engagement was with the firm of Dodge & Co., lumber merchants at Tobyhama Penn. In August, 1872 he returned to Alexandria and entered the coal firm of T.J. Mehaffey & Co. as the junior member. In May, 1884, he succeeded the firm at his present location, conducting the business himself and has materially extended it. It was at that time mainly retail, but he has developed it so that he not only supplies the city largely but the business extends at the present to Maryland, the Virginias, the Carolinas, and Georgia, with occasional shipments to other Southern States.



"Prominent among the wholesale trade, as well as the retail trade of the city, is J.R. Zimmerman."



Shipments are made direct from the mines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia by rail, and by vessel to various Southern ports for shipment into the interior. He deals chiefly in anthracite, with occasional shipments of West Virginia and Cumberland coal.

Mr. Zimmerman's yards have a water frontage of 120 feet. The yards are on the direct line of the R & D, Penn, B & O, C & O, and N & W railroad tracks. The dockage yard is 120 feet wide as a frontage and 200 feet deep.

Two large storage yards lie on the north and south side of Queen street, and fronting on Union. The three yards have a storage capacity of 8,000 tons. The facilities for both loading and unloading are ample for both cars and vessels.

The main office is located at the foot of Queen, fronting on Union street. The uptown office is at 112 South St. Asaph Street.

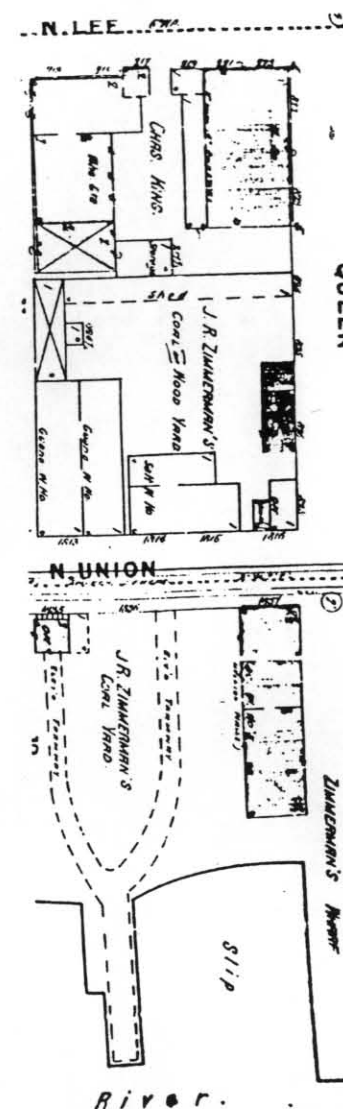
The anthracite coal is taken mainly from the mines of the Susquehanna Coal Co., situated at Nanticoke, and the famous Lee, Gaylord, Wm. Penn and Newport collieries.

Mr. Zimmerman is also engaged in the salt trade, receiving shipments from the Warsaw mines and importations of the English products. A large warehouse on the track offers ample storage." (AG: 9/16/1893)

On June 29, 1886, Alexandrians were uncereemoniously awakened as burglars dynamited Mr. Zimmerman's office at the intersection of Queen and Union St. Apprised of the incident, Mr. Zimmerman quickly repaired to the scene. Although the office was blown to bits, fortunately Zimmerman had left only \$3.00 in the safe. (AG: 6/21/1886)

In April 1902, Mr. Zimmerman fitted up a wagon factory and blacksmith shop on his premises at the foot of Queen Street where all wagons and vehicles used in his business were manufactured and repaired.

Charles King & Son -- Building & Trade business, wholesale groceries -- S.E. Corner of Queen & N. Lee Streets "The business of this firm was established by the senior member in 1877. The junior member Mr. Frank King was admitted about (1887). The building which is here illustrated was erected by them in 1888 at 215 to 225 North Lee street after designs by Munson & Co. Situated on a lot 110x180 ft., it embraces under one roof sales-office, counting room, shipping department, ware-rooms, and stable, thus concentrating the machinery of the business under the firm's personal supervision.

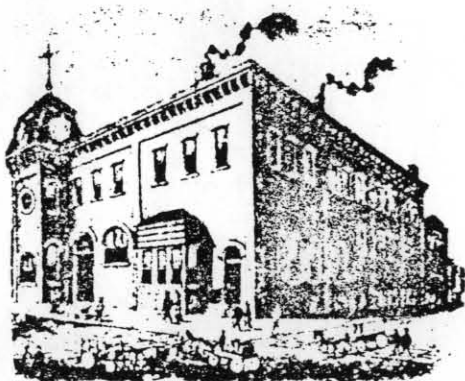


Charles King; J.R. Zimmerman's coal yard (1896)



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Charles King, a former major in the U.S. Army, served in the quarter-master department at Alexandria during the Civil War. In 1877, he commenced the retail business in Alexandria on Cameron St. between Royal and Pitt. In August 1900, the firm opened a canning factory on Queen Street. King died at his home at 212 S. St. Asaph Street on December 26, 1910.



Charles King & Son
215 to 225 N. Lee Street



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The office ... is a room 50 x 40 handsomely fitted up with bank counter and wire screen for the book-keeper, contains a fire-proof vault 8 x 12, .. and other conveniences for the reception and accommodation of friends and patrons. ... 'Orders filled on short notice' is the firm's motto. Centrally located between the railroad freight depots and the steamboat wharves, they are in position to make quick deliveries to any of the transportation lines ...

The different warerooms of the house are each set apart for some special line usual and unusual to the wholesale grocery business. Among the lines displayed, we notice drugs, spices, coffee, teas, leather, wood and willow ware, glass-ware, tin ware, hardware, confectionary, crackers, and cakes, canned goods, tobacco and cigars, provisions, oil, molasses, etc. besides a large stock of fancy groceries. ...

Another important commodity which Chas. King & Son handled was various kinds of salt--dairy, table, agricultural and rock or mined salt.

Another enterprise of this firm is their fish curing and packing establishment, located at the mouth of the Potomac River; they receive the product of a fleet of fishermen immediately after the fish are caught... Last season's (1892) pack was between 4,000 and 5,000 packages which were distributed throughout Virginia and the adjoining states. Messrs. King & Sons are agents for the Hazard Powder Co. of New York City, and carry a large stock of sporting and mining powders in a magazine located just outside of the city limits." (AG: 9/16/1893, p. 9)

As was the case with many of Alexandria's business establishments, a destructive fire destroyed Chas King & Sons warehouse on October 17, 1914. Although most of the contents were consumed by fire, the main office structure with books and other valuables were saved. The facility was later rebuilt.

This was the third destructive fire which had occurred on this block since February 1895. That month the George R. Hill Bakery on the opposite side of the street was gutted. In May 1909, the planing mill of W.A. Smoot and Co., adjoining the King buildings on the south also burned. "A northwest wind was prevailing at the time and the frame structure was a big mass of flames in a few minutes. ... The firemen managed to keep the fire from Henry K. Field and Co. mill adjoining and saved King Street warehouses from the conflagration which seemed doomed. Apart from these disasters there have in the same time been several dangerous fires at the fertilizer plant, W.A. Smoot and Company's coal yard and at other points nearby." (AG: 10/19/1914)

Next Month: Perry, Smoot & Company; F.A. Reed & Co.; J.W. Hammond & Sons (Mutual Ice Company); W.G. Cazenove's wharf.

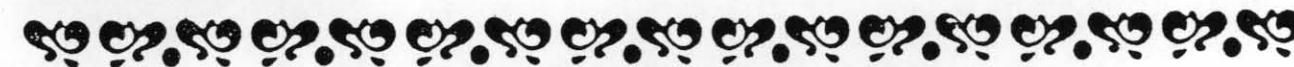


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Alexandria and Its Amusement Halls

by Sylvester A. Breen

(Reprinted from the Alexandria Gazette, October 27, 1933)

Alexandrians have always been amusement-loving people. They like fun and gaiety of all kinds and have patronized year after year good shows of every variety.

Some of the old-time halls are described in the following paragraphs:

Liberty Hall was located on the north side of Cameron Street near Royal Street. Theatrical performances, school commencements, lectures, and political meetings were held therein. Memory brings back to this scribe the time his mother and himself attended the "Who Killed Cock Robin" trained-bird show where a little bird hopped up to a small cannon and pulled the cord attached to a lighted taper near the fuze-hold which made the tiny cannon go off with a "bang!" That shot was supposed to have killed "Cock Robin," but the wise little bird "died" many times during his act thereafter to earn a luncheon of choice birdseed.

St. Mary's Academy, under the supervision of the Sisters of Holy Cross--when that now-popular institution was new to the townfolks of Alexandria--held their annual commencement exercises in old Liberty Hall. (Northwest corner of Cameron and Royal Streets)

The Virginia Sentinel newspaper--now a long-forgotten publication except by some of the old-time citizens, under the leadership of Col. M.D. Ball--was located in or near Liberty Hall.



Gliding "to and fro" in Harmony Hall

Harmony Hall, located on the east side of Fairfax Street, directly south of the old Green's Mansion House (121 North Fairfax Street) was noted for its wonderful smooth dancing floor. No doubt some of the "grandmas" and "grandpas" of nowadays remember climbing up the steep steps leading to that hall to enjoy a few hours in gliding "to and fro" with their dancing partners.

St. Mary's Hall, located on the northeast corner of Royal and Wolfe Streets, in bygone years has been visited by thousands

THE FIRST FAIRFAX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Compiled by T. Michael Miller

"Pursuant to the public notice, a number of the citizens of Fairfax county assembled at the house of Charles Ballinger, near Collingwood on Saturday last, January 12th, (1878) for the purpose of organizing a County Historical Society.

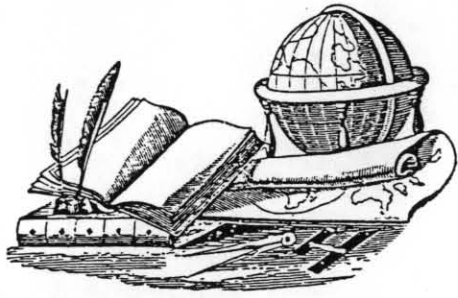
Eben Mason, of Woodlawn, was chosen President and W.H. Snowden, of Collingwood, chosen Secretary.

The President, on taking the chair, stated that the object of the organization was to encourage among our people a deeper interest for the collection and preservation of the many valuable fragments, both written and traditional, relating to times past of our immediate region, otherwise liable to be irretrievably lost.

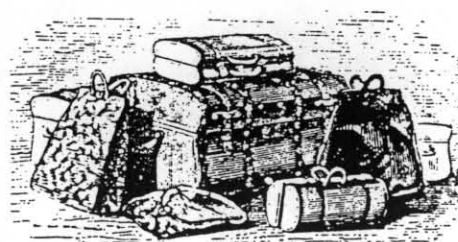
A committee of five, consisting of Eben Mason, W.H. Snowden, John Balinger, William Hunter, Jr. and Warrington Gillingham, was chosen to prepare suitable regulations for government of the association and to report at the next meeting.

The society contemplates holding regular monthly meetings at some convenient place, hereafter to be determined, and the cordial cooperation of all persons having an interest in its object is earnestly desired. Documents of every description--old manuscript letters, journals, genealogical records, maps, drawings, pictures, etc. having a general historical interest, are solicited, which, when received by the society, will be duly noticed or published in its monthly transactions, and if offered as permanent donations will be carefully deposited and preserved in some public place, safe from destruction, and always accessible to the public under the society's directions; and it is believed that with a hearty cooperation of everybody in the least imbued with an antiquarian spirit, a collection of matter can be made in a very few years of exceeding great value to future historians and annalists.

Lying neglected among the rubbish of garrets, lofts, offices, counting rooms, and store houses, in old desks, boxes, trunks and barrels throughout our county, liable at any time to be destroyed by fire are no doubt vast stores of historical materials, which their possessors actuated by patriotism and a love of "olden time memories," would doubtless willingly contribute for preservation in such a collection as that now contemplated by the founders of this society, who confidently look forward to the time when the properly directed energies of the inhabitants of all



"Documents of every description... journals, genealogical records, maps... will be duly noticed or published..."



our region of country, representing every useful industry, shall make possible in the old "city of Alexandria," the establishment of a "grand museum," richly representing the great department of agriculture, mechanics, fine arts, anatomy, mineralogy, geology, paleontology, history, geography and other kindred sciences. A museum, that would daily offer to the inquirer in all these provinces of useful knowledge, wholesome information in a most convenient and attractive way, and luring the rising generation from the poisoning influences of theatres, traveling shows, circuses and other places, elevate their thoughts to objects of high import and lead them into paths of real advantage to themselves and to society at large.

All persons who have a common interest in the promotion of the object as above set forth are hereby requested to commence, at once the work of collecting available materials, and to communicate with the "society" through the secretary.

The next meeting will be held incidentally with the next monthly meeting of the Woodlawn Farmer's Club, Saturday, February 16th at the house of Samuel Pullman."

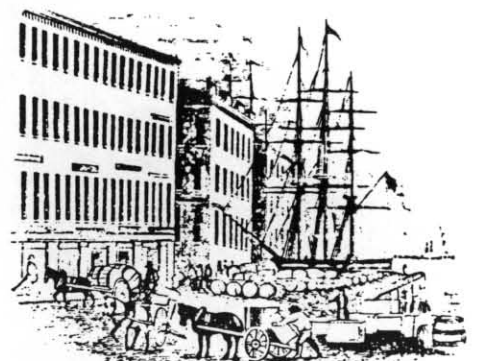
W.H. Snowden, Secretary (AG: 1/15/1878)

Wandering Along the Waterfront: Queen to Cameron Streets (Concluded)

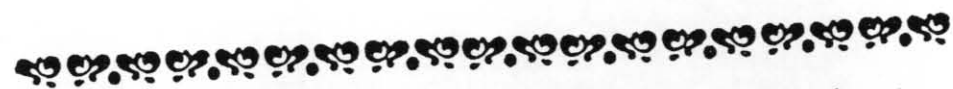
by T. Michael Miller

After the military occupation of Alexandria in May 1861, its waterfront became a virtual beehive of activity as the region was transformed into a logistical supply center for the Union Army. Stevedores unloaded hay, wheat, munitions, and military accoutrements from dozens of ships moored in the harbor. Alexandria was the umbilical cord which fed and clothed the Union Army in the field. A correspondent of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote on August 8, 1863:

This ancient city has now become a centre of commercial importance, being the great warehouse, as it might be termed, for supplies to the Army of the Potomac. Miniature mountains of hay and pyramids of oat bags, high up in air, meet the gaze as one approaches the city from the river. Spacious and antiquated storehouses along the wharves are filled to repletion with all kinds of stores for the use of our brave army, while hundreds of contrabands are busily at work unloading vessels and transferring their cargoes to depositories in and around the city front.



Editor's Note: At the February 16, 1878 meeting of the Woodlawn Agricultural Society, there is no mention of the Fairfax County Historical Society. Perhaps the activities of the proposed historical society were incorporated by the pre-existing club. Manuscripts and minutes of the Woodlawn Agricultural Society and the Woodlawn Housekeeping Society dating from 1866 to 1903, may be viewed on microfilm at the Alexandria Library, Lloyd House (microfilm reel 00435). Other papers and documents pertaining to the society were kindly donated by Joyce Brown of Sherwood Hall farm and are housed in the manuscript collection. (Box 100) No further record of the early Fairfax Historical Society has been found.



Alexandria, for the past two years, can boast of more shipping at its wharves than any other city of its size in the Union.

To facilitate the offloading of supplies, a large quartermaster depot was constructed at the foot of Queen Street which extended along the waterfront in a northern and southern direction. Among the many buildings which occupied the area between Queen and Cameron Street were:

- (1) A mess hall, 55' x 16'--2 stories high--felt roof at the S.E. corner of Queen and Lee Street; (2) A guardhouse 13' x 12 1/2' -- 8 ft. high--felt room at the S.W. corner of Union and Queen Streets; (3) A quartermaster hospital 18'x59', 20 ft. high; 2 stories on the N.W. corner of Cameron and Water (Lee) Street; (4) a commissary shed 98' x 113' -- 12 ft. high at the east of Union facing Cameron; (5) Two commissary storehouses, one 48'x97' -13 ft. high in the rear of Mr. Smoot's office (foot of Cameron St.), and another 42'x94'--10 feet high; (6) Grain sheds 131'x132'--11 feet high on the S.W. corner of Cameron and Union Street (Quartermaster Papers--Folder R, Box 89--Lloyd House manuscript collection).

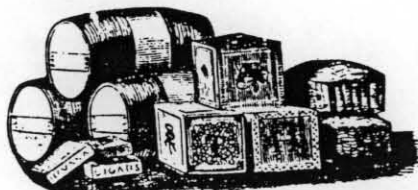
By 1866 quartermaster activities along this stretch of the waterfront had ceased and the U.S. Government put the buildings up for public auction.

As Alexandria returned to normality much of its harbor lay in ruins.

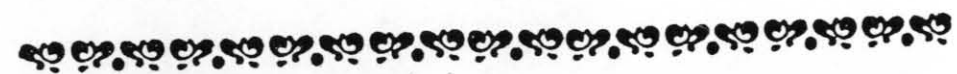
The greatest change that has taken place was the appearance of Alexandria, since the war, is observable in and about the wharves. The riverfront is far different from what it was when every warehouse was filled with goods and every store and counting room open for the transaction of business from the fish wharf to the Pioneer Mills. Now, what a contrast! But we mention this, not to encourage despondency, but to state that here in Alexandria, there is room ... for an increased and profitable commerce. (AG: 6/20/1866, p.3.)

Two years later the condition of the harbor had dramatically improved:

...The whole stream in front of the wharves is filled with the largest size coasters and their tall masts present a forest of spars which reminds one of the aspect of the larger shipping ports and is an indication of the immense advantage the city will derive



"Spacious and antiquated storehouses along the wharves are filled to repletion with all kinds of stores for the use of our brave army..."



from the coal trade now so prosperously reopened. (AG: 9/1/1868)

As early as August 1851, the Alexandria City Council had ordered that the bulkhead at Queen Street dock be rebuilt and raised to correspond with the grade of the Orange and Alexandria railroad. (AG: 8/30/1851) Other improvements soon followed suit. Messrs. Witmer & Jamieson erected a new planing mill and sash manufacture at the northeast intersection of Cameron and Water Streets in July 1868 (Gazette 7/10/1868). In March 1873, B.F. Price, a local contractor, cleared away the site of several burned buildings at the northeast corner of Cameron and Union Street preparatory to erecting four new warehouses for W.G. Cazenove (AG: 3/15/1873). Cazenove was the scion of the wealthy and influential Anthony C. Cazenove of Alexandria, one of the town's leading merchants. Born in 1819, William Gardner Cazenove soon followed in his father's footsteps.

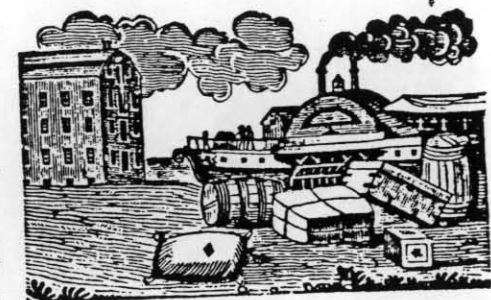
He commenced life as a lawyer, but finding that uncongenial with his taste, he entered into the mercantile business with his father and brother Louis A. Cazenove and still later with Cassius F. Lee was engaged in the extensive foreign commission trade carried on by the firm of Cazenove & Company.

During the election of 1861 he represented Alexandria in the Virginia House of Delegates and later was an officer in the Confederate Army. Cazenove was also conspicuous as vice-president of the Virginia Midland Railroad and president of the Alexandria railroad company. Throughout his business career, he maintained a large wharf at the foot of Cameron Street. He died of a heart attack at Greenbrier White Sulphur Spring on August 8, 1877. (AG: 8/8/1877; 8/9/1877)

In March 1870, the Superintendent of Police constructed a new footway across the head of the dock at Queen Street. (AG: 3/24/1870). After the war there had been constant complaints by the citizenry that the docks were filthy and filled with all sorts of dead animals.

Therefore it came as no surprise that with natural silting many of the docks needed dredging. It was reported that the steam mud machine had arrived from Baltimore in April 1868 with the purpose of deepening the docks at the American Coal Company, adjoining fishtown in order that the largest size ships could be floated. (AG: 4/4/1868)

On October 10, 1882, a gentleman from Washington remarked that "the riverfront presented a better appearance and many new wharves had been built and old ones repaired. He stated that there were 10 large vessels in port including 2 barks, some of them loading coal for Nor-



By 1868, the condition of the harbor had dramatically improved.





Mr. Smoot was one of the largest farmers in Virginia, conducting an estate of 1,800 acres in King George County, Virginia. Both he and his son were also directors of the Alexandria National Bank.

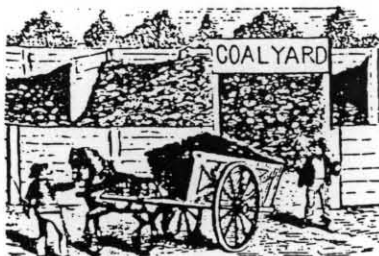
thern ports and some from Nova Scotia unloading plaster. One of the barks is loading cooperage for Cuba at Messrs. F.A. Reed & Company's wharf." (AG: 10/10/1882)

Again in April 1888, Mr. F.A. Reed's dock was dredged and that of Mr. Smoot in November 1897. (AG: 4/9/1888, 11/25/1897). Other improvements came in 1879 when T.J. Mehaffey's wharf at the foot of Queen Street was entirely rebuilt. (4/24/1879)

One of Alexandria's best known firms during the 19th century was W.A. Smoot & Company. Located at the corner of North Union and Cameron Streets, this firm sold lumber, lime, cement, nails, shingles, etc. In writing of his career in Alexandria, Mr. Smoot commented thusly:

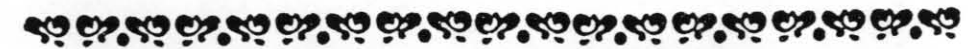
He was born in Alexandria but drifted to New York where he was connected with several importing and exporting houses. With the outbreak of the Civil War, he returned to Alexandria and joined the Black Horse Cavalry. The close of the war found him so poor that he did not have money to pay his fare to New York to look for a job and he settled down in Alexandria... Mr. Smoot can be found early and late in his office on the river front, looking after his coal interest while his son, W.A. Smoot, Jr., president of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, will be found at his office, 319 King Street, taking care of an extensive lumber business.

In speaking of Alexandria's potential as a port the elder Smoot noted that the town already had two miles of wharfage, deep enough to bring vessels to our doors drawing 20 and more feet of water. This wharfage can be extended for miles both ways from the city. We are right on the line, too, of Southern travel... (AG: 3/31/1922)



"The Smoot coal company...had the largest coal piers on the Potomac."

The Smoot coal company was later consolidated with Smoot and Company lumber dealers which had been organized in 1858. The firm's business covered more than 13 counties in Virginia and four in Southern Maryland. It handled all grades of lumber, millwork and building materials and had the largest coal piers on the Potomac. A devastating fire caused thousands of dollars worth of damage in May 1909 and totally destroyed the planing Mill, office building and 4 other structures. It commenced around 10 o'clock on the 12th starting at the southeast corner of Cameron and Lee Streets. Almost immediately the planing mill was a roaring mass of flames.



The heat soon became intense, so much that it was virtually impossible for the firemen to remain near enough to choke the flames. ...On both sides of Cameron street huge piles of lumber had been placed and they were soon burning furiously while the buildings ...between Lee and Union were a mass of flames many feet high...

The frame houses on the Southeast corner of Cameron and Lee Streets were soon...doomed and the only hope of the firemen was that the three story brick building adjoining on the south would provide a buffer and keep the fire from crossing the alley and into the planing mill of Henry K. Field and Company. ...The firemen worked heroically for two hours to prevent this...

...The frame house on the Northwest corner and the brick houses on the north and west at time caught fire from the terrific heat...

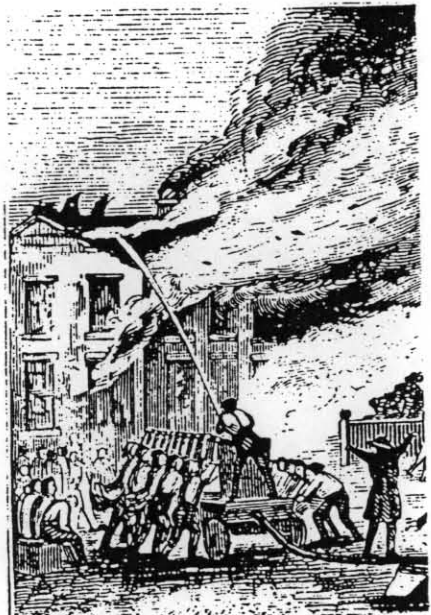
The roofs of buildings in the rear of stores on the north side of King street were at times smoking and men were kept on the roofs with buckets of water engaged in extinguishing the small blazes. ...The books and some other things were saved, but nearly everything else in the structure except the machinery was destroyed. (AG: 3/31/1922)

On June 2, 1909 Messr. W.A. Smoot & Company announced that they were engaged in reconstructing the mill plant.

The work of building the office at the Northwest corner of Cameron and Union was being accomplished by: William Webster, contractor for brick work; Mr. S.D. DeVaughn was selected to begin the erection of a large warehouse on the southwest corner of Cameron and Union Streets. (AG: 6/2/1909)

Plans for this structure specified that it would have a frontage of 44 feet on Union and would run westward 120 feet on Cameron. The area occupied by the old mill, northeast corner of Cameron and Lee Streets, was later used as a lumberyard. It was decided to place the new planing mill on the northeast corner of North Columbus and Montgomery Street.

F.A. Reed & Company--Born in Acton, Massachusetts on July 2, 1834, Mr. Reed came to Alexandria in 1856 where he became a clerk in Captain M. Eldridge's commission house. Subsequently, he married the



Almost immediately the planing mill was a roaring mass of flames.



F.A. Reed & Company was one of the largest ice dealers in Virginia.



The home of F.A. Reed at 605 Prince Street.

captain's daughter and became a partner in the firm of M. Eldridge and Company. For many years this company was one of the largest ice dealers in Virginia and had offices on the strand, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The firm was dissolved in 1870 whereupon Mr. Reed added the ice business. Reed was a man of many talents. For 25 years he was agent for William P. Clyde and Company and one of the largest coastal steamboat companies in the world.

In addition, he also represented the Island and Seaboard Coasting Company, a New York line and local Potomac River streamers. Reed was also a member of the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Railroad Company, and the River Improvement Company of New Alexandria. Besides these business interests, Reed was vice-president of the Virginia Board of Trade and was the first president of the Alexandria Board of Trade upon its organization.

F.A. Reed & Company's offices were situated on the strand between King and Prince Streets, while the ice plant occupied an area east of Union Street near the front of Cameron. The company was one of the largest ice dealers in the State and carried on its trade as far south as Winston, North Carolina. Mr. Reed's partner was William M. Reardon who was admitted to the firm in 1882.

For several years, between 1880 and 1890 this firm did a very large business with the West Indies in the shipment of large amounts of sugar cooperage. This enterprise was pursued successfully until the English bag was substituted for the wooden packages, previously used for the shipment of sugar. On the decline of this business Mr. Reed gave more attention to the material development of his adopted city...

The firm represents as agents the Baltimore steamboat line, consisting of the Lady of the Lake, and Sue, making tri-weekly trips to Baltimore, and the steamer Harry Randall, making tri-weekly trips down the Potomac River. (AG: 91/16/1893)

A bulwark of his community, Mr. Reed unfortunately committed suicide at his home (605 Prince Street) on August 23, 1893. He was greatly mourned by those who knew him.

The Mutual Ice Company--In 1900 William M. Reardon and J.W. Hammond established the Mutual Ice Company at the corner of Union and Cameron Street. By November Mr. Hammond had commenced the construction of a new wharf on Cameron Street in the shape of a "T". (AG: 11/7/1900; 1/4/1901) During this era the plant produced 40

tons of ice daily. With the construction of the Potomac Railroad yards in 1906 and the increased demand for ice, a large ice plant was built on the 1200 block of North Henry Street in 1916. This facility had a capacity of 60,000 tons yearly, a storage capacity of nearly 12,000 tons and employed 75 to 200 men during the season. During 1921, it iced more than 33,000 railroad cars of perishable goods. The company also operated seven trucks and 10 route wagons in the city and suburbs and had seven service stations. The plant was one of the largest, if not the largest, under one roof in the South. "Its water was taken from two artesian wells, one 400 feet deep which supplied the famous MICO water cones and another which was 256 feet deep." The ice manufactory was housed in a long brick building and occupied about three acres of ground including garages and stables. In 1922, its officers were: Mrs. W.M. Reardon, widow of W.M. Reardon, president; Harry Hammond, general manager, treasurer and secretary; O. Ashby Reardon, assistant manager.

Between 1921 and 1924 the Mutual Ice Company experienced two fires at its Cameron Street facilities. The first of these occurred on September 10, 1921 when the company's warehouse was destroyed:

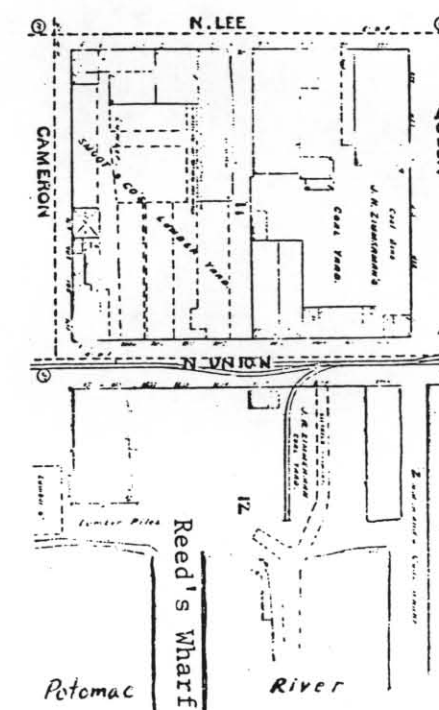
The building was divided into four rooms, each separated by partitions. In the front half of the building was stored about 100 bales of cotton, desks and other equipment of the United States Government, the building being leased by the Mutual Ice Company to the Bureau of Markets. In the second or east half of the building the Mutual Ice Company had stored a quantity of equipment including three collapsible icing stations, four wagons, an old automobile and other goods. Their loss according to Mr. Harry Hammond probably will be in the neighborhood of \$15,000 with about \$9,000 insurance.

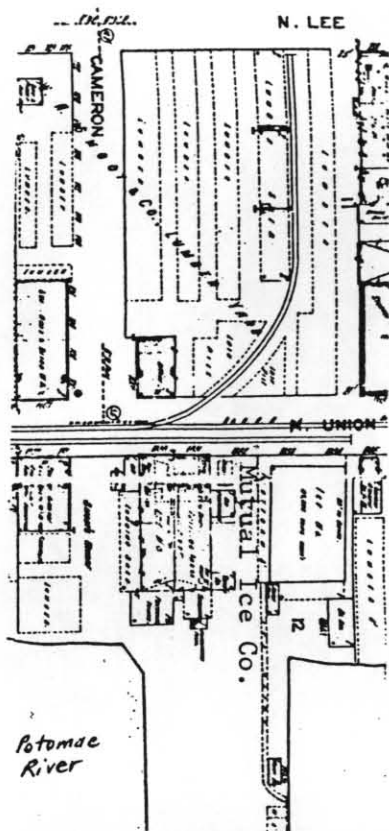
R.V. Bailey, assistant to the chief of the Bureau of Markets today told a representative of the Gazette that there was stored in the building 100 bales of cotton, used by the Agricultural Department for tests and about \$500 worth of office furniture, including desks and chairs. ...Total loss to the government amounted to \$7250.

The fire soon spread to the lumber yard of W.A. Smoot and Company, Incorporated, and a small auxiliary mill... (AG: 9/12/1921)

The fire attracted a great deal of public attention and an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people jammed the waterfront to watch the blaze. On

F.A. Reed Wharf (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1891.)





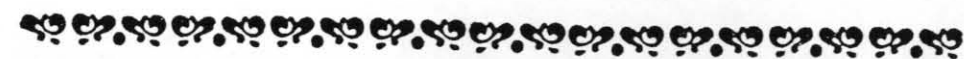
Mutual Ice Company (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912.)



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the morning of March 1, 1924, a second fire erupted at the Mutual Ice Company's two story brick warehouse on the northeast corner of Cameron and Union Streets. This blaze caused \$5,000 worth of damage and ice production at this facility was discontinued after the conflagration. At the time of the fire, machinery and equipment at the building were being dismantled and sold to J. Dreifus, a local junk dealer. It was then transferred to John Brenner, of Hagerstown, Maryland, who was engaged in the task of removing the same. Officials speculated that the blaze might have been started from sparks from an acetylene torch. (AG: 3/31/1922; 3/1/1924)

Although it no longer produces ice, the Mutual Ice Company, now called MICO, remains one of the Alexandria's premier businesses. Mr. James B. Williams, Jr., who worked for the company for 58 years reminisced that plate ice was manufactured at the Cameron Street plant and water for this purpose was pumped from a 500-foot well located there. In speaking of the North Henry Street plant, he said that it could produce as much as 500 tons of ice in a 24-hour period if needed. Supplied by five wells, this plant manufactured ice until July 31, 1967. By 1968 the plant had been torn down, a victim of the railroad refrigeration car, said Williams. Throughout the ice company's history several substations were maintained throughout the city. Williams specified that these were located as follows: 110 South Lee Street; 400 block of South Commerce and Payne Streets; the 300 block of North Alfred Street; 400 block of North Pitt Street behind the city jail; north side of King Street near its intersection with Braddock Road.

In August 1933, the Alexandria Ferry Company had the old Reardon wharf at the foot of Cameron Street refurbished in anticipation of running a ferry from that location to Shepherd's Point on the Maryland side. Operating from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., the ferry commenced business in September and had a capacity of carrying 14 passenger cars in 6 minutes to the Maryland shore. Company officers were: P.K. Schuyler, Washington, president; John Quincy Adams, Colonial Beach, vice president; H.D. Robinson, New York City, vice president; Thomas H. Andrews, Alexandria, treasurer; J.C. Gibson, Washington, secretary. (AG: 8/25/1933)

Henry K. Field & Company -- 115 North Union Street. Born in April 1860, Henry Knox Field was the son of Stephen K. Field, at one time an Alexandria tax collector. Early in life, Henry embarked upon the lumber business, having taken charge of the business conducted by George H. Smoot, Josiah H.D. Smoot and French Smoot. He founded his own lumber company in 1898 which was located at the foot of Queen Street. It contained a large planing mill and an extensive lumber yard along the waterfront. Mr. Field died on July 31, 1917.



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GENEVIEVE HERRICK--MODERN ALEXANDRIA JOURNALIST

By Marilyn W. Burke

Genevieve (Mrs. John O.) Herrick arrived in Alexandria in 1932 when "new" was the journalistic buzzword: New Deal, new power for newswomen and new social responsibility. Upon their arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Herrick leased the recently restored Federal home at 312 Queen Street. Owned first by U.S. Representative Franklin Korrel and then Admiral "Bull" Halsey, 312 Queen Street was located in the popular center of Old Town. As a new resident, Genevieve Herrick began her career as the *Chicago Tribune's* Washington Correspondent.

Mrs. Herrick's quest for a journalism career began in 1921 after graduation from Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. Disguised as an immigrant, the young woman made the steerage passage from Ireland to Ellis Island. Her newspaper expose of insufferable conditions led to Congressional hearings and sweeping reforms. Her career progressed from covering the plight of immigrants to becoming a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist and confidante of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

While in Alexandria (1932-1950's) "Geno" Herrick worked for the *Chicago Tribune* and served as president of the National Women's Press Club. The first big break for female journalists eager to cover news more serious than food or fashion came in 1933 when Mrs. Roosevelt, in an early act of reverse discrimination, decreed that only women could attend her press conferences. This forced newspaper bureau chiefs across the land to add females to their staffs. A life-long friendship and pattern of correspondence evolved between Geno Herrick and Eleanor Roosevelt. The First Lady wrote of her, "...it is wonderful to see a human being with such great courage and zest for living."



Eleanor Roosevelt

Mrs. Herrick, writing under the name of Genevieve Forbes Herrick, launched her newspaper career with the *Tribune* and covered the Scopes trial for that publication. In 1935-1940, she was a staff writer for "Country Gentlemen Magazine" followed by an assignment as Press Relations Chief for the Women's Army Corp in 1942-1943. During the war, Geno Herrick also served as a Bureau Chief in the Office of War Information and was Editorial Advisor for the