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Prince Street Profiles

Part II -- Gentry Row

by T. Michael Miller

The houses which dot the north side of the 200 block of Prince Street include some of the finest late Georgian dwellings in the United States. Known as "Gentry Row," a name ascribed to them by the late historian Ethelyn Cox, these dwellings for many years were home to Alexandria's merchant aristocracy and professional upper class.

The early 18th century history of the block begins with the initial sale of lots by the town trustees on July 13 and 14, 1749. At this sale two one-half acre lots were struck off--lot 57 at the N.W. corner of Water/Lee and Prince Street to planter William Fairfax of Belvoir Plantation, Fairfax County; lot 58 located on the

N.E. corner of Fairfax and Prince Streets to Col. John Champ on July 14. These two lots comprise the property now known as the north side of the 200 block of Prince Street.

William Fairfax, the original owner of lot No. 57, was one of the most influential planters in the Northern Neck of Virginia. A cousin of Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, William resided at Belvoir Plantation, a mansion completed in 1741 which was located a few miles south of Mt. Vernon. In 1733, William Fairfax was appointed Collector of Customs for the South Potomac District and agent for the Northern Neck Proprietary. He also served in the House of Burgesses in 1741 and was later a member and

president of the Governor's Council of Virginia. Fairfax died at Belvoir on September 3, 1757.

In 1753, 1766 and 1767, Alexandria town trustees resold town lots 56, 57, and 58 to George William Fairfax, William's son. The younger Fairfax and his wife Sarah Cary were close personal friends of George Washington. In 1748, under the supervision of James Genn, the 16 year old Washington and George William surveyed some of the western lands of the Fairfax family. During 1768-1769, George William Fairfax was a member of the Council of Virginia. As animosities between Great Britain and the colonies intensified, loyalist George William Fairfax and his wife returned to England in 1773, never to return again to Virginia. In the family's absence, George Washington acted as his executor in the sale of the Fairfax family's real estate and personal property in 1774. Belvoir Plantation burned in 1783.

Prior to 1780, it is not known what types of buildings, if any, occupied lots 57 and 58 since the law mandating the construction of a two-story brick or stone house following the purchase of a property was not always enforced. Most early dwellings in Alexandria were built of wood. Therefore, it is possible that several wooden dwellings or warehouses may have been erected on the property. From 1753 to 1790 there are over 25 land transactions which chronicle the transfer or subdivision of the north side of the 200 block

of Prince Street.

In 1771 and 1772, George William Fairfax had conveyed the majority of lots of 56, 57 and 58 to Robert Adam and John Hough of Loudoun County, Virginia. Adam was a prominent Alexandria merchant/miller and town trustee. He mortgaged his property in December 1771 to Andrew Wales, a distiller who operated a successful brewery on the east side of the 100 block of South Lee Street. In 1774, Wales transferred title to part of lots 56, 57, and 58 including a 9 foot alley which had been laid out between Water & Fairfax Streets along the north line of lots 57 and 58 to Robert McCrea, and Robert and Matthew Mease of Philadelphia for 350 pounds. (Fairfax Deed Book: M:4)

On June 14, 1773, Hough conveyed portions of lots 56, 57, and 58 to Quaker merchant John Harper of Philadelphia for 780 pounds. A profile of Harper's career was previously published in the summer edition of the Alexandria Chronicle. Notwithstanding, it was Harper who during the late 18th century was the prime mover and shaker in the construction of several dwellings on the 100 and 200 blocks of Prince Street.

**BANK OF OLD DOMINION:
N.W. Corner of Prince & Lee
Street**

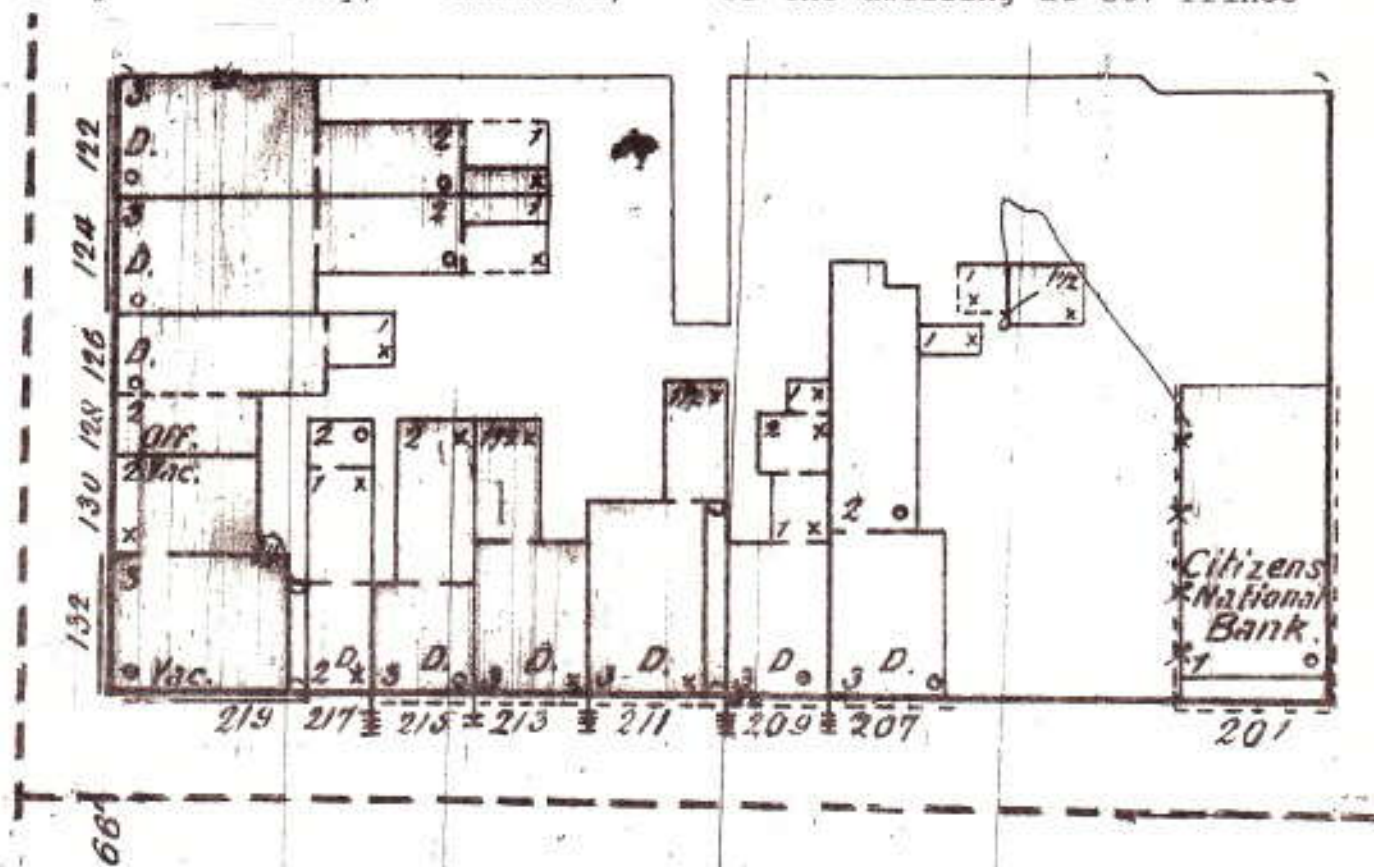
John Murray and Co., merchants, announced in April 1786 that they had moved from the store lately occupied by them on Fairfax Street to a large warehouse on the N.W.

corner of Prince and Water

(Lee) Street. Murray sold an assortment of wines, Jamaica spirits, West India rum, skillets, and playing cards; In 1791, Murray's partnership with John P. Mumford and Obadiah Bowen was dissolved.

A short distance west of the N.W. corner of Prince and Lee Street, merchant William J. Hall occupied another frame warehouse in 1796. He marketed cognac brandy, hardware,

1801, Hall offered to lease his Prince Street property. It included "a cellar which is perfectly dry with a door at each end and will hold 1,000 barrels of flour, 2,500 barrels may be stored on the premises without any inconvenience to the occupant." By 1823, cigar manufacturer Thomas Taylor was the proprietor of a 2-story frame store which was situated near the present day driveway of the dwelling at 207 Prince



The North side of the 200 block of Prince Street
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map -- 1891

earthenware, saddlery & cutlery and a large assortment of goods from the West Indies. Having removed to Merchant's wharf in

Street.

From 1830 to 1850, ship chandler Josiah H. Davis held

title to the N.W. corner property. A real estate magnate, Davis owned Jones Point and many other properties in town. In the 1830s, Davis leased his building on Prince Street to several artisans including Jonathan Field, a tobacconist and Charles Wright, a hatter. During the 1840s and 50s, the corner was home to carpenters James Fadley and George Plain as well as copper and tinsmith John Kell.

Subsequently, a Greek Revival building which housed the Bank of Old Dominion was constructed on the N.W. corner of Prince and Lee Street in 1851. In December that year, the Alexandria Gazette noted that "the workmen are slating the roof of the Banking House. .. The building will be one of the handsomest in town. By April 3, 1852, "the interior of the Bank was nearly finished." B.H. Jenkins executed the carpenter's work and Emanuel Francis was the bricklayer." The bank opened for business on May 3, 1852.

On May 24, 1861, during the Federal invasion of Alexandria, Wm. H. Lambert, cashier, removed the bank's assets and hid them in a cemetery until the end of the war. Thus, the Bank of Old Dominion was the only Alexandria financial institution which was able to redeem all of its money and to reimburse its creditors after the conflict.

Andrew Russell, a noted Union photographer, snapped a fascinating picture of Federal

military officials posing on the steps of the bank during the Civil War. At this time, the bank was occupied by the Chief Commissary's office of the U.S. Quartermaster Corp which maintained its headquarters here.

In May 1868, the Farmer's Bank moved into this building while its facility at 200 Prince Street was being repaired. Later, following its organization on September 10, 1870, the Citizens Bank, relocated here. Robert H. Miller was its first president and Wm. H. Lambert the cashier. An accident at the bank in April 1872 almost resulted in the death of L.E. Uhler, one of the tellers. The Gazette described the scene:

The vault was full of gas which had escaped from a burner that had been left open after an unsuccessful attempt to light it yesterday, and this morning soon after the bank opened, when Mr. L. Uhler, the teller, went in there with a lighted match, a violent explosion occurred, accompanied with a loud report. Mr. Uhler was blown out of the vault into the office, and had his face and hands severely burned. Mr. Furlong, the book keeper, whose desk was opposite the vault door, was knocked off his

seat, books and papers were scattered about in every direction and some panes of glass in the doors and windows were shattered. [AG: 4/21/1872]

Citizens Bank remained in business here until 1905 when it moved to the N.E. corner of King and St. Asaph Street. In 1907, the Stabler-Leadbeater Corporation purchased the edifice, utilizing it to manufacture talcum powder.

The Free Methodist Church occupied the building around 1925 to 1955. The church was organized in 1879 when the Rev. Joseph Travis arrived in Alexandria and first preached at Yates Garden, 414 Franklin Street. Before moving to Prince Street, the congregation also met in a building at 424 S. Lee Street. [AG: 1/1/1929, p. A p. 2., 4]

After extensive restoration, the Old Dominion Bank building now houses the Alexandria Athenaeum which sponsors exhibitions, ballet and musical productions.

207 PRINCE STREET: [55 PRINCE STREET--old numbering system]

As was previously mentioned, the quarter block on which this house sits was purchased in July 1749 by Colonel William Fairfax of Belvoir Fairfax County at the first sale of lots in the newly designated town of Alexandria.

The stately late Georgian house at 207 Prince Street was probably constructed, however, by Capt. John Harper around 1780. He subsequently leased it in 1782 to Colonel William Lyles, Jr., a merchant and distiller of rum. [FDB Z:51; ADB B:364] 207 Prince was then acquired in 1790 by William Hodgson, an English merchant, who married Portia Lee in 1799. There is no evidence that William Fairfax or his son George William constructed 207 Prince Street. Indeed, after completing an architectural analysis of 207 Prince Street for its current owner, architectural historian Calder Loth in April 1990 described the building as follows:

Located at 207 Prince Street, ... the Fairfax-Moore House has long been a focal point of one of America's most historic cities. With its refined proportions, three-and-a-half story elevation, side-hall plan, and service ell, it symbolizes the sophistication of Alexandria's late eighteenth-century urban domestic idiom. ...

Local tradition associates the Fairfax-Moore House with George William Fairfax, who between 1749 and 1771 owned the lot on which it stands. It is probable that a dwelling was

constructed there during the period of his ownership because lot owners in Alexandria were required to building structures on their property. The architectural evidence, however, suggests a later construction date for this particular building--most likely the mid-1780s, when the lot was owned and developed by John Harper. It is possible, of course, that the present structure incorporates an earlier dwelling.

... Upon settling in Alexandria, Harper became an enterprising real estate developer and used this and other property in the 200 block of Prince Street to construct an elegant range of dwellings echoing the rows of tall, three-bay town houses typical of his native Philadelphia. The Fairfax house was thus replaced by or transformed into the dormered dwelling standing today. [1990 National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form]

William Hodgson brought

his bride to 207 Prince Street in 1799 and here they resided until 1801 when the Hodgsons moved to Bellevue, an estate about one mile north of Alexandria. Portia Lee (1777-1840) was born while her parents were living in Europe, and it was in London that William Hodgson became a friend of the family. Portia's parents were William Lee (of Greenspring, Virginia) (1739-1795), tenth child of Thomas Lee of Stratford and Hannah Phillipa Ludwell. After the death of Portia's father, she and her sister Cornelia Lee resided with their guardian Richard Bland Lee, (Northern Virginia's first Congressman), at Sully Plantation in Fairfax County.

While the Hodgsons resided at 207 Prince Street, the property consisted of 3-story brick structure, plus a wooden shed 56 ft. by 15 ft. to the east and a 2-story wooden warehouse 42 ft by 20 ft. which lay to the north. [1796 Mutual Fire Assurance Records]

In March 1801, Wm. Hodgson lodged a complaint in the local newspaper against miscreants who had broken down his trees at 207 Prince Street.

Hodgson's wife Portia wrote a set of marvelous letters to her mentor Elizabeth Collins Lee at Sully Plantation. These letters are replete with juicy morsels about every day life in Alexandria. On June 1, 1799 Portia sent the following epistle:

No Lady visitors

have been here for some mornings. Every evening we have several Gentlemen step in. I have not returned my morning visits yet. The first cool morning next week, I intend to commence and wish they were over. No, my dear Cousin, a Town, I think will make no alteration in my disposition. I hope never to become fond of gadding and dissipation. The time will perhaps come, when I shall enjoy the kind of life I like.... Mr. Hodgsons' interest, and happiness must now be mine.

Again on Oct. 25, 1799: ...Before Mr. Hodgson left me he requested I would go to the Race and Ball with his friend, Mr. McPherson, accordingly, yesterday for the first time I saw a Race. Mrs. Potts was so obliging as to let her Carriage call and again in the evening, when I went to the Ball with Mrs. Andrew Ramsay, and danced with Mr. McPherson. I cannot say I enjoyed myself much and this morning an aching head, and uncomfortable feeling, induces me

to wish I had staid quietly at home.

Nov. 14, 1799
...This Evening, when I expect a party to sip tea, an English lady, lately settled here, will be among the number seated in the drawing room. Cake, candles, lamps prepared. Curtains let down, a brisk fire, and the duties of the toilet over, I shall wait the arrival of my expected visitors.

23 March 1800: For two evening successively we were engaged out --first at Mr. Edmund Lee's and next at Mr. Fitzhugh's [607 Oronoco St]. They were handsome entertainments. Sally's [Edmund Lee's wife] was a party, we had tea and coffee and afterwards jellies, whipping ices, plums, almonds, apples, etc. and a large cake handed round and cards. At Mr. Fitzhugh there was dancing and a very handsome supper. Our dinner is to come on this week. Hannah has for some time past officiated in the kitchen ...

Another occupant of 207

Prince, Henry Hiort, a lawyer informed the public in the June 16, 1804 Alexandria Daily Advertiser that "he had taken Mr. Hodgson's house on Prince where he will give regular attendance in his proof as an attorney at law."

William Bartleman who entered the grocery business in 1803, was the occupant of 207 Prince in 1805. He later became the senior deacon of the Alexandria-Washington Lodge.

John Hopkins who married Portia's Lee's sister Cornelia moved into 207 Prince Street around 1809-1810 and resided here until 1813. In 1789, George Washington had appointed Hopkins Commissioner of Loans at Richmond, a position he held for many years. 207 Prince was offered for public sale in April 1810: "The lower part contains a large store, compting house and cellars..."

From 1816 to the 1850s, John G. Ladd and his family were residents of 207 Prince Street. Ladd was a native of Newport, Rhode Island, and for many years lived in Alexandria. From his Prince Street Wharf, Ladd sold loaf sugars in hogsheads, coffee, candles, and German check fabric. He advertised in 1810 that he wanted to hire immediately "a master mason, carpenter and materials for rebuilding his warehouse, lately destroyed by fire on Prince Street." After lingering with a disease which left little hope of his recovery, John Ladd died on January 4, 1819 at Kingston, Island of Jamaica where he had arrived about a fortnight

before in search of health. [AG: 2/23/1819] Sarah Ladd, John's wife, resided at 207 until her death on September 11, 1844. From 1844 to 1851, the house was owned by the Ladd heirs who leased the dwelling to Alexandria merchant Benoni Wheat. On January 6, 1853, 207 was again offered for sale.

LEWIS MCKENZIE

From the mid 1850's to the early 1880s, 207 Prince was owned by Lewis McKenzie. A man of great energy and dynamism, McKenzie was Alexandria's leading entrepreneur and a member of the Whig party in the antebellum town. He was also the President of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad and represented Alexandria in the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. In the mid-1850s, McKenzie was an occupant of William McVeigh's house at 412 Prince Street.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, McKenzie, an ardent unionist, sided with the North while the majority of his fellow townsmen like Robert E. Lee fought for the Old Dominion. During the Federal occupation of the city, McKenzie was made a brigadier general and served as mayor of Alexandria from Nov. 1861 to March 1863. McKenzie was so well liked by the federal troops that the 8th Illinois Cavalry presented him with a gold cane in 1864. Abner Hard, the regimental surgeon, wrote as follows:

On the morning of
the 24th of February

1864, while our regiment was drawn up on dress parade, Mayor McKenzie was summoned to appear in front of us; and when that efficient and popular functionary made his appearance he was made the recipient of a magnificent gold headed cane.Col. Farnsworth addressed the Mayor. "The officers and men of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, feeling deeply sensible of the many and continued acts of courtesy extended to them by yourself, ...desire to present you with some token of their regard and appreciation of your kindness. ... We know the difficulties which surround you here as the chief executive of this city, but we congratulate the city and the country upon having a Mayor in Alexandria who knows his duty and dares to do it." McKenzie responded: "Col. Farnsworth when you sent for me this morning, I had no idea it was for the purpose of presenting me on behalf of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, your gallant regiment, a cane--a beautiful one, too,

elegantly mounted, representing the churches, the schoolhouse and log cabins. I shall cherish it ever as a mark of your and their regard and esteem." [Abner Hard, History of the Eighth Cavalry Regiment Illinois Volunteers. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1984]

After the war, McKenzie was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1869. His election was contested by Charles Whittlesay, a radical, who averred that McKenzie had sold foodstuffs and goods to the Confederate Government before the Union occupation of Alexandria in May 1861. This was not the first time McKenzie's election had been contested. When he ran for Congress in 1863, some members of that body voted to refuse to seat him because of his strong abolitionist views and ardent support of African Americans.

In 1868, McKenzie was elected president of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad and also served for a time as president of the Washington & Alexandria Railroad. For the large majority of Alexandrians who had supported and fought for the Confederacy, Lewis McKenzie was an anathema. For them, he was a representative of the Republican Party and those radical Unionists carpetbaggers who endeavoured to place a yoke around the neck of Southerners.

From 1855 to 1870, 207 Prince Street served as a boarding house while McKenzie lodged at the Alexandria Hotel, S.E. corner of Prince and St. Asaph Streets. Among the occupants of 207 Prince Street in 1855 was the Reverend Kingsford of Jersey City, New Jersey who served as the pastor of Alexandria's First Baptist Church from 1841 to 1848.

McKenzie returned to live at 207 Prince Street in the mid- 1870s. Col. John S. Mosby, the famous Confederate guerilla raider, who later embraced Grant and Republicanism after the war, visited McKenzie at 207 in February 1877.

McKenzie was appointed postmaster of Alexandria in 1879 but because he became embroiled in a controversy in 1880 he was removed by President Arthur in 1882. Old and infirm, McKenzie was ignored by a large segment of Alexandria society. He did attempt to run for Governor of Virginia in 1886, an endeavour which was futile. In 1891 he sold 207 Prince and took a room at the Alexandria House Hotel where he died in 1895.

McKenzie's will was unusual in that he left money for a fife and drum corp to march up King Street every 4th of July to honor his birthday.

By 1900, Robert E. Knight, a hardware store owner, was the owner and occupant of 207. He was instrumental in founding the Retail Merchants Association, the progenitor of

the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. During a terrible storm in 1913, the chimneys at 207 Prince were blown down and did considerable damage as they crashed on the roof of William Wattles house at 209 Prince.

207 was acquired by Colonel and Mrs. Charles Beatty Moore around 1930. Mrs. Moore was the daughter of William Montague who served as Virginia's Attorney General (1897-1901), Governor (1902-1906), and as a U.S. Congressman (1920-1937). Gay Montague Moore along with Ward Brown, an architectural historian, and Mrs. Charles R. Hooff were instrumental in implementing the preservation movement in Alexandria. In August 1932, Mrs. Moore hosted Mayor Edmund Ticer and the City Council for a tour of Alexandria's historic houses and refreshments were served in the rear garden of 207. On December 8, 1933, Col. & Mrs. Moore entertained Secretary of War Dern and Assistant Secretary of State Judge R. Walton and the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Again, in March 1935, Mrs. Moore hosted a reception at 207 Prince Street for newspaper correspondents who had made Alexandria their home.

Mrs. Moore's fascination with Alexandria did not confine itself to the preservation movement, she wrote an important volume in 1949 entitled a Seaport in Virginia. It chronicles the history of many houses in the city interspersed with commentary on the social and political scene. "In 1963 Mrs.

Moore received the Certificate of Recognition Award from the City of Alexandria for her work in promoting the city's architectural and historic resources." 207 Prince Street was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Commission Register in 1990 and subsequently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

209 PRINCE STREET: [57 PRINCE ST.--old city numbering system]

Built by Captain John Harper around 1786, this dwelling was set aside for his daughter Elizabeth in 1793. 209 Prince was described as a "piece of ground on the north side of Prince, west of Water Street on which is erected a 3-story brick dwelling house now in the occupation of Dr. Craik." [Alex. Hustling Court Deed Book: E, p. 128] Dr. James Craik was a tenant here from 1789 to 1793. [Cox] By 1796, Dr. Craik had moved to 210 Duke Street, where he remained until he subsequently relocated to his farm Vaucluse, in Fairfax County where he died in 1814.² A life long friend of George Washington, Dr. Craik served with him during the French and Indian War and was a Surgeon General during the Revolution. As Washington's personal physician, Craik attended the General during his last illness at Mt. Vernon in December 1799.

A review of tax records for the north side of the 200 block of Prince Street suggests that Dr. Dick, another of Alexandria's famous Doctors,

may have resided at 209 from 1796 to 1800.

Other owners and occupants of 209 Prince have included: 1802, John Foster, a merchant who operated a warehouse at Prince and Royal Street in 1799; 1803, Wm. Ramsay, grocer/retail merchant; 1804, Thomas Patten, a boarding house keeper; 1805-1815, Wm. King, proprietor of a boarding house; 1818, Stephen Field, [boarding house keeper] who advertised that he had taken that commodious house, one door east of Dr. Dick's, Prince St. where he can accommodate 8 or 10 gentlemen. [AGDA: 2/27/1818]; 1820, Dr. Vowell, physician; 1822, Eliza King's Circulating Library containing 2,000 volumes; ... 1834-1849, Charles Scott, grocer & boarding house keeper; 1850, Virginia Wharton; 1870, Virginia Hite, owner; occupant: L. Dealham, Isaac Swartz; 1896, Ernest Finnell, Virginia Hite, John Patterson, Edward Dove; 1900: James E. Finnell, carpenter, Charles H. Robey, stone cutter; Frank Robey, clerk; 1915: Charles W. Wattles, agent for the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company. On June 25, 1928, the Alexandria Gazette reported that Charles W. Wattles, 67, had died as a result of backing his car into the Potomac River at the end of Prince Street.

By 1950, Johnston Avery who worked for the Department of Justice was the owner of 209 Prince Street.

211 PRINCE STREET [59 PRINCE ST.]

211 Prince Street was

another of the three houses [209 -- 213 Prince] built by Capt. John Harper between 1786 and 1793. On December 18, 1793, merchant David Easton offered to lease the "store and cellar in Mr. Harper's new building, adjacent to Dr. Craik..." Around 1801, Dr. Elisha C. Dick (b. 1762; d. 1825) tenanted 211 Prince Street, occupying the dwelling until his retirement from medicine and subsequent removal to Cottage Farm in Fairfax County in 1819.

In 1782, Dr. Dick was an early organizer of the Alexandria-Washington Lodge and would later serve as its Worshipful Master. As master of the lodge, Dick participated in the laying of the first cornerstone of the District of Columbia at Jones Point on April 15, 1791, and in 1793, he also took part in the ceremony to lay the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol. A cultivated man, Dr. Dick played several musical instruments and was known for his fine singing voice. The good doctor also displayed an intense interest in the welfare of Alexandria and held the following positions of civic responsibility: Mayor; Clerk of the Sun Fire Company; Superintendent of Quarantine for the port of Alexandria; Justice of the Peace; Cavalry officer. During his early career Dr. Dick practiced medicine in partnership with Dr. Peter Wise. By 1809, he had established another medical liaison with his son Dr. Archibald Dick. Dr. Dick is particularly remembered as the young physician, who while

attending George Washington during his fatal illness, recommended the former President not be bled. He also urged that a tracheotomy be performed to save Washington's life. Unfortunately, Dr. Craik and Dr. Gustavus Brown overruled the younger physician's advise and Washington died. Although a man of intellect, Dr. Dick, like many of his contemporaries, did not excel in the business arena. In 1801, after a commission of bankruptcy was appointed to look into his affairs, Dr. Dick's economic fortunes collapsed. He died at Cottage Farm in 1825 and was interred in the Quaker Cemetery located at 717 Queen Street.

Dr. John Vowell had removed from 209 to 211 Prince by 1820. The Harper family offered to sell the house in 1822: "The three story brick house, on Prince Street, formerly occupied by Dr. Dick, and at present by Dr. Vowell -- It is well calculated for a genteel family, and more particularly for a professional reason, the lower rooms having been used as an office. -- Apply to J. & J. Harper." [AG: 3/11/1822]

The Reverend Wells Andrews of the Second Presbyterian Church and the Reverend Elias Harrison, minister at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, occupied 211 Prince Street respectively in 1824 and 1830. From 1838 to the mid-1840s, sailmaker Thomas Sanford (b. 1780; d. 1852) retained the dwelling and leased it to furniture maker, hotel keeper

and entrepreneur James Green, a resident here from 1838 to 1840.

Charles Whittlesay, Attorney General for the State of Virginia in 1869 was the occupant of 211 in 1881. From 1896 to 1950, Jonathan Matthews, a commission merchant, and his family owned the dwelling. In the 1960s, 211 was home to Capt. Earl and Lenore Van Swearingen, two prominent Alexandria preservationists and civic activists.

213 PRINCE STREET: [61 PRINCE ST.]

On Nov. 6, 1783, John Harper leased this lot of ground to James Lownes with the proviso that Lownes should build or cause to be built on the premises one brick house 19 feet front and at least 30 ft. deep and two stories high.

Perhaps, Lownes failed to build the house because he conveyed it to William and John Hickman in 1786 and 1787. Ethelyn Cox states that at some point William Hodgson acquired the property and that Hodgson may have traded John Harper the finished house at 207 Prince Street for the lot at 213 Prince. On April 10, 1793, John Harper conveyed in trust for his daughter Peggy, who married Dr. John C. Vowell, among other property, the lot at 213 "upon which is erected a brick house which is now in the occupation of John Gill and used as a storehouse." It is likely that John Harper built 213 Prince Street around 1793.

Gill was a merchant who in 1798 constructed a public garden south of Alexandria which was later called Tonkin's Garden.

After John Harper's death in 1804, his trustees conveyed the property to his daughter Peggy who married John Vowell. From around 1808 to 1843, Dr. John Vowell leased "213" to several tenants. Alexander Moore, Alexandria County's Register of Wills and a War of 1812 veteran was the leasee in 1809. From 1811 to the 1820s, William Wilson, a builder and merchant, inhabited the building. 213 Prince Street also served as Alexandria's post office from 1824 to 1828. It was managed by Daniel Bryan, the town postmaster from 1821 to 1853 and a poet whose works were admired by Edgar Allan Poe. Grocer James Norris lived at 213 from 1830 to 1836.

On April 1, 1844, Vowell conveyed 213 to his daughter Eliza C.K. Douglass, wife of John Douglass, a grocer, for \$5.00. Tax records reveal that Douglass initiated improvements to the property shortly thereafter. On April 13, 1852, Eliza and her husband deeded the dwelling to James C. Garrell for \$2,030. Subsequently, shoe merchant Peyton Ballenger purchased the property for \$1,800 on December 3, 1858 but sold it eight months later on August 27, 1859 for \$2,000 to John J. Wheat, a retail merchant. Once again the house was sold on May 18, 1860, when Wheat conveyed 213 Prince to tobacconist John A. Field for \$2,000. The Field family owned the dwelling until

the 1930s. On December 6, 1930, Isaac Field, son and only heir of Mary Field, sold 213 to Herbert Little and Ruby A. Black as joint tenants. Mrs. Herbert Little who wrote under the pen name of Ruby Black wrote a series of articles entitled "Life in Scraps of Paper," which were published in the Daughter of the American Revolution's National Historical Magazine in May 1938. In March 1933, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was the guest of her good friend Ruby Black. By 1960, Capt. Jacob Myers, USN, president of the Old Town Civic Association and Vice-President of the Chesapeake Instrument Company was the occupant of 213 Prince Street. Col. Wilfred Smith, the first president of the Alexandria Historical Society, and his family subsequently resided at 213 until the late 1960s.

215 PRINCE STREET: [63 PRINCE ST.]

On November 5, 1783, John Harper conveyed to latter Aaron Hewes for an annual ground rent the site of 215 Prince Street. A June 1796 Mutual Assurance policy taken out by Hewes lists a hatters shop in a brick dwelling house 2 stories high at this location. By 1812, Hewes had transferred his hat making manufactory to King Street second square above Washington Street.

Around 1818 to the early 1820s tax records reveal that Hewes had leased 215 Prince Street to Wm. King who operated a boarding house on the premises. For many years Hewes

served on City Council, was a member of Friendship Fire Company and was treasurer of the Mechanical Relief Society. A prominent member of the Society of Friends, Hewes was instrumental in acquiring the Quaker Cemetery at 717 Queen Street from Thomas West in 1784. Upon Hewes death in June 1819 his obituary stated: "Died on the of the 2nd inst. suddenly, at his residence in Chester, Pa., Aaron Hewes, formerly of Alexandria, Virginia in the 73rd year of his age." By September 1829, Hewes heirs conveyed to his widow "one brick tenement and lot of ground" on this site.

Prosperous lumber merchant Josiah H. Davis owned 215 Prince Street from the 1830s well until 1855. Among Davis' many tenants were baker John Tatsapaugh in 1838; carpenter Walter Piles in 1842; Thomas Butler, a river pilot, in 1847 and shoemaker Cornelius Grinnalds in 1850. The Davis family maintained ownership at least until the 1870s. Charles M. Hancock, a machinist, and his wife were occupants of the dwelling around 1915 to the 1930s.

217-219 PRINCE STREET: [65 & 67 PRINCE ST.]

A 1796 Mutual Fire Assurance Map (No. 106-A) documents that John Harper leased a dwelling house here built of wood one story high 25 ft. by 32 ft. The front was occupied by Samuel Craig as a store. Craig, a local merchant, sold goods from England at this location in the

fall of 1796. By 1813, the heirs of John Harper had conveyed the property to grocer Matthew Robinson who owned five buildings at this location. Three of these houses were situated on the east side of the 100 block of South Fairfax Street while the other two dwellings were located west of 215 Prince Street. The two buildings on Prince, one of which may be present day 217 Prince Street, were occupied by: John Westcott & Matthew Robinson, a grocer in 1810; Mary Caddis, a washer woman, in 1816; Henry P. Whitney, tailor/merchant in 1818; John P. Gorman, ship, ornamental and house painter in 1819; Benjamin Grimes & Zachariah Nichols, a tinsmith & bellhanger & Wm. Wedderburn, a physician in 1824.

By 1830 Matthew Robinson's son William was ensconced at 217 Prince Street. James Green, furniture manufactory, later purchased the dwelling around 1840 and maintained it until 1846. Grocer John Burns acquired Green's house sometime after 1847. Subsequent owners/occupants have been: 1900, Harry B. Richards, engineer; 1915, Frank Burroughs, clerk; 1924, J.E. Evans, steel worker; 1936, Frederick W. Shields, attorney; 1940, Ralph F. Armfield, salesman; 1950, Glenwood Beach, taxi driver; 1960, Russell Anderson, machinist, Atlantic Research Corporation.

219 PRINCE STREET: [67 PRINCE ST.]

In 1815 Joseph Riston and Mrs. Tridle occupied a 1-story

frame dwelling and dry goods store owned by Matthew Robinson on the N.E. corner of Prince and Fairfax Street. Upon Robinsons' death in 1828, Charles Murray announced he would sell his stock of merchandise.

By 1836, Thomas Burns became the proprietor of Murray's corner grocery and later acquired title to the property. From 1836 until 1901 the brick house at 219 Prince Street was known throughout Alexandria as Burns' corner. Improvements were made to the property between 1842-1843; 1847-1849. The Alexandria Gazette of August 4, 1887 described this well known town landmark:

The well known "Burns's stand," ... where for over half a century a grocery store has been kept, has its shutters closed at last. Over fifty years ago, when a frame building stood on the corner, a prosperous business was conducted by Mr. Matthew Robinson who was succeeded by Mr. Charles Murray and subsequently by Mr. Thomas Burns. In 1836 (?) the latter gentleman demolished the old frame structure and erected on its site the present brick building, and stocked it with groceries and liquors, and for

m a n y y e a r s
thereafter the
proprietor enjoyed
the reputation of
keeping some of the
best imported wines
of that day. Upon
the death of Mr.
Burns, in 1861, the
business was
continued by his
widow and others
until now, by the
death of Mrs. Burns,
the store has been
finally closed.

The Burns' heirs conveyed the house to the Mercantile Building and Loan Association for \$2,300 in 1901. Judge E.K. M. Norton purchased the structure and converted it into a residence after 1912. A great grandson of Chief Justice John Marshall, Judge Norton was the son of the Reverend George H. Norton, for many years rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Judge Norton was educated at Hanover Academy in Hanover County, and later attended the University of Virginia where he graduated with a law degree in 1882. Upon completion of his education, Judge Norton came to Alexandria and established a lucrative law practice. At the age of 27, he was made Judge of the Corporation Court in 1889, being the youngest judge at that time ever appointed to the bench. He was re-elected to the bench by the Virginia Legislature and served for thirteen years before resigning to practice law with Gardner L. Boothe. Judge Norton died of a heart attack on March 26, 1929, and was interred in St. Paul's Cemetery.

His son, Nicholas Norton, was granted permission by City Council in July 1937 to erect a 3 story frame rear addition to 219 Prince Street which now constitutes 101 S. Fairfax Street.

Wilfred H. Troupe and his wife Frances, a sister-in-law of Judge Norton, are the present owners of 219 Prince Street. Mr. Troupe served as a pilot with the U.S. Navy.

With its distinguished architecture, the 200 block of Prince Street is truly a touchstone to Alexandria's past, having been home to merchant princes, doctors, clergy, boarding house keepers, grocers, and preservationists.

Vignettes from the pages of the Alexandria Gazette

RATS! The rats that were slaughtered at the famous rat killing on Union Street yesterday evening have been attached to a cord and suspended in graceful festoons from the tops of the piles at the Prince Street dock. -- AG: 1/14/1873

GRAFTTI -- Defacing walls -- Many boys have a bad habit of marking the walls of private residences and other edifices with chalk or charcoal much to the annoyance of the property holders. It is bad enough to have one's house front chalked, but to have it covered, as in some instances is the case, with indecent and vulgar words is too bad. Boys ought to be more thoughtful... AG: 5/4/1868

ATTACKED BY A COW -- A little boy about four years old, son of policeman James Smith was attacked by a vicious cow near the corner of Fairfax and Cameron streets,

yesterday evening, tossed under a feed trough and badly bruised... AG: 8/21/1872

BULL FIGHT -- Arrangements are being made for a grand bull fight to come off at West End at an early date. Two young and vigorous animals are to be procured for the purpose and are to be infuriated by the sight and smell of blood from a slaughter house... AG: 8/24/1872

CITY HOTEL -- Gadsby's Tavern - The bar keeper in Kraig's lager beer saloon in the City Hotel building while drawing a glass of lager this morning was considerably alarmed by a tremendous crash all around him made by the falling of the ceiling. He had served in the war and for a time thought a bomb-shell had busted. AG: 9/11/1872

BRASS BAND --King St. was enlivened this morning for several hours by a strolling brass band which wandered up and down it, a blowing of their clarinets, and a tooting of their horns. AG: 11/22/1872

WILD COW -- Considerable excitement was created at the upper end of Cameron Street yesterday afternoon and a large crowd there collected by the exploits of a wild cow. The infuriated animal after dispersing the assembled spectators several times by furious darts into the very midst of them was finally driven into the yard of the Railroad Hotel where she became quiet. AG: 4/1/1873

An old gentleman from the country who was riding along Union Street this evening was greatly alarmed when his horse, scared by a passing locomotive, plumed with him into the dock at the foot of Queen Street. Both horse and rider were, however, speedily rescued. AG: 5/2/1873

Twenty-two Geese found going at large on the streets yesterday were driven to the Poor House and impounded, but their owner speedily redeemed them by paying the imposed fine. AG: 7/11/1873

HOGS on KING STREET --

One of a drove of hogs which was being driven up King Street yesterday afternoon on the sidewalk between Patrick and Henry Street fell through a cellar door and as it was impossible for it to be gotten out any other way, it had to be slaughtered there and brought up through the house. AG: 12/2/1873

ITALIAN ORGAN GRINDERS from Washington visited the city in numbers today and music was in the air of several of the streets. One of them had the most intelligent or best trained and the most erect walking monkey ever seen here before... AG: 5/7/1874

The three organ grinders sent to jail last week for stealing a duck appeared on the chain gang today and find cleaning the streets harder work than making music. AG: 6/2/1874

RAT ATTACK -- Attacks made by rats upon sleeping infants are of frequent occurrence, but it is a rare thing for a rat to attack a full grown man and bite him severely on the leg while he is asleep and yet it was done in this city last night. AG: 7/29/1874

RUNAWAY -- The horse and mule attached to Mr. James H. Watkins' wagon became so much frightened by a passing railroad train at the corner of Alfred and Wilkes Streets, yesterday evening that they ran away, throwing the occupants of the wagon-- Mr. Watkins and another man--out on the ground, and the wheels of the vehicle running over the former broke some of his ribs, and otherwise hurt him, but none of his injuries is said to be dangerous. AG: 9/7/1875

The **MUD** on Fayette Street between King and Prince is so deep that a wagon stalled there this morning and was only extricated after considerable difficulty. AG: 1/1/1876

The mayor has instructed the policemen to break up kite flying and marble playing in the streets of the city by arresting those indulging in these prohibited sports. AG: 1/24/1876

Biography

Captain James M. Steuart

One of Alexandria's most respected citizens, Captain James Montgomery Steuart (b. 1825/26; d. 1880), served as Postmaster of the United States House of Representatives from 1876 to 1880.

"At the age of eighteen he left Alexandria for St. Louis, where shortly after his arrival, he entered the United States Army, and participated in the Mexican war as a lieutenant in the Missouri Volunteer, under the command of General Sterling Price. At the breaking out of the War Between the States, Stewart abandoned his home and large estate in Tuolumne County California, consisting of valuable mining interests, ranches, and property, for the cause he held most dear to his heart. This property was all confiscated by the authorities in California and not a cent did he ever realize from it. Steuart rode 1,950 miles through a hostile country before he reached Brownsville, Texas. Here he offered his services to the Confederate States and subsequently volunteered as a private in the 17th Virginia Regiment, Col. M.D. Corse, then commanding. Shortly afterwards, upon an election of officers, Capt. Wm. H. Smith resigning, he was elected Captain of Co. E., Old Mount Vernon Guards. He was twice taken prisoner: first, at the

Battle of Frazier's Farm in June 1862 and at Dinwiddie Court House. Capt. Steuart was first confined in Fort Warren, Boston harbor, and the second time at Johnson's Island, Illinois where he remained until peace was proclaimed in 1865. Steuart fought gallantly and with distinction all through the war and at its close returned to his native city Alexandria, where in 1867, he was elected by the people sheriff almost unanimously. He served the people faithfully in the office to which they had elected him for nearly two years, when he was removed by Federal authority. After the "Reconstruction" he was elected sergeant of the city for two terms. The last year of the second term he resigned and in 1876 was elected postmaster of the United States House of Representatives."

"Steuart was also a member of the Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22, of Masons, and Mount Vernon Royal Arch Chapter; he was president of the Relief Hook and Ladder Company and president of the Alexandria Game Protective Association." At the time of his death Captain Stewart resided at 505 Cameron Street. He was interred at the First Presbyterian Cemetery on Hamilton Lane in Alexandria. "No man had ever been so popular in his native town as he." Stewart, over six feet in height, "had a large circle of friends for a better hearted, more upright man never lived." [Alexandria Gazette: 12/6/1875; 10/7/1880]

Businesses of Yesteryear

Anatomy of the Marine Railway and Ship Building Company

Following the Civil War, the Alexandria Marine Railway and Ship Building Company was one of the town's most notable waterfront businesses. Its principal officers were elected at Serepta Hall [400 block of King Street] on April 7, 1874 and included: President, Wm. A. Smoot and Directors: Broders, Mathew Kersey, Park Agnew, Joseph Rogers and Robert Portner; treasurer James H. Reid. Incorporated on April 11, 1874, this ship building and repair facility stretched along the Alexandria waterfront from Wilkes to Franklin Streets.

The company's first annual report was issued at a meeting of its stock holders held on April 6, 1875. The account provides an interesting insight into the early development and genesis of this major Alexandria concern. Excerpts appear below:

"... On motion it was resolved, that the president close the purchase of the [waterfront] lots of Mrs. Keith, R.C. Smith, C.L. Powell, James Green, A. Jamieson, Johnston & Goodhand, G.L. and J. Seaton and Mrs. Forrest--all of which was done after considerable trouble in getting titles. The deeds will all be perfected as soon as the deferred payments on real

estate are paid.

We purchased the lower or Goodhand's ship yard of the Messrs. Johnston & Goodhand for \$5,900, and took possession of it Saturday, April 25, 1874. The machinery, ways, cradle, wharf, buildings and yard were in a very dilapidated condition. After digging out the dock and the mud off the ways, and repairing the engine, boiler, well, ways, cradle, engine house, sheds and wharf, and purchasing a new fall, the old yard is now in very good working order.

After receiving several proposals the Directors, on May 16, 1874, awarded the contract to build the new ways to Mr. Isaac Davis. He then gave us bills for piles, timber, lumber, etc. necessary for the construction of the new ways for which we advertised, and on June 11, 1874, we opened bids for the same. We awarded contract for piles to Hugh Hammill, for lumber to Messrs. T.T. Gaskins & Co.

On June 17th, Mr. Isaac Davis arrived and marked out work for the mud machines, and as he said the gearing, at Havre-de-Grace would suit us, the Directors ordered its purchase.

July 30--Began to build the new ways at this date, Mr. J.T. Rogers commencing to drive the piles. On September 25 the first of the water piles were sawed off. As the [Potomac] River bed there is not very hard, we drove 684 piles under the ground ways from the outer end to low water, which piles

are from 40 to 55 feet long. Between low and high water there are large pine butts laid across and the foundation built upon them, and from high water to chain head gearing there are two solid stone walls, 4 feet thick at the bottom, with a slight taper to the top, braced with timbers, and the outer end built solid of large stones for some distance.

On October 23 and 24, 1874, the ground ways after considerable trouble were launched and sunk in place.

On October 11th and 12th, for the better working of the yard, the Directors thought best to alter the bye-laws and divide the duties up among themselves into three standing committees, viz:

Committee on Finance, which consists of Messrs. Robert Portner and Col. A. Herbert. Committee on Purchase of materials, contracts, bids and proposals--Messrs. J. Broders and J.T. Rogers. Committee on Yard and Workings therein--Messrs. Park Agnew and Capt. Mathew Kersey.

On November 17th, Mr. E. H. Day, our Superintendent, arrived and assumed the duties of his position.

November 25th Mr. Portner offered the following resolutions for the government of the standing committees, which were taken up and passed separately:

Resolved, That all matters relating to the finances of the company shall be referred to

the committee on finance, who shall have power to negotiate loans to an amount not exceeding \$2,000, and issue stock not exceeding \$30,000 in all, and the same committee shall report to the board at the next regular meeting.

Resolved, That all matters referring to the yard and the workings of the same shall be referred to the committee on yard and construction, who shall have power to make all necessary improvements in the yard, to contract for the building and repairing of vessels to an amount not exceeding \$1,000 and report at each meeting of the board.

December 9 it was resolved that the President be chairman of the standing committees.

December 3, we got steam up on the engine for the first time. After having two chain heads cast here, neither of which would work, so we sent Mr. Davis to Baltimore and got one cast there which worked after Messrs. Jamieson & Collins chipped the corners off some. All this took until December 31, 1874, and we hauled up on that date, as soon as the ways were ready, the tug "Gov. Curtin," she being the first vessel hauled out on the new ways.

Things now appeared to work well, so, on January 4, 1875, the Directors received and passed the ways from Mr. Isaac Davis. The engine and boiler had been passed on and received before.

On January 15, [1875] in

trying to loose the new ways from ice, so as to launch the Gov. Curtin, the chain head that was purchased in Baltimore split in two. The parties who had the pattern of the chain head in Baltimore were at one telegraphed to send it over by Adams Express which they did, and we had another cast by Messrs. Jamieson & Collins which works well.

To work the ways in cold weather we found it necessary to have a steam pipe from the boiler to high water on the ground ways, and a section of steam hose, so we could melt the roller boxes and cradle loose when frozen, which we completed on January 25th, 1875.

After launching a three masted schooner, we hauled up the steamer "Keyport" without much trouble.

On January 21 the Directors thought best for the better working of the yard that we adopt the hour system, and Mr. Day, the Superintendent, was informed that it would be done after that week. On Saturday, the 23d, after work, the men had it explained to them, and they all went to work in a day or two, and it seems to work well.

The regular meeting of the Directors is on the 1st and 3d Wednesday of each month.

All the deeds and other valuable papers and some of the books are kept at the German Bank on King Street for safe keeping.

We have hauled up since we have had the yard 89 sail vessels and barges and 27 steam vessels, 116 in all, and nearly all of this work was done by the small ways. We have built a new tug boat for Capt. Matt Kersey, who says: "I am perfectly satisfied with the manner in which the tug "Wm. J. Boothe" was constructed in the yard of A.M.R. W. & S. B. Co., and other competent judges have pronounced her as a fine a boat as any on the river without any exception. Respectfully signed, MATT. KERSEY.

We have also done other new work, which gives, we believe, general satisfaction, as well as our repair work.

[Statement of assets and liabilities]

The Directors desired to have both materials and workmanship in construction of the ways, machinery, etc. of the best order and from all sides we heard the new ways spoken of as among the best, and although there is much there to be done of minor importance, still it is a fine yard, everything first class in every respect, with plenty of timber, lumber, and other materials which can be gotten to build or repair vessels of any class; one large chain weighing 16,889 lbs., costing \$1,041.39 and one Downham chain, weighing 5,270 lbs. and costing \$339.50.

The following persons were then duly elected Directors: Mathew Kersey, Isaac Eichberg, Robert Portner, Park Agnew, James T. Rogers, James Broders

and A. Herbert." [Alexandria Gazette: 4/7/1875]

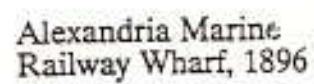
After an auspicious beginning, the Marine Railway subsequently encountered numerous logistical and financial difficulties. The stockholders report for the year 1877/1878 allude to these problems.

"...Gentlemen, whilst this is a tolerable good showing on paper, I regret to say that the actual facts look, and are different. The property as it now stands to day has cost \$45,292.87. We also own 1/3 part of the schooner R. Portner, which, with the insurance added, cost us to date \$4,841.96. Today we could not get \$3,000.00 for it, the amount she is insured for. We also have thrown on our hands a little schooner. The owner abandoned her not having the money to complete her. She will cost us about \$1,500.00 when finished. I doubt if one half of that sum will be realized. But, gentlemen, the greatest and heaviest pullback are the \$19,155.94 in notes outstanding. It will eventually eat the concern up if the stockholders do not come forward and pay off at least one half of that debt. Either do this or sell the whole property are the two alternatives left to us. The German Banking Company that has so long upheld and kept the gates of the yard open can and will no longer in justice to the interest of their stockholders renew the notes, unless they are curtailed. This cannot be done for want of available funds, consequently

it rest with you to come forward and assist. ...

The continued depression in business, low rates in freight, the canal boatsman's strike, and serious breaks on the canal, caused by the heavy freshet last fall, have also effected our institution, and if it had not been for the several steamers, especially the two ferry boats, which underwent extensive repairs, we would have had a very dull winter. In the latter part of January when we had no work on hand and none in prospect, the Board of Directors thought it advisable to haul out the little schooner 'Packet' and continue the work a year or so begun. Mr. Thomas Berry, our superintendent, and the three apprentices, whose pay went on, have only worked on the same, thus saving the company extra outlay for labor. It will be a nice serviceable craft when completed...

Some necessary repairs and improvements will have to be made soon. The small railway wants overhauling, and a new gearing with chain would be advantageous; it also has a defective place under water, where necessary piles will have to be driven. The roof of the saw mill is in a leaking condition, and must be repaired. It is also advisable to enlarge the store-room so as to keep all the stores in one room, also the tools of the company. This cannot be done at the present time. I would suggest a one-story brick house, with office attached; this would insure more safety against theft and fire. We



also need a pair of large shears to ship and unship masts, smoke stacks, boilers, etc. This would give us additional advantage, and, I believe, would soon pay for itself. As long as we confine ourselves to repair work and hauling out vessels, I think Mr. Thomas Berry is fully competent. The time of two of our apprentices will expire the middle of April, the other will serve one year longer. I do not think it is advisable for the present to employ anymore. Last January, when the work at the yard was almost at a standstill, and gloomy prospects ahead, Mr. Rogers voluntarily retired, which lessened our daily expenses two dollars a day. The Board of Directors at that time also instructed me to curtail the wages of engineer and watchman which was done. ... The following employees are at fixed pay: Thomas Berry, superintendent, \$3 per day; Wm. Bacon, secretary, \$56.00 per month; James H. Reid, treasurer, \$50 per year; Wm. Kidwell, engineer, \$1.50 per day; two apprentices, \$4.50 per week each... John Taylor, watchman and teamster \$1.25 per day; our daily expenses are about \$15.

As an indication of the depressed times or decline of business here is the steady diminishing of vessels we hauled out: In the second year of our existence, when our institution was fairly started, we hauled on our ways 225 vessels; third year, 180 vessels; this, four year, 152 vessels." [AG: 4/2/1878]

Following this dire report, the president introduced a resolution which notified the stockholders that an assessment of \$15 per share would be required against each share of stock within 30 days, otherwise the yard would have to be sold.

New director for the ensuing years were then elected: Col. A. Herbert, Park Agnew, Isaac Eichberg, Robert Portner, Justus Schneider, J.T. Roger and Joseph Broders.

Numbers of schooners and other vessels were constructed at the Marine Railway yard during this era. The first was the 150-foot "Robert Portner," a 631 ton three master, launched in 1876. Then, in 1880, the three masted 678-ton schooner "James G. Ogden." By 1882, financial conditions had worsened for the yard, therefore, the stockholders agreed to sell it in 1883 to John Park Agnew & Company, coal dealers.

Fred Tilp writes in his article "Shipbuilding in Alexandria" that the Marine Railroad's crowning achievement was the launch on July 21, 1883, of the schooner "William T. Hart," a four masted, 943 ton vessel built for the coasting trade. "A multitude of people gathered at the shipyard and on vessels near by and Wind-Mill Hill and all contiguous eminences were thronged with people, as were porches and windows wherever a view could be secured." "By 1887, Agnew was reportedly selling half a million tons of coal annually shipped to New

York, New England and Southern ports." Covering four acres and employing 50 shipwrights, the shipping facilities for the business were located at Franklin Street."...These yards are equipped with the latest improved machinery and appliances, and the company is prepared not only to effect any repairs, but to rebuild hulls and make estimates for the construction of new vessels. There are here two of the finest ways in the United States..."

Agnew enlarged the yard but misfortune befell the Marine Railway once again when on March 17, 1888, fire was discovered in the boiler room. The flames quickly spread to the adjoining engine room and saw mill which were soon completely consumed by fire. ...The loss is estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$5,000." [AG: 3/17/1888] The shipyard was rebuilt in the fall of 1888. On September 29, 1896, several of the frame buildings at the ship repair facility were damaged by a powerful cyclone which wrecked havoc throughout the city. Almost two years later, in November 1898, \$30,000 worth of equipment from Agnew's shipyard was removed to Wrightville, Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna River. [AG: 11/1/1898]



201 SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

"Around 1900, the yard returned to building sailing craft for the river trade," the last vessel launched being a fifty-foot longboat "George" in 1917. Later known as the Grover Railway, this company survived until 1923 when it too was sold to the George Washington Stone Corporation for handling their Aquia stone. [Fred Tilp, op.cit.]

End Notes:

1. Water Street was renamed Lee Street in honor of General Robert E. Lee in 1874.
2. Five miles from Alexandria, this Vacluse should not be confused with the estate of the same name inhabited by Thomas 9th Lord Fairfax in the 1830s. It was located on the present site of the Alexandria Hospital.

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Editor: T. Michael Miller

Editorial Committee:

James H. Johnson
Anne S. Paul

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