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Prince Street Profiles

by

T. Michael Miller

With its cobble stoned streets and beautiful Federal and Georgian mansions, Prince Street is one of Alexandria's most historic and enchanting streets. For 250 years it has been the scene of many fascinating events as countless artisans, merchants, bankers, silversmiths, teachers and musicians have promenaded along its brick-lined walks and left an indelible imprint on Alexandria's social and cultural history.

As historian William Buckner McGroarty wrote more than 60 years ago, the "story of an ancient house is not alone a story of brick and stone or of hewn timbers and moss grown shingles; undoubtedly they have their charm but it goes deeper than that; brick and stone, metal and wood may be combined into a

house, beautiful to the eye, appealing to the aesthetic sense yet unable to inspire a quicker beat of the heart or to moisten the eye-lash with a tear."

[The story of Prince Street and indeed] "Alexandria must give recognition to the people whose homes these houses were through succeeding generations; what were the circumstances under which they lived; what public or private events in their times molded or shaped their characters, and in what manner did these houses affect the tenor of their lives other than to afford necessary shelter?"

"Through long years people have been passing through these doorways--happy, laughing people, sad and weeping people, young and buoyant--aged and weary people. The exuberance,

the grief, the joy, the sorrow that they in swelling numbers have carried into these houses have left in each one an indefinable something--an atmosphere shall we say that has become a part of the house itself--felt but not seen. We cannot in considering these human domiciles of yesteryear disassociate them from their human associations; to do so is to spoil the story." [Alexandria Gazette: 9/27/1934]

To appreciate the historical importance of Prince Street, let us wander along its walkways where several late Georgian dwellings abound with their ventriculated keystones, fanlights, pedimented doorways and dormers, denticulated moldings, water tables and chaste Aquia sandstone pilasters. Who resided in these exquisite 18th and 19th century dwelling houses?

Like much of Alexandria, Prince Street has undergone several economic metamorphosis during the past 200 years. Initially, Alexandria encompassed 60 acres and was laid out into 84 lots. On July 13, and 14, 1749, the early town trustees sold at public auction many of these one-half acre lots. The parcels located in close proximity to the Potomac River offered excellent sites for businesses, taverns and warehouses and were among the first sold. These lots were quickly purchased by the landed gentry and merchant princes who frequently, after acquiring the real estate, sold them for speculative purposes. During the 18th

century the 200 block of Prince Street was an upper class neighborhood and was inhabited by wealthy merchants, many of whom were Quakers.

There was no concept of zoning as we know it today and the street scape was a crazy quilt of taverns, bakeries, oyster houses, furniture factories, brass foundries, drugstores, printing presses, silversmith shops, schools, all thrown together in a grand melange. Today, Prince Street is a quiet residential street. Two hundred years ago it was a vibrant beehive of activity as wagons clattered over the cobbles bringing their rich treasures of tobacco, grain and wheat from the Virginia hinterland to a pulsating, thriving port. Indeed, Alexandria was the 7th largest port in the United States in 1797 and the third largest exporter of flour. There was extensive building going on and the "sound of the hammer and trowel echoed up and down the street." By 1800, one traveller commented that "Alexandria is one of the most wicked places I ever beheld in my life; cock-fighting, horse racing, with every species of gambling and cheating...You may judge of the extent of this dissipation when I inform you this little place contains no less than between forty and fifty billiard tables." Other visitors were not as harsh in their judgment of the town. In 1796, Isaac Weld testified that "Alexandria was one of the neatest towns in the U.S. The houses are mostly of brick."

Unfortunately, little is

known about the buildings which occupied Prince Street during the pre-colonial era. Tax records do not exist for this epoch and land records in many cases merely provide evidence of ownership. The deeds are replete with boiler plate phrases such as "John Doe who purchased all tenements, orchards, waterways, etc." Most early buildings in Alexandria were constructed of wood and very few of these have survived. Personal letters, account books and architectural components such as nails, framing techniques, brickwork and moldings offer clues to date buildings. As Denys Peter Myers, Alexandria's noted architectural historian, has remarked time and time again: "The building is the document. It must be interpreted and read." Not only must historians consult the archival records, they must be cognizant of the architectural elements which comprise a house. Dating historic structures is not an exact science and I am the last to pontificate about these issues.

On July 14, 1749, Alexandria lots No. 64 and 65 which presently make up the south side of the 200 block of Prince Street were purchased by Augustine Washington, George Washington's half brother. Each lot purchaser agreed to construct a house 20 x 20 with a 9 foot pitch of stone, brick or frame within two years or otherwise forfeit his lot. Washington failed to abide by the terms of the sale and his two one-half acre lots escheated to town trustees who resold them to William Ramsay

in 1754. Ramsay mortgaged the properties in 1757 to John Dixon, a British merchant from Whitehaven England. By 1774, Ramsay had forfeited his real estate to Dixon who subsequently conveyed part of lot No. 64 at the S.W. corner of Prince and Water/Lee Streets to wealthy grain merchants Robert McCrea and Robert Mease. In 1776, Dixon conveyed yet another parcel to Robert T. Hooe and Daniel St. Thomas Jenifer, merchants of Maryland.

200 PRINCE STREET: It was Colonel Robert T. Hooe, a noted Revolutionary War soldier from Charles County, Maryland and Alexandria's first mayor who constructed 200 Prince Street around 1780. Hooe had purchased property on lot No. 64 as early as 1776. With its gabled roof, belt courses, fluted keystones and lintels, 200 Prince Street exudes strength. It originally overlooked the waterfront since much of the 100 block of Prince Street was later filled in during the late 18th century.

William Loughton Smith, a visitor to town, wrote on August 23, 1790, that Alexandria is now "thriving rapidly; and that much business is done here; there are about 3,200 inhabitants, the houses principally of brick, the streets are not paved and being of clay after rain they are so slippery it is almost impossible to walk in them. I went to the top of Colonel Hooe's house, a very lofty one, the prospect a magnificent one."

Robert T. Hooe was born in King George County, Virginia on October 3, 1743, the son of Rice and Tabitha Hooe. His father, Col. Rice Hooe was a burgess in the Virginia Assembly in 1703.

Robert Hooe spent his formative years in Charles County Maryland where he served initially as a member of the Committee of Safety and later as a lieutenant colonel in the 12th battalion during the Revolution.

Sometime before 1780 Col. Hooe removed to Alexandria where he organized and was a member of several Alexandria firms including Hooe, Stone, & Co. and Jenifer & Hooe. Later, he formed another partnership with Richard Harrison who served as unofficial consul to Spain from 1780 to 1786. Primarily a wheat and flour merchant, Col. Hooe maintained a wharf and warehouse which were situated south of Duke and east of Union Streets.

An 1805 fire assurance plat of Hooe's house values the main dwelling at \$10,000 and the dry goods store adjoining it on the south at \$7,000. Col. Hooe sold an assortment of goods at this store including Baltimore window glass, tobacco, mould candles, hollow iron ware, handkerchiefs of various colours, teneriff wine, etc.

The firm of Hooe & Harrison did not always operate smoothly. In March 1789 Harrison sent a letter to R.A. McKim of Philadelphia

complaining of bad rum: "...The rum you sent to Port Tobacco [Maryland] was so extremely bad that it will not sell, it is not better than our country made..."

On the political scene Robert Hooe became mayor when Virginia and the other colonies were in the throes of fighting a major revolution against the British. In 1780-81, Alexandria prospered having served as a logistical supply and hospital center for the Continental armies. Many merchants grew rich selling wheat, flour and grains. General Washington wrote to Governor Thomas Jefferson in May 1780 designating Alexandria as one of the towns named as a collection place for the State's quota of supplies. "Alexandria is to be the depository of 40,000 gallons of rum, 80 tons of hay and 40,000 bushels of corn."

An investigation of Alexandria's Hustings Court records for 1780/1781 discloses the early justices were busy appointing municipal officials including the harbor master, overseers of the streets and tobacco inspectors. One of the highlights of Col. Hooe's mayoral term occurred in July 1780 when Michael Gretter "was directed to give information to the magistrates of all those persons who kept tippling, disorderly or gaming houses so they could be proceeded against."

After completing his term as mayor, Col. Hooe served as a member of the Common Council until March 1784. That year

Hooe became a charter member of the Potomac Company. The brainchild of George Washington, this enterprise was charged with improving the navigation of the Potomac River and constructing a canal around the Virginia side of the Great Falls. By 1803, the canal was operational but fell into bankruptcy during the mid-1820s.

Col. Hooe was also at the forefront of establishing the Bank of Alexandria in 1792 and was elected to its Board of Directors in 1793. Alexandria's financial health benefitted significantly from the bank's infusion of capital into the local and state economies. The bank was headquartered at 305 Cameron Street from 1793 until a new building was constructed for its use at the southeast corner of Fairfax and Cameron Streets in 1807.

A close friend of General George Washington, Col. Hooe was a frequent visitor to Mt. Vernon and Washington's diaries disclose he dined there as early as 1773. The General apparently thought very well of Col. Hooe for he wrote in January 1784 that "...Col. Hooe, ...is an exceeding good man and very competent to the execution of the trust which he accepts."

In turn, Washington, also noted in his diary that he visited 200 Prince Street on several occasions: Nov. 25, 1786--"Rod to Alexandria -- dined at Col. Hooes and returned home;" March 27, 1788-- "Went to Alexandria, dined

at Colo. Hooe's and returned in the evening -- Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Stuart and Colo. Humphreys also dined at Colo. Hooe's;" Feb. 2, 1789-- George Washington voted for Richard B. Lee as representative to Congress "dined at Colo. Hooes and returned home in the afternoon."

After an illustrious career, Robert T. Hooe died on March 16, 1809. His obituary states briefly that his "friends and acquaintances were requested to attend his funeral from his late dwelling house" on Prince Street. [Fireside Sentinel: April 1987]

In 1811, Colonel Hooe's residence was purchased by the Farmers Bank and remained a banking house until 1909. A bill to incorporate the bank was read before the U.S. House of Representatives in January 1811. The bank was governed by 15 directors who were elected annually. For many years, Richard Marshal Scott, of 312 Queen Street, a well-known lawyer and planter, was president of the Farmer's Bank. John Hooff, [b. 1783; d.1859] served as bank cashier for 40 years and resided on the second and third floors of 200 Prince Street during the 19th century. In 1804, Hooff was secretary of the Alexandria Washington Lodge and in 1810 was appointed to serve on the first vestry of St. Paul's Church.

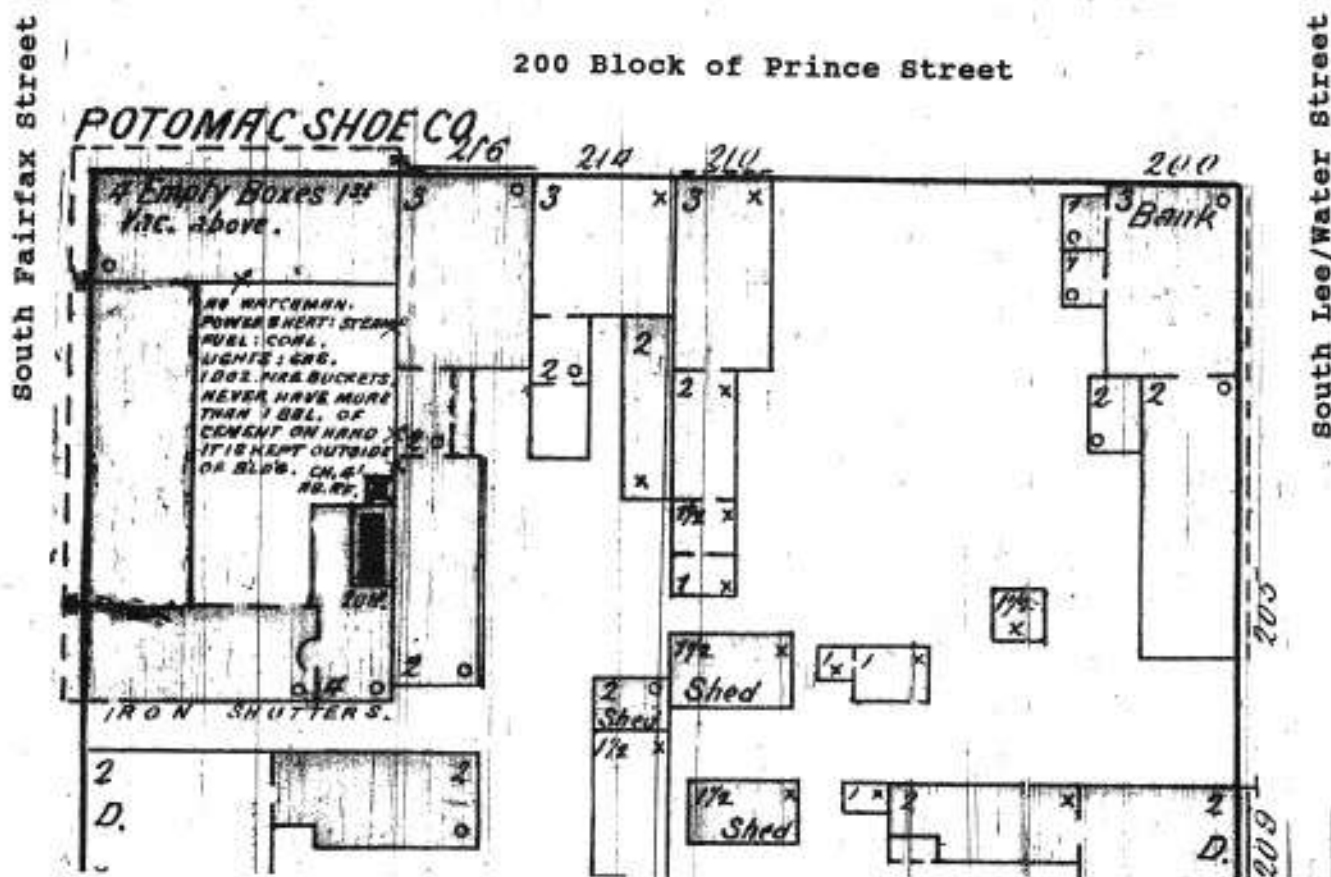
During the Civil War, the Farmer's Bank suspended operations but reopened after the conflict as the First National Bank of Virginia. Dr.

A.P. Hunt, an experienced practicing physician from New Jersey, also maintained an office in the Farmer's Bank during this time. [AG: 4/30/1930, p. 4]

Sanborn Fire Assurance records vividly depict the metamorphosis experienced by the old Farmer's Bank. In October 1894, a bay window was

office segment of 200 Prince Street on December 5, 1909:

"Between 8 and 9 o'clock yesterday morning huge volumes of smoke poured from the windows of the southern portion of the old First National Bank building on the southwest corner of Prince and Lee streets, and before the fire department could reach the



1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

installed on the west side of the building and two, two-story additions were added to the main block between 1907 and 1912. Fire ravaged the south

scene a roaring blaze was raging in the interior. The firemen were soon at work, but the fire proved to be stubborn and over an hour was consumed

in subduing it. The interior of the rear portion of the building was practically gutted and the roof destroyed, although the flames were kept out of the bank building proper. The loss is placed at from \$1,500 to \$2,000. The property, which is now owned by Robert Aitcheson, is insured. Shortly after the building was vacated several months ago it was purchased by its present owner, and mechanics were converting it into apartments. It is suggested they left a smoldering fire in the open fireplace in one of the rooms when they ceased work Saturday afternoon, which resulted in the blaze." [AG: 12/6/1909]

200 Prince Street had fallen upon hard times in the 1930s when Mrs. Charles R. Hooff sold its decorative second floor elegant parlor woodwork to the Saint Louis Art Museum. In 1987 a corner section of this parlor was reconstructed in The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum at 201 S. Washington Street.

SHIP'S TAVERN: No longer extant, this tavern stood in the vacant lot between 200 and 210 Prince Street. James Davidson purchased the dwelling and operated a tavern at this site from 1800 to 1804. During this era, the Alexandria-Washington Lodge held its meetings in the large 2-story frame building.

In 1802 a Mr. Kennedy, a carver from Philadelphia and Baltimore, announced that "such persons as wish to have their prints or looking glasses

framed, old frames, new gilt, old looking glasses will favour Kennedy by leaving their address for him at Capt. Davidson's tavern." City Council elections for the first ward were also held at the Ship's Tavern in 1804. By 1805, William Joy was the proprietor of this hostelry. He was followed by Frederick Shuck who also ran a bath house next to the town theater just west of the northwest corner of Royal and Cameron Streets. In 1807, John Bogan informed the public that "he had taken over the Ship's Tavern lately occupied by Frederick Shuck as a tavern and oyster house and that he would supply good liquors and prepare relishes at the shortest notice."

Randolph Mott invited subscribers to organize the MARINE COFFEE HOUSE at the Ship's Tavern in 1810. Previously Mott had conducted the Spread Eagle Tavern, in what had been McKnight's tavern, at the N.W. corner of King and Royal Streets. Subsequently, Mott became the proprietor of the Washington Tavern, S.E. corner of King and Pitt Streets, which he operated from 1803 to his departure in 1808. While the proprietor of the Marine Hotel on the 200 block of Prince Street, Mott advertised in 1811 that a museum of wax figures as "large as life & living animals, viz. A living African leopard, mechanism, 10 different figures will dance in great perfection after a large German organ; to be concluded with the Yankee firing a big gun." By 1812 the peripatetic Mott had

resumed his stand at the Washington Tavern on King Street.

In 1821, James Davidson agreed to lease a building next door to Col. Hooe's residence which had formerly been occupied by Mrs. Edmonds as a boarding school. An editorial in a December 1823 Alexandria Gazette praised Mrs. Edmonds for the exemplary manner in which she had conducted her school.

On January 2, 1822, the Ship's Tavern was sold to Isaac Entwisle for \$1,000. [Alexandria Deed Book: L2, p. 181] Entwisle, a brewer and bottler, conveyed the dwelling to Thomas Simpson, a butcher, on August 3, 1822. From 1825 to 1828, Margaret Garner was the proprietor of a boarding house at the tavern. Among her many occupants was Uriah Jenkins, the first pilot to captain a steam boat on the Potomac River.

Robert W. Hunter, a prominent ship builder, owned the building after 1828. He leased the Ship's Tavern to Joseph Nevitt in 1834. Born in 1784, Nevitt served as Alexandria's harbor master and was a resident of town from 1796 to until 1863. He died in Washington D.C. at the age of 81. A mariner by profession, Nevitt made several European voyages and commanded sailing and steam vessels on the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

During the 1840s and 50s, the Ship's Tavern was called the Farmer's Hotel and was run

by Zachariah Wright, a hotel keeper from Pennsylvania. On July 2, 1845, Wright offered to serve up "a fine green turtle which was large and fat and in prime order."

On December 27, 1870, the Alexandria Gazette lamented the loss by fire of a very old house on Prince Street one door west of Col. Hooe's residence which in olden times had been used by George Fletcher as a brass foundry.

Vacant Lot --As early as 1794 George McMunn and Isaac Sittler established a manufactory to produce stills and kettles of all sizes. In 1810, Isaac Kell, a tin and coppersmith, removed his store from Water Street to Prince Street two doors above the late Col. Hooe's residence.

210 PRINCE STREET:
Ethelyn Cox writes in Historic Alexandria -- Street by Street that 210 Prince Street was constructed between 1785 and 1786 by Col. Michael Swope (Swoope) of York, Pennsylvania. A former Revolutionary War soldier, Col. Swope served as a member of the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety in 1775, was captured at Fort Washington New York in November 1776 and imprisoned on Long Island. Suffering great hardship, Swope was later exchanged in 1778 by the British for the return of Governor William Franklin -- Benjamin Franklin's son -- who as Governor of New Jersey had sided with the Tories.

Historian William Buckner McGroarty writes in the

Alexandria Gazette of September 1934 that "Col. Swope removed to Alexandria in 1783/84, [where he first lived on Fairfax Street] and engaged in what was at that time the leading business of Alexandria--the shipping industry, when ships from this port proudly sailed the seven seas." By 1786, Swope had built a 3-story brick house on a parcel he had purchased in December 1784 from Robert McCrea and Robert Mease. That same year, villainous robbers broke into Swope's store and stole considerable goods.

On March 23d 1787, Col. Swope assigned all of his business interests to his two sons, Adam Simon and Jacob Swope, with the proviso that they pay all their father's debts. The two sons administered the estate of their mother, Eva Barbara Kuhn, on January 10th, 1804 and shortly thereafter, tradition has it Col. Swope returned to Philadelphia where he died in 1809, and was buried in the family vault in the Union Cemetery of that city.

Henry Wilbar, late master of the Stine House Academy, Brighthelmston, Germany, announced on February 8, 1798, that "his ACADEMY will open in a commodious room at the house lately occupied by Adam Swope on Prince Street."

On June 29th, 1809, Jacob Swope and Mary his wife sold an undivided half interest in 210 Prince Street to Edward K. Thompson and on August 9th, the same year, Thomas Swann, and Edmund J. Lee, as Commissioners

conveyed full title to the same. Thompson, a merchant from Providence, Rhode Island, was in 1787 the proprietor of a business on the N.W. corner of Water and Prince Streets where he sold West India and New England rum, vinegar, pickled salmon, codfish, tongues, hops, cranberries, candles, etc. Thompson leased 210 Prince Street to Edmund Edmonds, a teacher from Philadelphia, from 1810 to 1814 and later to painter William Rudd in 1815. In 1823, Thompson subsequently sold the house to Mathias Snyder, a paint merchant, who was its occupant to 1846. Snyder, however, in 1828 conveyed the dwelling to Phineas Janney and Robert I. Taylor, in trust, to secure funds to the Bank of Potomac. In 1854 the Farmers Bank of Virginia held title and in that year sold 210 Prince to William N. McVeigh, president of the Bank of Old Dominion. [William Buckner McGroarty, "Story of the Michael Swope House" in Alexandria Gazette of 9/27/1934]

During the Civil War William McVeigh moved to Richmond to escape the Federal occupation of Alexandria. Failing to pay direct U.S. federal taxes on his Alexandria real estate, McVeigh had his property confiscated including "210" which was seized by U.S. military authorities and sold at public auction in 1864. Judge Underwood, U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia, executed a deed for this property to Mary Ann Chenney and Theodore Tweed. After extensive litigation, which included a case

adjudicated before the U.S. Supreme Court, McVeigh regained possession of his property after the Civil War and sold it in 1883 to Charles William Wattles, agent for the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company. Following Wattles' death in 1887, his wife, Harriet R. Wattles, disposed of 210 Prince Street to Mr. Amos Fisher in 1890. Fisher, Alexandria's oldest surviving Mexican War veteran, fell down the steps of 210 Prince in 1916, seriously injuring himself which no doubt contributed to his untimely death in 1919. In the early 1930s, Mrs. Josephine Lambert purchased and restored 210 Prince Street. Mrs. Ethelyn Cox, one of Alexandria's most distinguished historians, moved into the house in 1948 where she and her husband, attorney Hugh Cox, collected and assembled one of Alexandria's finest collections of antique furniture. Mrs. Cox died in 1988.

212-214 PRINCE STREET:

This double wooden dwelling was constructed around 1786/87 by William Hartshorne, a Quaker merchant, who had purchased the lot from John Dixon, merchant of Whitehaven England, on May 25, 1774. Born in Burlington, New Jersey in 1742, Hartshorne moved to Philadelphia where he served as an apprentice in the counting house of Joseph Saunders, a Quaker marine underwriter. By the mid 1770s Hartshorne had associated himself in business with John Harper, another Philadelphia merchant. The two men moved to Alexandria and both

constructed houses on the 200 block of Prince Street. As early as 1775, Hartshorne had acquired land about three miles from Alexandria on the Little River Turnpike where he later built a plantation house called Strawberry Hill and a grist mill now situated at 3642 Wheeler Avenue.

Civic minded, Hartshorne was a trustee with George Washington in the early Alexandria Academy and was active in other political and social organizations. Hartshorne served as a member of the Alexandria Common Council [1780-1787, 1804]; a Director of the Potomac Company; President of the Marine Insurance Company; Director of the Bank of Potomac; Commissioner of Taxes; Superintendent of Streets; and a member of the Alexandria Library Company. For many years Hartshorne operated a successful store on King Street near the corner of Fairfax Street where he sold an assortment of merchandise. Tax records suggest Hartshorne leased 212-214 Prince Street to merchants Peterson and Taylor in 1787.

On December 18, 1792, William Hartshorne conveyed his Prince Street dwelling to Mordecai Lewis of Philadelphia for L 1,000. On December 9, 1794, Lewis made conveyance to Mordecai Miller, Hartshorne's son-in-law, and a Quaker silversmith and merchant.

Mordecai Miller (b. 1763; d. 1832) who emigrated to Alexandria from Chester County, Pennsylvania settled

in town prior to 1791. In that year George Washington's account ledgers show payments to Miller for repairing a silver knee buckle and mending a table cross. Miller was vigorously engaged with William Hartshorne in the mercantile and shipping trade until 1799 when he became briefly associated with Abram Hewes & Co. in the auction business.

1796 Mutual Assurance Company maps describe 212-214 Prince Street as "a wooden 3-story dwelling house, 36 by 31 ft., the front room occupied as a Retail Store. Attached in the rear, were two, 2-story wooden kitchens, each 24 ft. by 10 ft." Occupants at this time were Mordecai Miller and others.

Antoine Caylor, a jeweller from Paris, offered to sell rings, diamonds, necklaces and gold jewelry from 212 Prince Street in 1798.

In 1802, Dr. William Daingerfield, was a tenant in one of Miller's houses and administered inoculations for smallpox in 1803. Daingerfield associated himself in the practice of medicine with Dr. George A. Thornton in 1808. On Nov. 19, 1821, Daingerfield died at Notley Hall aged 52. He had previously served with Major General Anthony Wayne in the Northwest Territory and was present at the battle of 1794 terminating the horrors of Indian Warfare.

On February 22 and 25, 1811, denizens of the 200 block of Prince Street filed a complaint against John

Cranston, a loaf bread baker and a resident of 212-214 Prince Street. They claimed:

"the biscuit baker begins work at 3 or 4 in the morning and continues till near dark. ...The back yard, a very small one, is kept generally full of wood, of which a considerable part is split up. The oven is cracked on the south and west sides from the top nearly to the bottom and in the opinion of a number of persons who have seen it is supposed to be very dangerous...If the said baker does not conform himself more becoming the dignity of the neighborhood, it is hoped the town will expel him or at least make him bake loaf bread instead of biscuit." "...[Cranston also goes] to work at four o'clock in the morning when he sets a-going (what he calls) a wood horse, which makes such a clattering noise the neighbors cannot sleep..."

From 1815 to 1840, the Miller family leased 212-214 Prince Street to numerous tenants including James Norris, a grocer, [1817 to 1825]; Jacob Helligle, a baker [1817 to 1820]; Isaac Kell, tin and whitesmith [1830] and a Mrs. Rebecca Mills who operated a boarding house in one of the houses from 1823-1827. Around 1843, James Green purchased the dwelling. After the property was restored in the 1930s, it has since been home to several attorneys including Tucker M. Brown, John B. Barton, Herbert W. Reisner, Gifford H. and Henry G. Irion and Robert Dempsey.

216 PRINCE STREET: By 1796, the ironmonger Philip Wanton owned a large two-story wooden warehouse which occupied this site. In March 1809, Wanton et. al. sold the property to hardware merchant Charles Slade who constructed the present day 216 Prince Street between 1809 and 1816. Financially encumbered, Slade mortgaged his house at 217 S. Fairfax Street and his store at 216 Prince Street to Edmund Lee in 1818, to secure Slade's indebtedness to Mayor Jacob Hoffman. In 1821, Lee sold the "brick warehouse and lot of ground on [216] Prince St. occupied by Henry C. Slade as a hardware store" to Jacob Hoffman. Evidence suggests that Hoffman operated a bacon and currying manufactory here.

In 1825 Hoffman, also financially overextended, pledged 216 to U.S. Congressman James H. Hooe. Upon the death of Hooe's wife Elizabeth in 1831, 216 Prince Street was sold at public auction in 1832 to Isaac George for \$1,600.

On October 19, 1839, Isaac George [d. Sept. 1862], the proprietor of a soap and candle factory, conveyed the property at 216 to James Green for \$3,250. Perhaps, George may have converted the brick store shown in an 1823 insurance policy into a residence. Green eventually acquired several properties along the south side of the 200 block of Prince Street.

By 1915, 216 Prince had been converted into apartments. On July 8, 1917, Rose Hamilton

and 14 others, both males and females, were arrested at 216 for running a house of prostitution. Since 1940, the Charles R. Hooff family has owned the dwelling and presently leases the building to the Burke Insurance Company.

A mysterious club named "The Society of the Skull and Dagger" met at 216 Prince Street in 1935. The Marshal Transfer and Storage Company were also occupants in 1938 as well as "The Better Mousetrap Circulating Library."

218 PRINCE STREET: [Razed]

In 1796, Richard Weightman, a tailor and stay maker, owned four buildings on the south side of the 200 block of Prince Street which were replaced by James Green's furniture factory. These included: a dwelling house 31 ft. by 36 ft.; 2 kitchens and a stable. Weightman and Alexander McConnell ran a retail shop here in the late 1790s. In 1804, Charles Slade who built 216 Prince Street announced in 1804 that he would open a hardware and nail store on Prince Street in a 2 story brick store owned by Weightman.

By 1816, Slade had imported a large stock of cutlery and hardware and was the manager of the Phoenix Nail works on the upper end of King Street in 1817. In 1819, Slade closed his business in order to collect debts but announced that he would reopen in the future under the name of Henry C. Slade & Co. During the 1820s, grocers Matthew Robinson

and Robert Massey purchased the buildings formerly owned by Weightman. These structures were probably razed when James Green built his furniture factory on this site in 1836.

S.E. Corner of Prince & Fairfax Streets:

In 1796, flour merchants John Thomas Ricketts and William Newton owned a large brick warehouse house on this corner described as 97 ft. long, 31 ft. wide, and 3 stories high with brick walls covered with wood. In 1792, the firm advertised the sale of Irish linens, flannels, sugar, tea, old peach brandy, moulded and dipped candles, leiper's snuff and an assortment of glassware at their store on King Street.

In July 1796, Ricketts & Newton advised those who had flour stored with them to have it removed since it had soured.

Ricketts and Newton later leased their corner warehouse to the firm of Hamilton & Green who opened a new hardware store in October 1801. Following the dissolution of Hamilton and Green's partnership, O.P. Finley and Adam Lynn operated a hardware store in this building where they sold grates, fenders, shovels, guns, pistols and powder flasks between 1804 and 1805.

By 1815 Joseph Cristy of Fredericksburg, Va. was the owner of a 3-story brick warehouse on this corner. Cristy subsequently leased the building to Nicholas Blasdel &

Co., who manufactured furniture here as early as 1819. The firm offered fancy and windsor chairs together with a variety of other furniture including trunks, bureaus and stands. After Blasdel purchased William True's interest in the business in 1819, the partnership was dissolved.

James Green, formerly the proprietor of a furniture factory on the east side of the 100 block of S. Royal Street in the 1820s, removed his business to this site after a disastrous fire in 1827 destroyed his and more than 40 other houses and businesses along the 100 block of Prince Street. Once again, fire destroyed Green's furniture factory in 1836. "...The combustible nature of the materials, within the building, caused the fire to spread with great rapidity and in a short time, the fine furniture room and the whole of the manufactory were enveloped in flames. ... [The business was equipped with] a steam engine and new machinery... Large quantities of elegant furniture, materials, and tools were destroyed; and, the work of destruction did not cease until the whole building with most of its contents was entirely consumed." [AG: 4/25/1836] The loss sustained amounted to at least \$20,000. Once again, James Green rebuilt his furniture factory and from 1836 to 1888, it became an Alexandria institution. Green produced furniture for the U.S. Supreme Court, local hotels and utilitarian wares. In October 1852, fire again erupted at Green's steam saw mill, but the

swift action of the fire department and a thick wall which separated the mill from the main factory prevented the complete destruction of the building.

The old factory originally had a bell in a cupola which served to regulate the activity of the town's citizens. In March 1866, the Gazette wrote that "the bell in whose cupola told the hours of the day to more people than the town clock and the turning of whose lathes, as seen through its basement windows of Fairfax Street was the great and continuous attraction to each successive generation of town boys."

During the Civil War, Green's Furniture factory housed a military prison for thousands of federal deserters, some of whom died trying to escape from the facility. One soldier who did flee ran west along Prince Street, was shot at by a federal guard who missed. The bullet struck the north wall of the house at 302 Prince Street near the main entrance door and lead fragments may still be seen there in the brick wall. After the failure of the Green furniture business in 1888, the factory was subsequently used as a school, occupied by the Potomac Shoe factory, the Kretol Chemical Company, and a mattress factory.

During the turn of the 20th century, the Emerson Engine Company constructed cars here. The Alexandria Gazette reported in 1906 that Emerson manufactured one of the first

cars in Virginia at the old Green Furniture Company.

The Southern Apron Co. and the Alexandria Steam Laundry were occupants of the building in 1907 and in the autumn of 1919, the Belle Haven Garage, agent for the Hupmobile and Dort Cars, opened for business. Recognized as the best equipped motor establishment in Alexandria, the garage covered 56,000 square feet of floor space and boasted an elevator and other conveniences. J.E. Ross, the manager of the plant, was a man of wide experience in the automobile business. Mr. Albert T. Peake, was proprietor of the firm and was formerly superintendent of the Emerson Pump Company. He has been in the automobile business for 14 years. [AG: 3/31/1922]

During the early 1980s, the old Belle Haven Garage was completely refurbished and converted into condominiums. An unusual brick sculpture depicting a steam engine adorns its entrance hallway.

With its antiquated houses, wrought iron railings, brick walls and columned portico, the 200 block of Prince Street exudes a special charm as countless tourists and visitors stroll along its street scape drinking deeply from the chalice of history.

The Fall issue of The Alexandria Chronicle will examine "GENTRY ROW"--The 200 block of north Prince Street.

Vignettes from the pages of the Alexandria Gazette

RESCUED FROM DEATH. --

A little boy, two or three years of age, named Thomas Hays, whose mother is a widow, residing on the extreme northern end of Columbus street, accidentally fell into the ice house well of Mr. John Laphen, in that locality, on Monday evening last. The well contained twelve feet of water, and the little fellow had sunk twice, when he was rescued by a young man named McNulty, who at the imminent period of his own life, jumped in and rescued him. (Alexandria Gazette: Oct. 10, 1866)

BOMBSHELL EXPLOSION. -

- A bombshell, taken from the ruins of Fort Ellsworth, was yesterday evening, very foolishly thrown, by someone, into a fire kindled in the yard of Mr. John Bright, just this side of the first toll-gate on the Little River Turnpike. The shell was loaded, but, fortunately, when it exploded no one was near, except a little Negro girl, and she received no greater injury than a burn, and the loss of her clothes, which were torn from her. (AG: Oct. 27, 1866)

MANSION HOUSE CIRCUS?

-- Mr. Martin Maddux, the popular and accommodating host of the Mansion House, has now in the yard of that hotel [formerly located at 121 N. Fairfax St.] a lively and sprightly wolf, and a fat and jocose bear, natives of Virginia, captured in the mountains beyond Lynchburg, and presented to him by some of his numerous friends across the ridge. (AG: Oct. 31, 1866)

FORCE OF HABIT. --

A day or two ago the driver of a horse which has been used for a long time in hauling for a large commission house in this city was taken so sick after he had driven the horse home and given him his mid-day feed that he was unable to hitch him up again, and had to remain in the house. At the sound of Green's Factory bell, [Green's Furniture Factory at the S.E. corner of Prince & Fairfax St.] for one o'clock, however, the horse, though unharnessed, came out of his stable and walked down the street to his usual standing place, and backed up in front of the door, where he remained until the same bell rang for six o'clock, the hour for stopping work, when he trotted himself off home. (AG: August 8, 1868)

SHOW WINDOW SMASHED

-- The show window of the clothing and fancy store of G.S. Rosenbaum, on King street, between Pitt and St. Asaph, was smashed and utterly destroyed this morning, about half past ten o'clock, by the horse attached to the baggage wagon of Mr. Enoch Cook. The horse was running away but instead of taking the street in which to exercise himself, he made a furious charge right through the large glass window of Mr. Rosenbaum, which he shattered to atoms. It is needless to say that the proprietor of the store was very much astonished at the sudden, unexpected and remarkable attack made upon him. The horse was inside the store when his mad career was stopped. A bull in a china shop is no unusual occurrence, but a horse in a fancy store is something that never before occurred in this city. (AG: Dec. 16, 1868)

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SWORD presented to Capt. Robert E. Lee

--Mr. [George Washington Parke] Custis of Arlington, has presented to his son-in-law, Capt. R.E. LEE of the U.S. Engineers, (an officer whose brilliant services in the Mexican War have elicited the

praise of all the Generals) a sword, with the following inscription: "The gift of General Washington to George W.P. Custis, 10th of January 1799." "Presented by George W.P. Custis to Captain Robert E. Lee, U.S.A. the 22nd of February, 1848.

This ancient sabre is peculiarly valuable from its being the only sword that Washington ever presented in his lifetime, and with his own hand to a human being. When presented by the Chief to his adopted son, (then an officer of cavalry) in 1799, it was attended with this injunction: "This sword you are never to draw but in a just cause or in defence of your country."

When this interesting relic of a past age shall arrive in Mexico, will not many a martial spirit of our gallant army delight to grasp a hilt that once was grasped by the Father of his Country. (National Intelligencer as reported in the Alexandria Gazette: March 21, 1848.)

VELOCIPEDE SCHOOL --Mr. Alfred J. Shultz of Baltimore, opened a Velocipede riding school at Portner's Garden--formerly the Potomac Garden--on Monday last, with flattering prospect of success, as the pavilion there has

since been daily crowded from early in the evening until a late hour at night, and some even practice in the morning. Among the numerous young gentlemen who take lessons several have proved themselves apt scholars, and one has so far progressed in his studies that he astonished the citizens yesterday by appearing on the street mounted upon one of the new vehicles.

Some very laughable scenes often occur in the riding school when novices mount their bicycle for their primal endeavor. Such a one enters a hall for the first time. Perhaps there are some half a dozen riders on the floor who are in the secret of controlling the machine and to the uninitiated their easy movement, the rapidity and gracefulness with which they move along, turn sharp corners and cut wonderful figures around posts, seem not at all difficult, and the new comer, in blissful ignorance of what the rates have in store for him, watches his opportunity and makes up his mind to take a ride. With his legs thrown across the machine, and seated in the saddle, he puts one foot on the stirrup, revolves the crank once--only once--and when he attempts to pick up the other foot from the floor to his utter surprise the velocipede tumbles

over, and, with a heavy thump, he falls down on top of it. He picks himself and his machine up, and with his temper not at all improved by the titter of laughter amongst the lookers on, goes to work for a second trial, only to fall once more, and again arises with a liberal coating of the dirt of the floor adhering to his clothing. After several more falls, from each of which he arises dirtier, hotter and more excited, the learner probably gets the proper motion and begins to move along slowly, and just as he commences to feel that he has conquered all the difficulties, there comes a collision. Two awkward riders meet, both turn the same way, and the machines come together with a crash, and, together with their riders, go down upon the floor with a bang. But if he will only persevere he will acquire the art, and recompense himself for his own beginning troubles by laughing at the tryos who come after him. (AG: April 29, 1869)

WAR UPON VELOCIPEDES.

-- A bill has been prepared, and will be introduced at the next meeting of the City Council, entitled, "An Act to prevent obstructions and nuisances upon the sidewalks." Several

velocipedists have of late made their appearance upon the pavements of the public streets, and the bill alluded has been prepared at the instance of a prominent member of the Common Council, with direct reference to the prevention of similar reappearances. As Council, however, does not reassemble for two weeks, experts at the new fashioned riding school can, during the interval, still use the sidewalks as race tracks. (AG: April 30, 1869)

Biography

During the past 250 years, many Alexandrians have made significant contributions to the arts, music, literature, science, politics and business. Unfortunately, many of their accomplishments have been obscured by time and are not generally known. To remedy this situation, **The Alexandria Chronicle** will commence publication of sketches which will highlight the careers of these little known, yet interesting personalities.

DEATH OF A FORMER ALEXANDRIAN

Colonel Edgar L. Lambert, a native of Alexandria, died in New Orleans Wednesday night [February 13, 1901] at the age of sixty-three years. Colonel Lambert was a graduate of Caleb Hallowell's High School in this city. [S.E. corner of Duke & Columbus Streets] He served in both the Confederate army and navy, and with Maximilian in Mexico.

Graduating from school the year the Civil War opened, he soon after offered his services to his native State Virginia, and was appointed as an aide de-camp on the staff of Governor Letcher and afterward as major and lieutenant colonel of the Tenth Virginia Infantry. He was so dangerously wounded in the West Virginia campaign at Carnifax Ferry that he was invalided for eleven months.

He was then appointed a lieutenant in the Confederate navy and stationed at Mobile, Alabama. He commanded the Tuscaloosa and the Selma in the memorable battle of Mobile Bay. He ran the Selma aground and sunk her in order to prevent her capture and when Mobile was captured sunk the Tuscaloosa in the Alabama River, and in an open boat made his escape to

Mexico, where he sought service under Maximilian and was appointed to a position in the Mexican army. He assisted in the building of the railroad from Mexico City to Vera Cruz. He left Mexico when Maximilian was overthrown and returned to the United States, where he assisted in the building of the Texas and Pacific, Missouri, Kansas and Texas and other western roads, the water works at Dallas, Texas and other important improvements. He returned to New Orleans in 1893, and was engaged in the city engineer's office up to the time of his death, preparing the survey and plan for the combination of the new sewerage and drainage system for the city.

Mr. Lambert was the son of the late B. H. Lambert of 314 Duke Street and a brother of Messrs. W.H. and B.H. Lambert of Alexandria. [Alexandria Gazette: February 15, 1901]

Alexandria Businesses of Yesteryear

Established as an entrepot for trade in 1749, Alexandria has been home to hundreds of businesses and industries.

Many of these wholesale/retail firms once dotted the commercial heart of King and Washington Streets. Others, such as chemical, glass, maritime and industrial concerns were located along the bustling waterfront either on the Strand or Union Street. Now, largely a city populated by restaurants and tourists shops, Alexandria once teamed with mom and pop groceries, men and womens' clothing stores, ice cream parlors, candy shops, butcher's stalls, furniture stores and stationary and hardware firms. These businesses provided jobs to hundreds of Alexandrians in addition to generating capital which drove the city's financial engine. Lest these important businesses be forgotten, **The Alexandria Chronicle** will initiate a column which will focus on reminiscences and histories of these old establishments.

On December 16, 1926, the Gazette announced that Alexandria would soon have a new industry in its midst:

"Alexandria within a comparatively short time will have another manufacturing industry to be known as the United States

creamery. The principal product will be the manufacture of butter, and the concern also proposes to manufacture a high grade chicken feed. This concern backed by able men financially now operates a plant in Washington and it is stated that they already have a big trade and contemplate expanding their business. They, it is said, purchased from the Portner estate a part of the brewery building on [the S.W. corner of North St. Asaph and Wythe Streets] and in a short time will begin the work of installing machinery at the plant and expect to begin operations in January 1926."

"An announcement to the foregoing effect was made at a meeting of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce held yesterday afternoon [December 15, 1925] presided over by Claude W. Fletcher,

president, and W.B. McGroarty, traffic and industrial agent for the Southern Railway Company in Alexandria, which was largely responsible for locating the new enterprise in Alexandria." It was anticipated that the company would turn out 4,000 pounds of butter daily.

The Creamery began operations in early 1926 but remained in business only a short time.

Editor: T. Michael Miller

Editorial Staff:

James H. Johnson
Anne S. Paul

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