
THE ALEXANDRIA CHRONICLE



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The Alexandria Memorial Drinking Fountain

by Anne S. Paul

Circumstance --

Things sometimes have a way of going awry and this fountain is the offspring of such a circumstance. It is best to start at the beginning - an editorial in *The Alexandria Gazette* newspaper published on July 31, 1908:

SPARE THE CANNONS

The older citizens can bring to mind the history of the old cannons located at different points around the wharves, some of them claiming that they were placed there by citizens

of Alexandria as far back as 1812 as a reminder of the war at that time when the English vessels came up the river and destroyed the Capital at Washington and later came to this city and robbed our merchants of all the provisions they needed. There is one gun in particular that is about to be consigned to mother earth, incident to the improvement being made on the strand between Prince and King streets by T. F. Burroughs, Son & Co., who expect to locate their grist mill in the building facing the river front. With the spirit which actuated the writer of that poem, 'Woodman, Spare that Tree,' we would suggest that the old cannon might be taken up and placed in another location to preserve it as a relic of by-gone days.

Motivated by the fact that the cannon was a historic relic, Mary G. Powell, Frances G. Monroe and Isabel G. Boswell authored a petition which was presented for approval to the Mt. Vernon DAR Chapter¹ at its November 20, 1908 meeting:

Whereas the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, having for one of its objects, the preservation of all historic relics - be it resolved that the Mt. Vernon Chapter petition the City Council of Alexandria, Va. to preserve and have placed in a prominent position, the old cannon which has recently been removed from the Strand, near King & Prince streets. The said cannon being valued by many of our citizens, as a relic of the war between England and the United States of 1812-1814.

The Alexandria City Council considered the petition on November 24, 1908, but referred it to the committees on streets and general laws.²

As the City has no pertinent records for this period, Mount Vernon Chapter DAR minutes have been used to provide missing details. Mrs. Powell's January 26, 1909 chapter report informs us about the petition's outcome:

The City Council of Alexandria notified the Mt. Vernon Chapter D.A.R. that after investigation by Commonwealth's

Att'y Fisher [Samuel P.]³, he was unable to prove the city's rights to the cannon, on the strand, one of which was unlawfully appropriated by a junk dealer and sold to the Steel Plant, on the Maryland Shore, and that it rests with the owner of the property, on which the cannon was at the time of its seizure, to prove his right and demand return of the cannon.

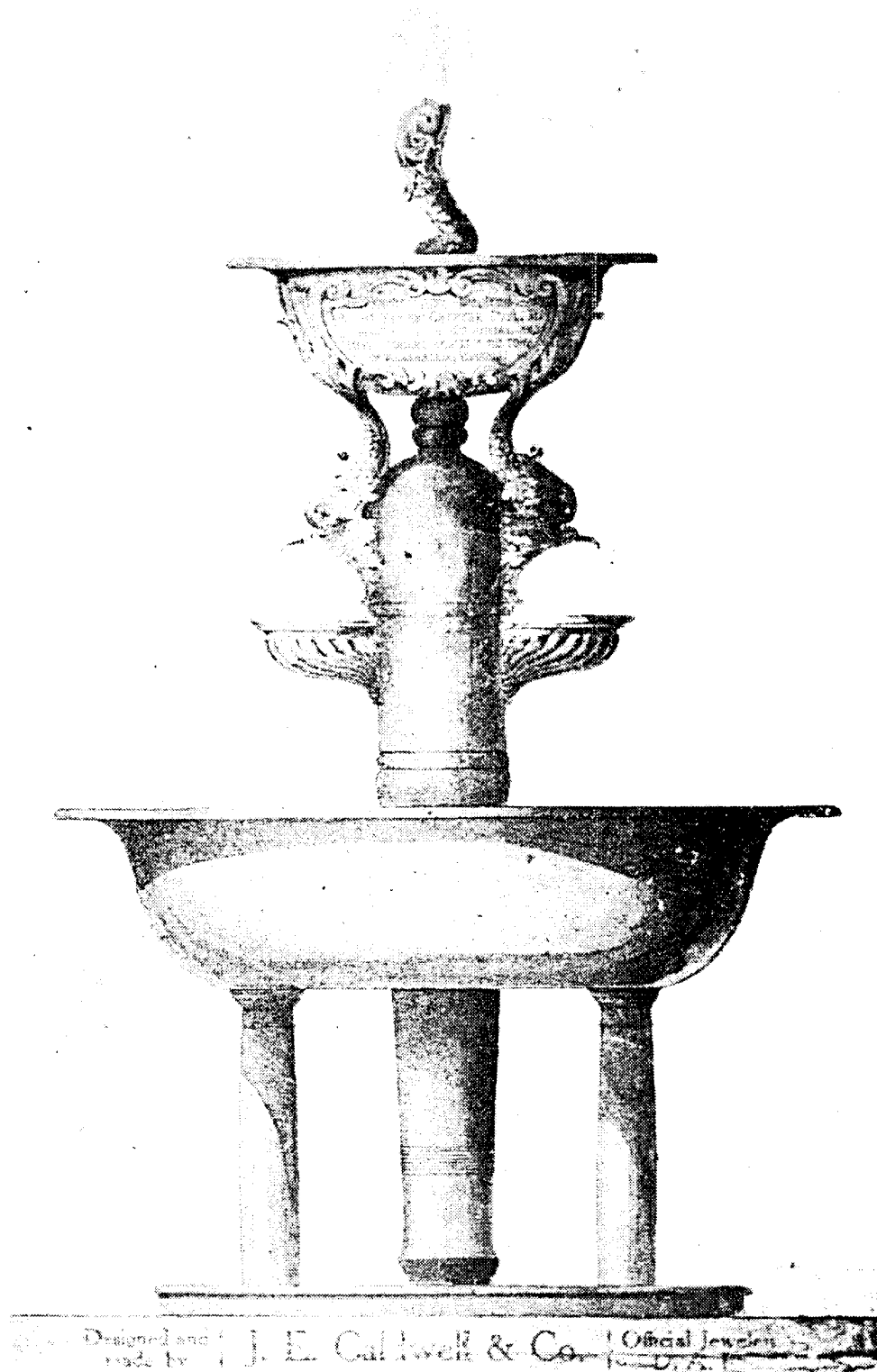
After noting that the owner had no interest in pursuing the matter. Mrs. Powell then shared some startling news:

Capt. Bryant [Herbert]⁴, an Alderman, finding that there were four cannons still on the Strand, has secured by written agreement on the part of the property owners, the right of possession of the said four cannons to the Mt. Vernon Chapter D.A.R.

The reaction of the ladies is reflected in the following motion that was approved at this same January meeting:

The Mt. Vernon Chapter realizing that the preservation of these relics is a work more properly belonging to the Society for the Preservation of Alexandria Antiquities, therefore it is moved that we convey to that Society, our guaranteed right to said cannon and that we promise to give such financial aid in the work of preservation, as the Chapter can afford.

Although the February 1909 minutes reflect the Society had accepted ownership of the four cannons, it later



*The J.E. Caldwell & Co. Design for the
BRADDOCK CANNON*

changed its position. The Chapter was then confronted with the responsibility of finding ways to preserve the cannons.

ALEXANDRIA MEMORIAL DRINKING FOUNTAIN

In November 1909, Mary Gregory Powell⁵ suggested to the chapter the idea of placing a drinking fountain in front of the market at the historic intersection of Royal and Cameron streets. She told members that if they would undertake the project she felt it would be well supported by the community. Her idea was readily accepted and she was made chair of a committee of three members of her choice.

Mrs. Powell accurately predicted the community's support for the project. The following letter explains why:

I am very much interested in the drinking fountain for men and animals. . . Such a work commends itself to the whole community as there has been no convenient place for watering horses since the removal of the old 'diagonal pump'. It is hoped that the ladies will be supported in their worthy undertaking by the citizens generally, and generously.

OLD CITIZEN

The Alexandria Gazette

May 16, 1910, p 2

The letter voiced a large but under publicized concern of a community caught in the midst of social change. As pointed out by T. Michael Miller and William Francis Smith in their book, *A Seaport Saga*⁶, water pumps were once located on almost all street corners in Alexandria. With the advent of a city water company by 1852, the pumps became obsolete as more and more residents subscribed to the company. While some corner pumps still remained in 1910, all of the water pumps along King Street, a major roadway, had already been removed. Although most Alexandria businesses still used horse drawn wagons at this time, citizens were mostly concerned by the lack of public drinking available to farmers and their horses bringing produce to the city market.

The Mt. Vernon D.A.R. (sic DAR) Chapter was neither the first nor the last to think that the city needed a water fountain:

WANT TO ERECT FOUNTAIN.
The Women's Christian
Temperance Union, alive to
everything affecting the general
welfare of man and beast, are now
creating interest in a public
water fountain, where a man,
likewise a horse, can get a drink of
water. The object is commendable
and it is hoped will succeed.

Alexandria Gazette

Friday, 25 September 1908

In October 1911, Mr. Swan
[C.B.]⁷, a common council member,

introduced a resolution before Council asking for a \$300.00 appropriation towards a drinking fountain for horses. The matter was referred to the committees on finance and streets.⁸

Funding for the DAR Chapter's fountain came from a variety of sources but the most significant funds collected were derived from two major events. A May 1910 publicity release for the first event gives an update of the project's progress:

The City Council having granted the petition of the Mount Vernon Chapter, DAR to erect a public drinking fountain on Cameron street and the Alexandria Water Company having generously agreed to furnish the water therefor, it has been decided by the ladies . . . to begin their efforts to raise the necessary funds . . .

Alexandria Gazette

Saturday, 14 May 1910, p 3

The Chapter's first major event was an "Evening of Song and Story," held May 20, 1910 at the Hill Young People's Hall, on the west side of the 100 block of South Washington street. Jean Wilson, a monologist, starred. Several others lending their talents to the evening were Mrs. Thomas Hulfish who sang, "If I were a Rose", and Miss Katherine Waller and Miss Kast in piano and violin duets.⁹

The second event was a performance of the comedy, "Just Plain

Folks" utilizing a volunteer cast of actors. It was held on Monday evening, February 20, 1911 at the Opera House which Mr. J. M. Hill¹⁰ had loaned to the ladies. The event's great success prompted the ladies to make a special newspaper announcement:

. . . . The returns from the entertainment were so gratifying that the chapter was encouraged to direct the fountain committee to begin the work of securing designs and estimates, in the belief, that, in the very near future Alexandria will be blessed with a much needed drinking fountain for man and beast.

The Alexandria Gazette

February 27, 1911, p 3

With the fountain committee immersed in gathering designs and estimates, a subcommittee was appointed in June 1911 to have the cannons transported from the waterfront to Christ Church. Because the October minutes state, "the special committee... had them brought to Christ Church yard, together with one which has been in Mrs. Herndon's care" it appears the Chapter may have owned five cannons in all.¹¹

By November, seven fountain designs had been collected - two from unidentified firms in the District of Columbia, two from [Virgil W.] Fuller of Boston, two from [J & R] Lamb of New York, and one from [J. E.] Caldwell & Co. in Philadelphia.¹² The

membership selected the Caldwell design with an understanding that several modifications would be made.

December and January were devoted to finalizing the fountain's design. Mrs. Powell chaired a committee to prepare a suitable inscription for the fountain. Meanwhile, Mrs. William A. Smoot, Sr.,¹³ the chapter regent, was asked to seek the Virginia Legislature's permission to use the center of the street for the drinking fountain.

By February 1912, nearly all the planning had been accomplished. The fountain's final design along with an appropriate inscription had been approved and a cannon shipped to the Caldwell company. Mrs. Powell reported to the membership that "Mr. Caldwell said he would finish [the] work by April, if possible."

On March 11, 1912, the General Assembly passed an Act "to allow the erection of a fountain in the city of Alexandria by the Mount Vernon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and to authorize the city council of Alexandria, to grant permission for such erection."¹⁴ All that remained now was for Caldwell to produce the fountain. That the ladies believed Caldwell would finish and deliver the fountain before April is evidenced by the fountain's erroneous inscription:

"Erected April 1, 1912 by Mount Vernon Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution in memory of the Colonial and

Revolutionary Events of the town of Alexandria"

The 7 foot 6 inch high fountain did not arrive in Alexandria until early May. An important reason for the delay was that:

When it [the cannon] was being drilled for use in the fountain, it was found to contain a solid shot, and as there was every reason to believe that there was a charge of powder back of the shot, the work of drilling had to be conducted with extreme caution.

The Philadelphia Press newspaper

Sunday, 28 April 1912, p 3

Caldwell had also placed the fountain on public exhibit for several days before sending it on to Alexandria.

On May 6, 1912, the fountain was positioned in the center of the recently vitrified brick intersection¹⁵ at Cameron and Royal streets and a formal dedication was held on May 9, 1912.

The scene at the corner of Royal and Cameron streets where the fountain is located, was an inspiring one this afternoon. Surrounding buildings were draped with many American and Virginia flags, while the stained wall of the old historic structures located nearby were hidden from view by fluttering bunting in red, white and blue . . .

The fountain was designed and constructed by Caldwell of Philadelphia and is a handsome piece of work. It is built around an old cannon which had been in Alexandria for many years and which gun experts from Washington say was made in 1750 and was in all probability used by General Braddock.

Above the cannon a dolphin spouts water into a small basin which is for birds. Below are two automatic fountains, for men and underneath this the main fountain for horses. At the base are two troughs for dogs. The fountain is seven feet, six inches in height and the main bowl is four feet in diameter.

On the west side it bears the inscription: 'Erected April 12th [1st], 1912 by Mount Vernon Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution in memory of the Colonial and Revolutionary Events of the town of Alexandria'

On the east side is the insignia of the D.A.R.

Alexandria Gazette newspaper

Thursday, 9 May 1912, pg. 1

Shortly after the May 9 dedication, it became apparent that the fountain was not functioning properly and on June 7,

1912, Mr. J. F. Thomas, the fountain's designer came from Philadelphia to adjust the openings.¹⁶ Problems with its operation persisted however.

In October, the ladies asked City Council to "look into the condition of the fountain." Mrs. William A. Smoot, the Regent, reported that both the Chairman of the committee on streets and the plumber "considered the fountain faulty in construction." The ladies again contacted the Caldwell company for help. The January 10, 1913 minutes reveal:

He [Mr. Caldwell] sent an experienced man to ascertain the fault in the fountain. He calls the attention of the ladies of the Chapter, to the pit under the fountain, which is constantly filled with water, which seeps in through the ground. He proposes that a connection be made from this pit to the sewer, to carry off this water, for when it freezes it is likely to cause more serious trouble. The City Council was notified of this fault.

Mr. [Joseph C.] Gates was interviewed, but did not consider it necessary to fix it; but as Caldwell so strictly warned the Chapter of the consequences, which would arise from neglect, Mrs. [Wm. J] Boothe and Mrs. Smoot were requested to again interview Mr. Gates. Mrs. Boothe made the following motion; 'I move that Mrs. Smoot ask Mr. Gates to give a written guarantee to the effect that in his expert opinion Caldwell's suggestion is unnecessary, in regard to the plumbing under the fountain.' Seconded by Mrs. Morton.

City Council did nothing to remedy the drainage problem.

CITY COUNCIL AND THE COMMITTEE OF LADIES SKIRMISH

In 1915, the **Alexandria Gazette** published two letters by unidentified citizens complaining that Alexandria's sense of civic pride was lacking. The March 22, 1915 letter signed "Another Old Inhabitant" chided City Council members as being reluctant to deal with issues concerning the community's health, sanitation and safety. The fountain was cited as an example:

It [the fountain] was received with a flourish of trumpets and professions of appreciation, but not the least effort has ever been made to keep the drinking fountain in order or to have the water turned on and off, as was promised. For nine months thousands of gallons of water were wasted, and the small and unfettered youth of the neighborhood (besides banging on the rim of the bowl) performed his [their] morning ablutions there, even going so far as to bring with him [them] soap and towel. . . .¹⁷

As shown in the City's 135th Annual Financial Statement for the fiscal year ending May 31, 1915, City Council did try to address the fountain's drainage problem since it reports that \$10.90 was paid for "plumbing at Public Fountain."¹⁸

On the rain stormy night of September 22, 1916, an automobile collided with the fountain. Although the newspaper reported the fountain had escaped injury, we see from the following paid advertisement this was not true¹⁹:

At the time of the accident to the fountain at the corner of Cameron and Royal streets, in September last, the bronze ornament or 'Dolphin,' which surmounted the top of the monument was lost or mislaid. Any information as to its whereabouts, or that will lead to its recovery, will be gratefully received by the ladies of the D.A.R. or the city authorities. It was seen shortly after the accident.

The Alexandria Gazette

Wed, 21 March 1917. p 1

Within days of the collision, neighbors near the fountain circulated a petition asking that the fountain be removed. Alleging that it was "dangerous to life and property and effects the life of man and animals who drink from it since it is used for a wash basin, laundry and bath tub because no one appears to have supervision over it", they called it a "nuisance."²⁰ City Council considered the petition at its September 26, 1916 meeting but referred it to the joint committee of streets and general laws.²¹ The joint committee would concur with the neighbors but their decision was not presented to Council until February 27, 1917.

Neither the Board of Aldermen nor the Common Council disputed the joint committee's recommendation to relocate the fountain . Instead, disagreement about the details of where to relocate it and what measures should be taken to ensure its sanitation caused both councils to postpone a decision until their March meeting²².

Seeing that Council and the community favored relocating the fountain, the Chapter took several decisive steps at their March meeting. Mrs. William J. Morton, Mrs. John H. Foster, Mrs. Thomas W. Robinson and Mrs. John Stuart Jamieson were to call upon the City Council and propose that Council either leave the fountain where it now stands and appoint a custodian to care for it or return it to the Mount Vernon Chapter. The ladies were also to present to Council the June 26, 1912 thank you letter they had received for the fountain signed by Howard W. Smith, President of the Common Council. The decision to have a copy of the letter published in the newspaper was an important one:

Alexandria, VA

June 26, 1912

President

Mt. Vernon Chapter, D.A.R.

Dear Madam:

Your communication to the Common Council of the City of Alexandria in reference to the care of the drinking fountain at the corner of Royal and Cameron

streets, was duly received and referred to the proper committee. At the same meeting a motion was offered and unanimously carried extending a vote of thanks to your organization for the donation of the fountain and directing me as President of the Common Council to communicate the same to you.

In doing so permit me to say it is gratifying and encouraging to the City Council to feel they have the support and assistance of your splendid organization in their efforts toward the improvement of our city, and Council will take great pride in properly caring for your handsome and useful donation.

Respectfully,

President, Common Council

Alexandria Gazette

Sat. March 10, 1917, p 2

The letter's publication caused an immediate shift in public opinion. Council soon received a petition signed by a number of merchants and stall renters at the market urging them not to move the fountain.²³

On March 13, 1917, Mrs. William J. Morton²⁴ accompanied by a delegation of five ladies from the Chapter made what the newspaper called a "short but forcible

address" before the City Council.²⁵ In her remarks, Mrs. Morton said that the "ladies had spent \$1,600 for the fountain; that the Virginia Legislature had given the Chapter permission to locate it at its present site;²⁶ and that when the fountain was presented to the City in 1912, the Chapter had asked the City then to appoint a custodian for the fountain. Her implication was clear to all - it was City Council's fault the fountain had become a nuisance." Besides asking that the fountain not be removed from its present site, she asked Council to (1) consider placing the fountain under the jurisdiction of the police station since it was located but a square away; and (2) that the City Engineer ascertain what steps would be necessary to keep the fountain in working order. She concluded her remarks by saying that if the city did not feel it could properly care for the fountain, the Chapter would.²⁷

Council did that night adopt a motion by Councilman [Albert]²⁸ Bryan that the city engineer ascertain what steps would be necessary to put the fountain in a sanitary condition but the matter along with the petitions was referred back to the general laws committee.²⁹

On March 27, 1917 the Council unanimously voted to accept the committee on streets recommendation that the fountain be overhauled and repaired at an expenditure not to exceed \$100 and that the fountain be placed in the custody of the police force.³⁰

The ladies were jubilant. An April minute entry states, "Mrs.[Julian] Howard

moved the Chapter be congratulated and the committee chairman be thanked." Their jubilation was to be short lived, however, for the City Auditor's Financial Statements for the fiscal years ending May 31, 1917 and 1918 show no city expenditures made for the fountain.³¹

THE FOUNTAIN IS RELOCATED

On September 7, 1918 the fountain suffered a second mishap when an army truck from the Quartermaster's Corps at Ft. Humphrey's [Ft. Belvoir] collided with the fountain knocking it off its pedestal and throwing it to a distance of about 40 feet. The newspaper states "Fortunately, however, the fountain was not broken and apart from the injury sustained by being disconnected no other damage was done."³² The fountain was put back onto its base where it remained until October 1919 when it suddenly vanished from public view. Since City Council was still enjoying its summer recess, it is quite probable that the City's newly created Department of Health ordered the fountain's removal.

An April 5, 1923 unsigned report by City Manager, Wilder M. Rich³³ to City Council indicates:

. . . the fountain was shipped to the makers, J. E. Caldwell & Co., Philadelphia for repairs in October 1919. The fountain was returned in October 1920 and is now stored in the market

building in the original crating. The total cost of repairs, freight, crating, etc. was \$220.33, which was paid by the City.³⁴

Both the chapter minutes and newspaper reports show that from October 1920 until the spring of 1923, the ladies annually petitioned Council to restore the fountain to its original location and that Council referred them to committee.

Following a two and half year impasse, the Chapter's May 15, 1923 minutes state:

"The Regent [Mrs. D. Mauchlin Niven] reported a letter received from Alexandria Council asking for a committee to meet them in conference, relative to the location and re-erection of the fountain. The Committee appointed were Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Niven."

The bronze drinking fountain was re-erected at the southwest corner of Fairfax and Cameron streets. As reported by *The Alexandria Gazette* on September 19, 1923 "once its pipes were connected the water would again be turned on." That there was some delay in connecting the pipes is suggested by the chapter's October minutes which state "Mrs. Powell reported she and Mrs. Niven had called upon Mr. Rich [the City Manager] and Mr. [Robert S.] Jones [a Councilman], in behalf of the fountain, which had at last found an abiding place. Promises were made to these ladies that it would be in working order the

ensuing week." Since the fountain committee agreed at the December meeting to see that the water was turned off, before any danger of freezing occurred, we know the promise was kept.

In the absence of any photographs of the fountain in 1923, it is difficult to judge whether the Caldwell company's repairs to the fountain included a new bronze dolphin to replace the one lost in 1916. The City Auditor's 141st Annual Financial Statement for the fiscal year ending May 31, 1921 simply reflects the J.E. Caldwell company was paid \$120.00 for the repairs³⁵. The present Caldwell company has stated that they do not have any of the old company's records.³⁶ There is no question, however, that the fountain looked better than it had in some years. The ladies were apparently so pleased to have it on display again that in November 1923 they decided "to secure both a new chain and a new bronze dipper for the fountain." At the May meeting, Mrs. Robinson, chairman of the Fountain Committee reported that the new dipper had not yet been attached to the fountain, "for reasons of sanitation, but after some discussion, it was decided to follow the original plan." What happened to this dipper and the one ordered from Caldwell in June 1912 is not known.

In John D. Everhardt., Jr.'s article "Monuments, Markers, Now Reflect Glories of City's Past" published by the *Alexandria Gazette*, January 6, 1964 he writes:

Leonard A. McKenney, director of mechanical inspection for Alexandria, well remembers as a very young man, drinking water from that fountain out of the old copper dippers that had been placed there for that purpose by those who first erected that fountain - as did a lot of other people.³⁷

In an article entitled "Alexandria's Cannon Cockers" and Their Cannons, Col. William Glasgow, Jr. states that after the fountain was moved to the southwest corner of Fairfax and Cameron streets, "the city's then one-man General Service employee Police Officer Julean Rawlett always kept its troughs as shiny as a new penny."³⁸

By 1925 the need of a public drinking fountain for horses was waning. While the ritual of turning the fountain's waters on in the spring and off in the fall continued for some years, a day did come when the ritual was no longer followed. As years elapsed and its beauty faded, the fountain became an object of some curiosity, especially to children.

In 1963 William F. Kesterson a plumber on Mount Vernon Avenue totally dismantled the fountain and rebuilt it. With help from the water company, the fountain once more became operable.³⁹

When the City completed its first phase of its urban renewal project, the fountain was relocated to its present site on N. Royal street and a dedication

ceremony was held on June 2, 1967.⁴⁰ It is here that one finds it today⁴¹.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Mount Vernon Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution was organized on May 13, 1893. It is the oldest of the city's four chapters and third oldest in the state of Virginia.

The Chapter interest in the fountain has been on-going. A Chapter objective for the past year has been to relocate the fountain and its bronze tablet to a more visible location and this has been the impetus for writing this detailed account.

2. Alexandria Gazette: November 25, 1908, p. 2.

3. T. Michael Miller, **Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom 1749-1992** (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1992) p. 65.

4. *Ibid.*, p.62-65. Capt. Herbert Bryant (1834-1914) had been alderman but in 1909 he was Chairman of the School Board.

5. Mary Gregory Powell (1847-1928) -- her book **The History of Old Alexandria** was published about 6 months before her death. At the time it was considered one of the best books ever written on Alexandria.

6. William Francis Smith & T. Michael Miller, **A Seaport Saga Portrait of Old Alexandria, Virginia 1780-1820** (Norfolk, VA: Donning Press, 1989) p. 68, 145.
7. **Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom 1749-1992**, op. cit., p. 67.
8. **Alexandria Gazette**, October 11, 1911, p. 3.
9. Ibid., May 19, 1910, p. 3.
10. Ibid., February 18, 1911, p. 3.
11. The Vestry minutes, Christ Church, Alexandria, VA contain no reference to the cannons being stored in their churchyard. I am grateful to Julia E. Randle for furnishing me a copy of her Transcription from the original of the Vestry Minutes, Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia for the years 1907 to 1914.

If the Chapter owned a fifth cannon, it is quite possible that an unsubstantiated tradition perpetuated by Bill Glasgow's article (see: Endnote 38) may contain an element of truth. On pages 4 and 5, he states, "they [John Alexander Chapter of the DAR] also gave the Carronade and one of Braddock's 9 pounders to the George Washington National Masonic Memorial Association." He suggests this happened circa 1922.

After discounting the John Alexander Chapter as a donor in 1922 since it was not organized until May 17, 1932, I telephoned the George Washington Memorial Association to try to verify the

gift. I am grateful to Mr. John Riddell for not only looking through the Association's inventory which did identify two cannons as being in the boiler room but also for referring the matter to Stephen Patrick, curator. To date, no records have been located to explain how the cannons were acquired.

DAR Chapter minutes do reflect, however, that in March 1915, members gave two cannons to the Society of the Colonial Dames of Virginia to mark the beginning and end of the Virginia portion of the 1775 trail taken by Major General Edward Braddock to Fort Duquesne, PA.

12. 1911 City Directories for Boston and New York, The library of Congress, Local History and Genealogy Reading Room.

13. An interesting note is that in 1910-1912, Betty Carter Smoot was the Chapter's Regent and her husband, William A. Sr., was the Senior Warden at Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia.

Since the State of Virginia had legal jurisdiction over the roadways in Alexandria, the DAR secured permission from it to construct the cannon at the intersection of Royal and Cameron Streets.

14. **Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly (amending the Constitution) of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, commenced at the State Capital on Wednesday, January 10, 1912, Chapter 134, Approved 11 March 1912, pp. 233, 234.**

15. **Alexandria Gazette**, May 6, 1912, p. 2.

16. Ibid., June 8, 1912, p. 1 and March 13, 1917, p. 1.

17. Ibid., March 22, 1915, p. 3.

18. Box #4, City Auditors Reports 1915-1923; Archives and Records, 801 S. Payne Street, Alexandria, VA., City's 135th Annual Financial Statement, p. 12.

19. **Alexandria Gazette**, September 23, 1916, p. 1.

20. Ibid., September 27, 1916, p. 1.

21. Ibid., September 27, 1916, p. 1.

22. Ibid., February 28, 1917, p. 1, 4.

23. Ibid., March 14, 1917, p. 1, 2.

24. Mrs. William J. Morton was Chapter Regent from 1913 to 1915. Her husband was the Rector at Christ Church, Alexandria, Va. In 1912 she became one of the first women in Alexandria to seek public office when she ran for a place on the School Board. **Alexandria Gazette**, February 5, 1921, p. 1.

25. **Alexandria Gazette**, March 14, 1917, p. 2.

26. Mrs. Morton's reference to the Act [Endnote 14] seems an artful ploy since the Act states:
"Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia, That authority be, and it is granted to the Society in the city of Alexandria, Virginia, known as Mount

Vernon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, after first obtaining the permission of the city council of the city of Alexandria, to erect a fountain in the streets of the city of Alexandria, and be it further enacted that the city council of Alexandria, Virginia, shall have full authority to grant such permission, and to designate where such fountain may be erected."

27. **Alexandria Gazette**, March 14, 1917, p. 1.

28. **Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom 1749-1992**, op. cit., p. 72.

29. **Alexandria Gazette**, March 14, 1917, p. 1.

30. Ibid., March 28, 1917, p. 3.

31. Box #4, City Auditors Reports 1915-1923, op. cit., The 137th and 138th Annual Financial statements.

32. **Alexandria Gazette**, September 7, 1917, p. 1.

33. **Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom 1749-1992**, op. cit., p. 123.

34. Box #1, City Dockets September 1, 1922 to December 18, 1924; Archives and Records, 801 S. Payne Street, Alexandria, Virginia.

35. Box #4, City Auditors Reports 1915-1923, op. cit. 141st Annual Financial Statement p. 7.

36. Telephone conversations February 5, 6 and 7, 2001, Joan Miller, Repairs

Department and Mrs. Fisher who replaced Bill Johnson, retired.

37. **Alexandria Gazette**, January 6, 1964, p. 5. -- My special thanks to Jean T. Federico, Office of Historic Alexandria, for bringing this article located by T. Michael Miller, Alexandria City Research Historian to my attention.

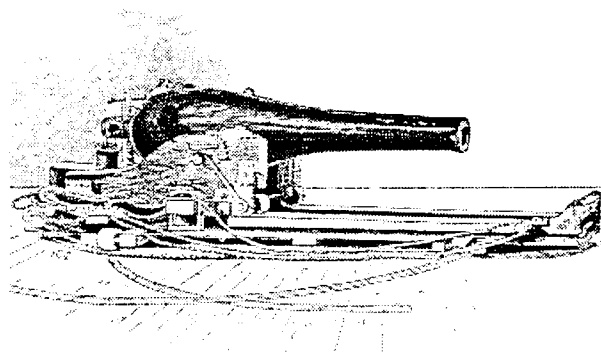
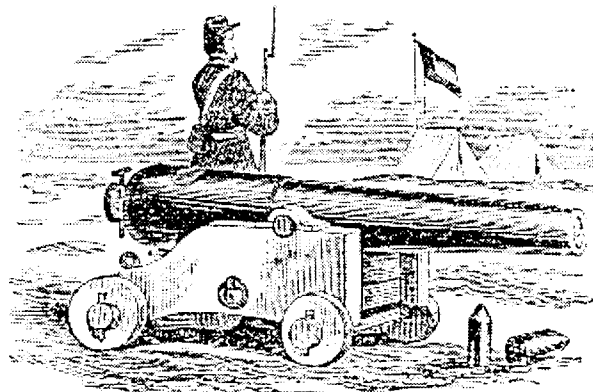
38. Col. William Glasgow, Jr., US Army retired, "Alexandria's Cannon Cockers" and Their Cannons," (Alexandria, Virginia: The Friendship Firehouse News, Vol. 1, No. 1, circa 1993) p. 5.

My special thanks to T. Michael Miller, Alexandria Historical Society member, not only for alerting me to this article but also providing me a copy.

39. **Alexandria Gazette**, January 6, 1964 p. 5.

40. Ibid., June 1, 1967, p. 1.

Other acknowledgments -- Gretchen Bulova, Director, Gadsby's Tavern Museum; Staff at the Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library's Special Collections division; Jackie Cohan at Archives and Records; Petter H. Smith, Principal Staff, Boards of Architectural Review Department of Planning and Zoning; Mount Vernon DAR Chapter members: Harriet Fellos, Lucie Holland, Barbara Muller, Markie Peter and our Regent, Joan Poland. Last but not least my thanks to Mrs. Alva Crawford, Archivist, Historian General's Office, NSDAR.



"Memorial Day Address"

May 28, 2001

Veterans Memorial

College Park, Maryland

by

Glenn Harry Nordin

Thank you for the invitation to join you on this day - here - where you honor veterans and those who died in war. My remarks today are drawn from an inquiry as to the history of our nation's Memorial celebration and the personal meanings that I draw from this day.

Boalsburg, Pennsylvania; Richmond, Virginia; Columbus, Mississippi and Waterloo New York all claim to be the origin of ceremonies to honor both Union and Confederate dead. The city of Waterloo New York first observed this annual remembrance on May 5, 1866, by closing business, decorating graves and flying flags at half-staff in honor of those dead in the Civil War. There was no fixed date for the celebration until 1868 when the Grand Army of the Republic Commander in Chief John

Logan issued general order number eleven. I quote:

"The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials as circumstances may permit."

United States Senator
Foraker speaking at Arlington on May 30th 1905 broadened the list of those to be honored. I quote:

"This day belongs to our soldier dead; not of one war, but of all our wars; and particularly here, in this cemetery, where on these shafts and stones we read names that illumine so many periods of our history."

It seems that the name Memorial Day was proclaimed after World War I and in May of 1966, Waterloo, New York was recognized as the "Birthplace of Memorial Day" by the United States Government.

In 1971, Congress with the President's signature expanded the observance to include every military person who died in service to our nation and set the date of the last Monday in May to observe Memorial Day. By setting the date in that way, there will always be a three-day weekend at the end of May. A three day weekend that has become a time to travel, to add to a vacation, to attend concerts and big sales events, and to take more leisure in doing the normal weekend chores. In 1999, a Senator and a Congressman, both veterans of World War II, and possibly chagrined by the commercialization of this day sought legislation to return to May 30th as the date for Memorial Day.

In December 2000, the Congress of the United States passed a resolution signed by the President which states that on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time, all Americans are asked "To voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to Taps."

Taps - the last bugle call of the soldier's day was once known in US Army manuals as Lights Out or more precisely Extinguish Lights. General Butterfield of the Union Army in 1862 did not like the then

current version of Lights Out. Although the General was not a musician, with his wife's help he composed a different set of notes. He then called a bugler - one Oliver Norton and had the bugler play the call repeatedly while the General adjusted the notes until it became our modern day Taps.

Taps became our final tribute to a fallen warrior in the crucible of our Civil War. During the Peninsular Campaign in 1862, a soldier in the Union Army was to be buried at a time while his artillery unit was concealed in a wooded area near to Confederate lines. It was considered unsafe to fire a cannon salute and thus disclose the location of the unit. The unit commander - one Captain Tidball - decided that the sounding of Taps would be the most appropriate ceremony. Now we bury our honored dead with both rifle or cannon fire and the bugle's peaceful call to rest. And we honor our dead on Memorial Day by listening to that last call relieving all from duty.

My first memories of this holiday come from Spring Lake, a small, mostly Swedish-American farming community in Minnesota in the mid 1930s. The holiday was "Decoration Day". This was the time in the year we went to the cemetery across the street from the Lutheran Church to tidy the burial sites and plant flowers to

beautify the graves and undo the ravages of the always harsh winters. Then on Decoration Day itself, our celebration was centered on the Church and the Church Hall where all events of community import were held. It was a day of a large flag on the Church yard flag pole and small flags flying on the graves of the veterans. Flowers had been planted or placed on grave sites of those buried in the cemetery who still had living relatives to decorate the graves. There were memorial bouquets placed in the church for the special program honoring those who had died in service to their country and also honoring those who had simply left their families for eternal peace in the cemetery across the road. Although I was only in my pre-teen years, my mother was among those thus honored. It was a celebration of the lives of dear and valued persons who were now absent from our midst.

Later, in the church hall, there were wonderful foods - large hams, fried chicken, casseroles (the predecessors of Garrison Keilor's Minnesota Hotdish) and desserts with ice cream cones and different kinds of "soda pop" - sold for a nickel per cone or big bottle by the General Store keeper. There were games and races and later on a baseball game out in a nearby cow pasture. In short, it was a day of celebration and enjoyment with a brief hour or two

of remembering those that were gone.

Then came World War II and I was too young to be drafted and too young to enlist. I had to reconcile myself to farm work, high school and Four H. It was then that I believe I began to recognize that the real meaning of this day as older "boys" and cousins, a brother and other men that I knew were now serving in the Army and Navy and away training for combat or in the war itself. It seems to me now that for me "Decoration Day" began to take on the meaning of honor by the public for those who had served and were serving in the military and to honor those who had fallen in that war and would rest in those cemeteries across the road.

During my own days in the military, I marched in parades and took part in local ceremonies honoring the fallen and wounded from all of our wars and the meaning for me became clearly fixed on the celebration of the United States of America, the value placed on military service and heroic acts in defense of our democracy. The Cold War was upon us as the forces of a totalitarian state were focused on undoing our democracy and our way of life. I spent some "Decoration Days" on duty in Europe or in the United States standing watch against the

potential aggression of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact and all the other forces of that failed ideology Communism. I felt especially honored to be on duty on Memorial Day.

Then came our entry into the Viet Nam conflict and my own participation in the US intervention. Memorial Day took on deeper meaning as some of my comrades died or were terribly hurt by that conflict. I can't remember for sure but I believe that the Decoration Day that I spent in Viet Nam was one of those days when I returned to Saigon aboard an aircraft accompanied by bodies of some of our fallen soldiers. There was no celebration; just a toast that evening to those absent.

The questions raised about our part in the Viet Nam conflict and our conduct while there brought to me some doubt and cynicism about "Memorial Day" celebrations. It was difficult then and has become more difficult with age to equate the meaning of national honor with the waste of youth in the deaths of brave young men and women. It also became more difficult to equate the pleasures of a three-day weekend with the solemn honor due those who fell in line of duty. And yet, and yet - celebration with food and festivity, as we did on Decoration Day in my youth, bring a very human form of closure to our grief

over our loss of those that have fallen.

I believe that Oliver Wendell Holmes wrestled with these same thoughts as he spoke to a Decoration Day celebration on May 30, 1894. I quote:

"Year after year, the comrades of the dead follow, with public honor, procession and commemorative flags and funeral march -- honor and grief from us who stand almost alone and have seen the best and noblest of our generation pass away. But grief is not the end of all. I seem to hear the funeral march become a paean. Our dead brothers still live for us and bid us think of life not death - of life to which in their youth they lent the passion and joy of spring".

He went on to quote a song about a soldier buried on the battlefield. I have heard that song sung in Russian and it carries the thoughts that I bring with me to you today. It is the song of every fallen soldier that I have known.

"And when the wind in the tree
tops roared
The soldier asked from the deep
dark grave:
'Did the banner flutter then'
Not so my hero, the wind replied
The fight is done, but the banner
won
Thy comrades of old have borne it
in triumph hence.

Then the soldier spoke from the
deep dark grave:
I am content.

Then the soldier heard the lovers
laughing pass,
And the soldier asks once more:
'Are these not the voices of them
that love.

That love - and remember me'
Not so my hero - the lovers say
We are those that remember not;
For the Spring has come and earth
has smiled,
And the dead must be forgot.
Then the soldier spoke from the
deep dark grave:
'I am content.'

Over the years from the time
I retired from the military to this
day, I have not routinely
participated in Memorial Day
celebrations. However, on the
occasions that I have gone to
interment of comrades in the
Arlington cemetery, the pomp and
circumstance of the ceremony
have caused me to reflect on and
question the personal meaning of
those celebrations and our national
holiday - "Memorial Day".

Is it only Heroes of War that
we celebrate when we celebrate
Memorial Day? Does one qualify
because one died while serving in
the military? Does one qualify
because one died while serving in
the military during periods of
conflict? Does one qualify by
having died in combat?

And why is the word
"veteran" used in conjunction with
the celebration of the war dead? I
am called a veteran yet it is hard
for me to perceive myself as a
veteran despite my years of
military service. Veterans are older
persons who belong to a different
age - the War of Independence, the
Civil War, World War I and World
War II - the one that produced
what Tom Brokaw calls the
"Greatest Generation". Veterans
are the ones buried in the
gravesites with flags in that
cemetery across the road from the
church in Spring Lake, Minnesota.
Veterans are those older men and
women in the American Legion and
Veterans of Foreign Wars.
Veterans are the ones that are
honored here at this beautiful,
loving and beloved memorial that
has been carefully preserved and
enhanced by the community.

As I searched for the
meaning of Memorial Day, I
returned to my early memories of
Decoration Day and the people
who were honored in those
ceremonies. The men and women
of this country who had served
their community and thus their
country in all ways possible for one
to do good for another. All of
those who had never received a
medal or an award for their actions
during life but who had left an
imprint for good and goodness on
the people and world around them.
Their bravery and courage

exhibited not in battle but in the living of a good productive life through both troubled and peaceful times while bringing life and sustenance to others.

Three weeks ago a family tragedy further solidified the meaning for me. Judith, my wife, and I learned that our twenty-six year old niece, a new mother, had returned to her parental home and had dropped to the floor in death. No cause nor reason could or can be found and the suddenness of the tragedy caused me to question the meaning of life itself. The family and the niece had been an integral part of the Oregon community - participating fully in making their part of the world's populace and society better because of their acts while living. Beloved by all, the funeral ceremonies became a true celebration of a young life well-lived and the wonderful memories that she left behind. Jennifer Lynne Greene was cited as "a best friend to all - an inspiration to goodness - a being who lifted everyone around her". This loss and the community's celebration of her brief but full life has moved me to clarify for myself at last a personal meaning for Memorial Day celebrations.

It is Memorial Day and it is Decoration Day, a day of remembrance and celebration. Today and future Memorial Days will provide me the moment and the motivation to celebrate the memory of all those that I have known who have sacrificed self and served their country, their community and their families in ways both large and small. Of course, I will continue to honor the dead from all wars and my own military comrades who will be noted by their absence. But I will also honor the memory of all those who have in whatever way helped to make this life that I live a better life and this life itself have greater meaning for me. And I will celebrate with both solemn honor and enjoyment of life itself.

Both war heroes fallen and those now absent, who have touched our lives, reach out to you and to me in the words of an anonymous poet. I am not sure when these words were written or where. I first read them in Viet Nam and have found their recall of value when coming to closure with the loss of family members, friends, military comrades and colleagues. I can hear those absent that we honor today say these words to us:

"Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there,

I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the Gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the mornings
hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight,
I am the soft stars that shine at
night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there,
I did not die."

I ask you to join me in
honoring all those you have known
and those unknown that have
made our world a better, more
peaceful place to live and who
have opened opportunities and
possibilities for better
understanding among the peoples
of this world. I ask you to join me
in honoring those who fought for
this nation in its wars and in its
peace in both large and small
ways. Let us offer prayers for
continuation of their good works
and let us express our gratitude for
their legacy of freedom, courage,
sacrifice, service and compassion
for all in our democracy.

Thank you.

Glenn Harry Nordin is an Assistant
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The Arrest of General Robert E. Lee's Daughter in his Hometown of Alexandria, Virginia

Shortly after seven o'clock yesterday evening [June 13, 1902] the quiet of the city was broken by an incident which caused much comment and sincere regret. It was the arrest and escorting through the principal streets of Miss Mary Custis Lee, aged 67. [Mary was General Lee's oldest daughter, born: 1835; died: 1918] It occurred at an unfortunate hour when King Street was alive with people and when nearly everyone living on the thoroughfare or conducting business thereto was being wafted from the northwest. The arrest occurred on a [trolley] car at Payne Street and in a few minutes the news of the affair had reached every quarter of the city. The cause of the trouble was an infraction of the separate seat law now in operation on the electric railway. Miss Lee had declined to obey the law after the conductor had requested her to take a seat in the portion of the coach set apart for white people. She had declined for reasons as follows: Miss Lee took the car in Washington for this city; occupying one of the seats reserved for colored people, and after the Long Bridge had been crossed she was approached by Conductor Thomas Chauncey with the request that she move to the front section of the car. At that time Miss Lee said, everybody in the car was seated. The law was cited but she protested against being moved, explaining to the official how she was situated in

regard to the moving of her heavy baggage. The point was not pressed just at that juncture, but a few minutes later a colored man entered the coach and the conductor came back after her seat. Again she protested, asking why the man could not be made to ride in the smoker. Thereupon the conductor called her attention to the fact that she was liable to arrest. He kept coming back now then, saying that he would have to place her in custody until she finally told him to do as he pleased. A telephone message was sent to this city and when the train reached Payne Street the two officers boarded it and took positions alongside of Miss Lee. Before the cars reached Royal Street a crowd had gathered, it having been noised around that Miss Lee was under arrest and a throng of people crowded around the coaches while Miss Lee was being helped to the pavement. It required sometime to unload her baggage, which consisted of a heavy traveling case and several other bundles. Although the policemen endeavored to keep the crowd back it was to no purpose. When the station house was reached the pavement was black with people. Chief Webster and Lieutenant Smith were sitting in front of police headquarters when the party arrived. In order to divide attention as much as possible, Officer Bettis escorted Miss Lee around by the market building while Officer Sherwood, carrying the traveling bag and bundles, went by another route. The policemen immediately stated the case to the chief. Mr. William Carne, who was acquainted with Miss Lee, was on the spot, and to him and Chief Webster she made her statement.

Here she waited for the decision of the officers as to what dispositions should be made of the case. They decided to confer with Mayor Simpson. Lieutenant Smith called the mayor over the telephone, stating the circumstances as Mayor Simpson directed the officers to release Miss Lee on her personal recognizance to appear in the police court this morning at 10 o'clock to answer to the charge...Miss Lee left the station house, accompanied by several Confederate veterans and went to the house of Mrs. P.T. Yeatman, 220 North Washington Street, [LLOYD HOUSE] where she was expected as a guest. There were willing hands to convey the heavy luggage which had been partly responsible for the most embarrassing situation. Although she manifested much admirable composure before the crowd at the station house, she was visibly affected after the ordeal was over. Miss Lee averred that she knew nothing of the new law regarding the separation of the races. [Jim Crow

laws]

The case was called by Mayor Simpson at ten o'clock this morning and Miss Lee failing to appear he declared the \$5 collateral left for her appearance by her friends forfeited. The Mayor, however, said he purposed examining the case for the benefit of the electric railway company in order that they could be set right before the community... Mayor Simpson in summing up the case said the conductor had performed his duty in the premises, and had he acted otherwise he would have been fined himself. Under the circumstances he said, when a passenger, ...defied a law of the Commonwealth it was the duty of the conductor to have the same penalty inflicted as he would in cases where other people violated the law...

Miss Lee was distressed over the publicity of the affair and the next day left for Ravensworth, the Lee family estate in Fairfax. [Alexandria Gazette: June 14, 1902] [contributed by T. Michael Miller]



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