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# An intersection with the past

This picture from 1920 of the intersection of Cameron and North Washington streets gives us a snapshot of both the familiar and the obsolete. As construction crews repave this section of Washington Street, we thought now was a good time to revisit this picture.

Washington Street might not have been one of Alexandria's original streets but is present in a 1791 map of the city by James Dermott. Cameron Street is one of the city's original streets, named to flatter Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, Baron Cameron.

Like the sponsors of the Cameron settlement, the movers and shakers of early Alexandria thought it wouldn't hurt to flatter the wealthiest and most influential man in the county. The original geographic center of Alexandria – and its civic center – was the intersection of Cameron Street with Fairfax Street, also named for Lord Fairfax!

Readers can see familiar landmarks, such as the Christ Church cemetery on the west side of Washington Street. The most prominent building, on the other side of Cameron Street from the cemetery, no longer exists. In its place is an office building owned by the American Correctional Association, which houses the George Mason Post Office.



PHOTO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A 1920 photo of the intersection of N. Washington and Cameron streets.

Perhaps the most striking thing about this photo is that Washington Street only had two lanes at this section. The George Washington Memorial Parkway did not officially open until 1930, 10 years after this photo.

In 1929, the City of Alexandria and the federal government entered into an agreement leaving control of Washington Street to the city,

but giving the federal government a permanent easement on the street. The easement requires that buildings built along Washington Street maintain certain aesthetic features.

The majority of the trees, including the ones obscuring the historic Lloyd House, have been replaced. A current picture of Washington Street would include many more au-

tomobiles than in the picture, reflecting advances in automotive technology and their importance in life today.

Despite the changes, this intersection is recognizable from this picture, taken more than a century ago.

*Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.*