

Denise Dunbar

Publisher & Executive Editor
ddunbar@alextimes.com

Margaret Stevens

Sales Director
mstevens@alextimes.com

Caitlyn Meisner

Editor
cmeisner@alextimes.com

Sydney Kodama

Reporter/Photographer
skodama@alextimes.com

Andrew McCabe

Photo Intern
amccabe@alextimes.com

Hannah Shiblaq

Reporting Intern
hshiblaq@alextimes.com

ADVERTISING

Margaret Stevens

mstevens@alextimes.com

Marty DeVine

mdevine@alextimes.com

Patrice V. Culligan

pculligan@alextimes.com

Tina Franco

Office Administrator
tfranco@alextimes.com

DIRECTOR OF ART & DESIGN

Jessica Kim

graphics@alextimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Kim Davis

Mark Eaton

Mark Edelman

Thompson Eskew

Kim Gilliam

Ryan Hopper

Lexie Jordan

Audrey Keefe

Louise Krafft

Brianne McConnell

Jim McGrath

Erin Shackelford

Dr. Vivek Sinha

Sandra Smith

Kathryn Ziemer

ALEXTIMES LLC

Denise Dunbar

Managing Partner

The Ariail family

Suzanne Brock

William Dunbar

The former Alexandria Academy

With the start of school almost upon us, Historic Alexandria remembers the first public school in the city. In September 1785, Alexandria celebrated the cornerstone ceremony for the Alexandria Academy, a school for boys, on the corner of Wolfe and South Washington Streets.

The Academy originally required its students to pay a fee, but one year after its founding, the third floor was furnished to house students whose families could not afford the tuition.

The Alexandria Academy's first trustee was George Washington, a major proponent of free schooling. He sponsored 20 students in the last 14 years of his life and stipulated in his will that more students in need were to be educated.

Despite the sponsorship from Washington's estate, the Alexandria Academy suffered financially. It closed in the 1820s, and the building was sold to Samuel Marsteller for use as a residence. In 1884, the Alexandria School Board acquired the building and rededicated it as a public school.

This image shows the school in the early 20th century, with a wooden fire escape added to the west side of the building. The Washington School, another public school for boys, had been built nearby to handle an increase in student population.



PHOTO/ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY

The Alexandria Academy at 311 N. Washington St.

As you can see in this image, the school still stood in the middle of a rural area, even though it is three blocks away from King Street.

By the 1920s, the surrounding area included street trees,

a picket fence and a post office box. Alexandria City Schools used the building for educational purposes until 1952.

In the late 1980s, the Historic Alexandria Foundation prioritized preserving the his-

toric building, and it stands today fully restored to its 18th-century appearance.

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