Documentary Study – First Baptist Church Property

Introduction

Located at 2932 King Street in Alexandria, Virginia, the First Baptist Church stands on the southwestern side of King Street (Leesburg Pike) on just over 16 acres of land. The property is bisected by Taylor Run, a stream that runs northwest to southeast.

The focus of this documentary study is the Octagon House that stood on the property from 1856 to 1866. For its short existence, the Octagon House played a remarkable role in a turbulent time in Alexandria’s history. Built by Sarah W. Hall in 1856, the house’s octagonal design and cement construction were unusual in the area. After the death of her husband, Charles Hall, a prominent clergyman involved in the American Mission movement, Sarah Hall moved her three daughters from New York to join her eldest son Charles Stuart, who lived in the Alexandria area. With the outbreak of the American Civil War in the spring of 1861, the house’s location along Leesburg Pike and in the vicinity of several Union Army fortifications led to its use as a headquarters by several Union regiments and as a regimental hospital.

During the Civil War, the Octagon House was associated with U.S. Brigadier General John Sedgwick (1813-1864) and nurse Amy Morris Bradley (1823-1904). Sedgwick was a career Army officer; with his death at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, he would become the top-ranking U.S. officer to be killed in the Civil War. Amy Morris Bradley had a noted career as an educator in New England and North Carolina before and after the Civil War; she gained a wide renown for her work during the Civil War as a nurse and as the Special Relief Agent for the U.S Sanitary Commission at the Convalescent Camp in Alexandria.

The Octagon House burned to the ground in 1866. As all above-ground physical traces of it disappeared, the house’s history also faded. Circa 1871, Patrick Cunningham constructed another house on the property in close proximity to what had been the site of the Octagon House; the Cunninghams ran a dairy farm there for the remainder of the 19th century. In 1930, the City of Alexandria annexed 911 acres from Fairfax County that included the 16 acres of the subject property on the southwest side of King Street. (See Figure 1) Although a private owner bequeathed the property to St. Mary’s Church of Alexandria in the early 20th century, it was not home to a church until the 1950s when the First Baptist Church of Alexandria constructed its first building there.
To prepare this history, History Matters has drawn upon primary documentary resources such as deeds, wills, and property and personal tax records from Fairfax County, Virginia and the City of Alexandria. Other sources include Civil War-era regimental histories, diaries, sketches, newspaper articles, and biographies. We’ve also drawn upon a series of maps that show the subject property at different points of time in the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Figure 1.** Annexation Map, City of Alexandria, VA. Taken from the *City of Alexandria Annual Report 1955-56* with a handwritten overlay made for the Circuit Court Archives. First Baptist Church property location marked by a red star. (Alexandria Library Special Collections Branch; Alexandria Circuit Court Archives)

**Early 19th-Century Property History**

The landowners and merchants who founded Alexandria on the Potomac River in 1749 envisioned it becoming a major port city on the Atlantic Coast of North America. By the end of the 18th century, Alexandria realized that early promise with a prospering export trade in wheat and corn produced in northern and western Virginia; by 1798 the town boundaries were extended west to
West Street. Local goods arrived via the Potomac River and overland by Braddock Road into northwest Alexandria and by the Main Post Road (approximately the route of today’s Telegraph Road) which joined an extension of Duke Street by Shuter’s Hill on the west.

In the early 19th century, King Street was extended between West Street and Shuter’s Hill. Early access from Alexandria to farms in the project area came by way of the Little River Turnpike (Duke Street) and Braddock Road. Little River Turnpike became the first turnpike to be completed from Alexandria to the west, and it entered the town by way of Duke Street. By 1806, the Little River Turnpike extended between the towns of Alexandria and Aldie in Loudoun County, Virginia. The development of the Middle Turnpike (now Leesburg Pike or Route 7) running from King Street in Alexandria towards Leesburg provided a major transportation route from northwestern Northern Virginia to the port of Alexandria; it was named the “Middle Turnpike” because it lay between the Little River Turnpike and the turnpikes such as the Alexandria and Washington Turnpike that extended north along the

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**Figure 2.** I. A. Sommers, “Plat of the contemplated Turnpike road from Alexandria to Difficult run by Wileys,” 1827 (Center for Cartographic and Architectural Archives, National Archives; reprinted in Richard W. Stephenson, *The Cartography of Northern Virginia*, 1981)
Potomac River. By 1838, the Middle Turnpike was completed between Alexandria and Leesburg. ¹

(See Figures 2 & 3) In the project area, the Middle Turnpike followed the line of the District of Columbia, which defined DC’s southwestern boundary from 1791 until 1846 when the federal government retroceded land on the west side of the Potomac River to Virginia.

The construction of the Middle Turnpike in this area encouraged land speculators to divide patents of hundreds of acres of land into parcels of four to twenty acres. The earliest property owner that can be positively associated with what is now the First Baptist Church property is James W. Atkinson, a blacksmith who worked in Alexandria and the surrounding area. In the 1830s and

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¹ See Figures 2 & 3.

Figure 3. Maskell C. Ewing, Plan of the Town of Alexandria, D.C., 1845. This maps shows the westward roads that extended from Alexandria: Little River Turnpike (highlighted on left), Middle Turnpike (curved in center); and Braddock Road (on right). (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division)
1840s, Atkinson acquired land from six different owners to assemble a 90.75-acre farm that he named Laurel Grove.² It stood on the west side of the Middle Turnpike, approximately one mile from Alexandria’s city limits.³

Originally from Nottinghamshire, England, Atkinson and his wife Verlinda lived at Laurel Grove in a large, two-story brick house; their farm included a kitchen, smokehouse, stables, carriage house, blacksmith’s shop, and other outbuildings.⁴ Atkinson ran a thriving blacksmithing operation of six people who were white and free black males.⁵

James Atkinson was a member of Alexandria’s Friendship Fire Company, the Alexandria Henry Clay Club, and Christ Episcopal Church.⁶ In 1846, Atkinson retired and gave his blacksmithing business to his son James W. Atkinson who continued to operate it at Laurel Grove. The elder Atkinson died in 1849 and left Laurel Grove to his wife and children.⁷ In 1852, Verlinda Atkinson advertised the sale of Laurel Grove; in 1853, the family sold the farm to Hester, Charlotte, Mary and James Camp of Fairfax County.⁸ (See Figure 4)

Within three years of the Camp family’s purchase, James Camp moved to Klamath County, California. In October 1856, the Camps sold a 19.74-acre parcel from the farm to Sarah W. Hall. The Camps kept the remaining 70 acres along with the house and farm buildings.⁹

Sarah W. Hall and Her Octagonal House

Sarah Webster Lawrence Hall was “a woman of matronly dignity, cultivated and refined.”¹⁰ Born circa 1802, she was the daughter of Colonel Joseph W. Lawrence of Genesee, New York and the widow of Charles Hall, who also grew up in western New York. Charles Hall attended Princeton
Theological Seminary and became a Presbyterian clergyman. Charles and Sarah married in her hometown of Geneseo, New York on October 22, 1827.\textsuperscript{11} The Halls spent much of their life together in New York City and the surrounding area. Charles was the Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, a national Christian organization started by several Protestant denominations to establish nation-wide and foreign missions to convert non-Christians. Sarah supported Charles’ work, managed their household, and gave birth to and raised five children.\textsuperscript{12} Charles Hall died in October 1853 and left his entire estate to Sarah. The probate records of his estate note that the Halls’ children included two sons—Charles Stuart and James—and three daughters—Sarah Cornelia, Mary Emma, and Anna Louisa. Charles Stuart Hall, the only child then over 21 years old, lived in Alexandria, Virginia. His younger brother James lived in New York City and worked as a clerk in the Bank of the Republic.\textsuperscript{13}

By the summer of 1856, Sarah Hall moved her three daughters to the Alexandria area to live with her eldest son, Charles Stuart. Sometime before the fall of 1853, Charles Stuart had moved to Fairfax County to attend the Theological Seminary and then became a music teacher in Alexandria.\textsuperscript{14} He was among a large number of male students from northern states who entered the Seminary.

Founded in 1823 by the Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, the Theological Seminary was supported not only by the Episcopal Dioceses of Virginia and Maryland, but by other dioceses along the East Coast as well. However, from its founding, the Seminary was heavily influenced by the northern U.S. traditions of Puritanism and by the Presbyterian influences of the Princeton Seminary through its early professors, who were all from Northern states. Large numbers of Northern students entered the Seminary, drawn there by the influence of and contact with the early professors.\textsuperscript{15} The 1860 U.S. Federal Census records 40 students at the Seminary; of these men, half were born in Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{16} Then only accepting male students, the graduates served as clergymen in their home states as well as missionaries in the U.S. and abroad. With his father’s connections to the missionary society and Princeton Seminary, it was not unusual for Charles Stuart Hall to have chosen to attend the seminary.

The land that Sarah Hall purchased from the Camps was within sight of the Theological Seminary. She most likely took possession of the property shortly after its division in June 1856 and seems to have employed men of the Camp family to construct her house. The August 27, 1856 Alexandria
Gazette records that the rear wall of the house fell during construction “injuring two brothers, named Camp, and a couple of laborers.” According to the next day’s edition, “the house, part of which fell in on Monday, near Shuter’s Hill, belonged to Mrs. Hall, and was constructed of clay, gravel, and cement, on a new plan, in an octagonal shape.”

Two factors made Sarah Hall’s house unusual for the area: its octagonal plan and its building materials. From the 18th century, a small number of eight-sided buildings were constructed in Virginia as houses (for example, Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest) and as outbuildings. The use of the octagon plan for two- and three-story houses gained popularity in the mid-19th century with the publication of Orson Squire Fowler’s A Home For All in 1848. In the 1850s, at least seven other pattern books included floorplans for octagonal houses. With their encircling porches, roof additions such as cupolas, wide ranging views from the rooms, and exposure to light at all times of the day, octagonal houses also provided different room arrangements than the traditional rectangular dwelling. Between 1848 and 1900, but mostly in the 1850s and 1860s, octagon houses principally constructed of frame or brick were built across the country in various styles including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate as well as those without exterior detailing. Of the approximately 2,000 octagonal houses still in existence, the majority are located in New York, Massachusetts, and the Midwest.

In Northern Virginia, three octagonal houses are known to have been constructed during this period. Of these, only the Glebe House at 4527 17th Street North in Arlington County remains standing. Constructed in the 1850s, the brick, octagonal part of the Glebe House was an addition to an earlier 19th-century brick house. Also located in Arlington County and constructed in the 1850s, a two-story, frame octagonal house that stood on Columbia Pike near current day Glebe Road became the headquarters for General McDowell during the U.S. Civil War. Sarah Hall constructed the third octagon house.

Sarah Hall’s choice to build an octagonal structure for her new home indicates her interest in a contemporary architectural fashion. Her choice to use concrete as a building material may have related to the 1854 edition of Fowler’s A Home For All, which advocated using gravel and cement as a “New, Cheap, Convenient, Superior” method of building. The September 2, 1854 Alexandria Gazette reprinted an article on concrete houses from the Salem (Massachusetts) Gazette that provides insight into the methods used to build the Hall house:
…an economical mode of building houses…adopted in consequence of the present high price of building materials. The walls are constructed of a mortar made of lime, gravel, and stones of all sizes, from gravel stones to a 42 lb. ball. They are made about the thickness of common brick walls, and are as solid and probably as durable; but this remains to be tested by experience. The octagon form of house is considered the best of this kind of material…The finishing outside can be of cement, which will give it the appearance of free-stone; the inside is plastered.

Constructed of concrete, Sarah Hall’s house was finished in cement and was Italianate in detail with large wooden brackets under the eaves of the cupola roof and the roof over the second story.

Figure 5. Photograph, “Seventh Brigade Hospital – Octagon House – Gen Slocum’s Brigade – 1861-1862.” The photograph shows Sarah Hall’s Octagon House when it was occupied as a hospital by the Seventh Brigade. Matron of the Brigade Hospital, Amy Morris Bradley, is shown on the second floor veranda. The steeple of the Fairfax Seminary can be seen in the left background. (Alexandria Library Special Collections Branch, William Smith Collection #1392. Original in Special Collections Library, Duke University)
Hexagonal or octagonal wooden posts supported the encircling, flat porch roof that provided an open veranda for the second story, which was surrounded by a low wood balustrade. (See Figure 5)

Fairfax County land tax records from the 1860s valued Hall’s house and probable outbuildings such as a barn or stables at $4,000, which was four times the value assigned to Laurel Grove—the Camp farmhouse and agricultural buildings. Personal property tax records listed Sarah Hall’s taxable goods as: 1 horse $75, 1 cow $15, 1 carriage or wagon $30, 1 watch $70, 2 pianos or harps $200 (son Charles Stuart Hall’s instruments as a music teacher), and all household furniture $200.

Less than a year after the Octagon House was constructed, Sarah Hall’s son Charles Stuart drowned while bathing in the Alexandria Canal. Although only 26 years old, he had established a “wide and deservedly high reputation” as a musician and teacher in Alexandria and as the organist at Christ Episcopal Church. The Alexandria Gazette notice of his drowning on July 20, 1857 included the information that “Mr. Hall’s mother and sisters reside on the heights, near this place.”

Sarah Hall’s move to Virginia came at a time of upheaval in her personal life and in national political events. Throughout the 1850s, while Alexandria’s trade rebounded, sectional turmoil between primarily non-slave-holding northern states and southern slave-holding states heightened to what would soon become armed conflict. On December 6, 1860, the Alexandria Riflemen were mustered as one of the Virginia state militias that were formed in response to the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency the previous month. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the United States. By February 1861, six more southern states left the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. The sectional divisions were felt in the Alexandria community. Being from a northern state, Sarah Hall was subjected to suspicions from many of her southern neighbors, or as her son-in-law Day Otis Kellogg phrased it, “the rapacity of a semi-civilized community.”

The Reverend Day Otis Kellogg married Sarah’s eldest daughter, Sarah Cornelia Hall, on April 10, 1861; he later wrote that he “got my bride away just one day before the Civil War began at Fort Sumpter.” After their marriage, the Kelloggs moved to Philadelphia.

The Civil War Period (1861-1865)

On May 24, 1861, the day after Virginia seceded from the United States, the Union Army occupied Alexandria. That same day, the Alexandria militia moved west to Manassas. The city’s location across the Potomac River from the nation’s capital and at the water and overland transportation...
crossroads for northern Virginia, made Alexandria a vital supply area for the Union Army. Leesburg Turnpike provided a major transportation route for troops and supplies from Alexandria to northwestern Virginia.

At the outbreak of war, the Union build-up of forces comprised calling up state militias into federal service for a period of 90 days. These volunteer regiments were initially uniformed and equipped by their states and, because they were formed locally, retained ties to their localities. Regiments from Maine, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere flooded into the D.C. area that spring and early summer and camped where space could be found. On July 21, 1861, they experienced defeat in their first battle at Bull Run near Manassas, Virginia.

After their loss, the Union’s Army of the Potomac retreated closer to Washington; many regiments drew “duty in the Defences [sic] of Washington, D.C.” until March 1862. These regiments constructed and manned the circle of forts then being built in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington County to protect the nation’s capital. They performed guard duty at various outposts and transported supplies to troops. The regiments also maintained hospital facilities for soldiers injured in battle or suffering from disease.

Rev. Kellogg later wrote that the “war …almost immediately drove her [Sarah Cornelia’s] mother and sisters from their home and to the north, and dispossessed them of it forever.” In their absence, due to its location and size, the Union Army utilized Hall’s octagonal house for its own needs. The appearance of the Halls’ Octagon House was sufficiently remarkable that Captain B.S. Church of the 12th Regiment Engineers included it on his map of the area, which was probably drawn early in the war. (See Figure 6) Sarah Hall had certainly vacated her home when Brigadier General John Sedgwick of the 2nd Brigade of Heintzelman’s Division occupied the house as his headquarters in the late summer of 1861. Sedgwick supervised the construction of Fort Ward, one of the more than sixty forts that were rapidly built at the beginning of the conflict to protect Washington, D.C. and its environs. Located on Braddock Road approximately two miles from the Octagon House, Fort Ward occupied high ground that sloped down to the west and to the east toward Leesburg Turnpike. Begun in July 1861, the fort’s initial construction was completed in September 1861.
Figure 6. Map, Capt. B.S. Church, n.d. “Reconnaissance in advance of Camp Mansfield by 12th Regiment Engr.” The Octagon House is circled. (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division)
Southeast of the Octagon House along Leesburg Turnpike, the Laurel Grove farm contained open, slightly rolling land and the water source of Taylor Run. The land and water provided a convenient area for temporary regimental encampments that occupied the land for most of the war. A photograph taken by E.L. Wires on September 8, 1861 shows the Maine Third and New York Thirty-Eighth Regiments encamped in this area; it is possible that the photograph was taken from the second floor porch or cupola of the Octagon House.\(^{35}\) (See Figure 7) Private Robert Knox Sneden noted that on September 20, 1861, “the tents of the 3\(^{rd}\) and 4\(^{th}\) Maine and the 38\(^{th}\) New York and 40\(^{th}\) New York regiments were struck [and] loaded on the wagons and all moved out from the

Figure 7. Photograph by E.L. Wires, “Maine Third and New York Thirty-Eighth Regiments,” September 8, 1861. Possibly taken from the roof of the Octagon House, the photograph shows the Maine Third Regiment in Sibley tents (center) and the New York 38\(^{th}\) Regiment in Adams-type tents (to the right). The view is taken looking southeast toward Alexandria with the Potomac River in the background. In the distance, center right, would be the Camp (formerly Atkinson) farm Laurel Grove. (Courtesy of photo owner Don Troiani)
vicinity of the Octagon House two miles further on the Leesburg Turnpike beyond camps of all other regiments.”

Nurse Amy Morris Bradley witnessed the constant movement of regimental camps in the area of the Octagon House. Bradley moved to Virginia in the late summer of 1861 to serve as a nurse with the 5th Maine Regiment. When the 5th Maine received orders to move, she took over nursing the soldiers from the Third Maine Regiment and the New York 40th Regiment in a temporary hospital set up in the Powell House, which stood across Leesburg Turnpike from the Octagon House. (See Appendix B, Figure 1) From her vantage point at the Powell House, she recorded in her journal:

“As I raise my eyes, the light from the camp fires of the Pennsylvania 63rd is brightly illuminating the heavens for a long distance. O, I wish you could take a peep at these encampments by night. The sight is grand. Just beyond the last named regiment the Pennsylvania 61st are pitching their tents where the Mozarts [New York 40th Regiment] were this morning.”

Born and raised in East Vassalboro, Maine, Amy Morris Bradley was a remarkable woman whose first career as a teacher took her to schools in the New England states and to Costa Rica in Central America before 1860. Not only a noted educator, Bradley was also a single woman during an era when women were expected to marry and raise children as their chief occupation. The outbreak of war in 1861 gave her a new career as a nurse; her caring nature and her seemingly inexhaustible energy and organizational abilities brought her to the attention of prominent military officers and to civilians with the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Her connections within the Sanitary Commission enabled her to more efficiently obtain hospital supplies and clothing for the soldiers in her care.

From the beginning of the Civil War, approximately one-and-one-half times as many Union soldiers died of diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, malaria and measles than were killed in battle. Men from northern states were exposed to diseases for which they had no immunity in the close quarters of the camps. It was typical that regimental doctors and nurses saw more cases of illness than of battle wounds in the regimental hospitals around Alexandria. When the regiment moved to its next assignment, those not in any condition to join their units were evacuated to general hospitals in Alexandria or to the convalescent camp initially established at the foot of Shuter’s Hill. By mid-1861, inadequately staffed regimental hospitals were combined into brigade hospitals to consolidate resources.
In November 1861, General Henry Warner Slocum, who commanded the 7th Brigade of General William B. Franklin’s Division, recognized Bradley’s abilities by appointing her Matron of the Brigade Hospital. At that time, the 7th Brigade consisted of regiments from New York and Maine—4,000 men all encamped a short distance from each other. Slocum authorized Bradley to take over the Powell House and the Octagon House; Bradley noted that both houses “are empty a short distance from here where we will move them [the sick] all.” Bradley’s writings imply that the Octagon House was vacant for about a month after General Sedgwick left. A photograph of the Octagon House taken at this time shows Amy Bradley standing on the second floor porch. (See Figure 5)

In March 1862, the 7th Brigade broke camp and moved to Centreville, Virginia. Patients remaining in the Octagon House and Powell House were moved either to the hospitals in Alexandria or to the Virginia Theological Seminary, then known as Fairfax Seminary or Theological Seminary. Located northwest of the Octagon House and on a hill between Seminary Road on the south and Quaker Lane on the east, the Union Army used the Seminary’s buildings as a brigade hospital after July 1861 and then as a hospital for Franklin’s Division in 1862. In the 1861-1862 photograph of the Octagon House, the Seminary’s prominent steeple is visible on the left. (See Figure 5)

Amy Morris Bradley travelled with the troops out to Centreville and then Manassas before they were called back to Alexandria in April 1862. When the regiments embarked for Yorktown as part of General McClellan’s campaign to take Richmond, Bradley was determined to accompany them, but the U.S. Army would not approve it. She worked at the Fairfax Street Hospital (Mansion House) in Alexandria, all the while frustrated that she could not accompany the troop transports. In May, Amy Bradley volunteered her services to the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Washington; the commission accepted and sent her to Yorktown to work on the hospital transports that ferried soldiers from the front lines to the hospitals behind the lines.

In September 1862, as part of her work for the commission to improve Union hospitals, Bradley returned to Alexandria. In her position as the “Special Relief Agent of the U.S. Sanitary Commission at the Convalescent Camp in Alexandria,” Bradley was instrumental in moving Camp Convalescent (called “Camp Misery” by the soldiers because of its poor drainage and lack of facilities at the foot of Shuter’s Hill) to higher ground near Four Mile Run. There she organized the distribution of clothing to the needy, organized hospital tents, took discharged soldiers to
Washington to obtain their pay and arrange train travel to their homes, and published the *Soldiers' Journal*, the camp newspaper whose distribution reached the White House.\textsuperscript{44}

From January to April 1863, Companies K and C of the Eleventh Regiment Rhode Island Volunteers encamped in the Octagon House area while they were on guard duty at the Distributing Camp (the former Convalescent Camp at Shuter’s Hill). While encamped in the area, the Eleventh Rhode Island’s camp commander, Captain Upham, occupied the Octagon House as his headquarters. Private R. W. Rock, a member of the Eleventh Regiment visited the encampment area; his writings are included in the regiment’s history, which notes that the encampment area was “on the direct road to Alexandria, and but a short distance from the residence of a Mrs. Hall, a large octagonal-shaped building, which could not escape notice.”\textsuperscript{45}

While visiting the encampment, Rock met Mrs. Hall and recounted that she:

\begin{quote}
had gone to her old home, only to find it more a heap of ruins than at her last former visit. She stopped at the house of the nearest neighbor, one Mr. Camp, who appeared to be a Union man. There Mrs. Hall was packing the remnants of her furniture and what there was left of her husband’s formerly valuable library, to remove them to the north.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Rock’s writings indicate that Mrs. Hall stored some of her furnishings at the Camp’s house before she left in 1861. The circa-1861 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers map and the 1864 U.S. Coast Survey Map (\textit{See Appendix B, Figures 1 & 3}) depict an octagonal house in the location of the Octagon House with a resident named Cole. Either the mapmaker got the wrong name in 1861, which was copied in the later map, or Sarah Hall leased the property to someone named Cole.\textsuperscript{47} The Halls probably moved to Philadelphia to be near Sarah and Day Otis Kellogg. On January 14, 1863, Sarah’s youngest daughter, Anna Louisa, married Rev. Gustavus Bird in Philadelphia. Her brother-in-law Rev. Day Otis Kellogg officiated. Bird was born in Anne Arundel County, Maryland; he and Anna Louisa most likely met while Bird attended the Theological Seminary in 1859-1861.\textsuperscript{48}

The Octagon House seems to have remained in use as the headquarters of whatever Union regiment encamped to its south. In 1865, General John Gross Barnard published a map of the Washington area which shows the line of defenses of Washington that were constructed from 1861 to 1865. The Barnard map includes the Cole house (depicted with a rectangle).\textsuperscript{49} (\textit{See Appendix B, Figure 4})

Within three months of the surrender of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at
Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, Alexandria ceased to be a city occupied by the Union Army.

After the Civil War

Sarah Hall lived in Philadelphia throughout the war, but travelled to Alexandria on occasion to look after her property. When the war ended in 1865, and with no family left in the Alexandria area, she planned to sell the property. However, according to son-in-law Kellogg, on the afternoon of November 21, 1866 Hall’s octagonal house was burned “by an incendiary in its owner’s sight while she was on an errand…to sell it.” According to the Alexandria Gazette, “in a very short time the entire building, save the chimney, was consumed…The property has been lately occupied by Mr. Joseph Buller, and we believe, is owned by Mrs. Hall, of Philadelphia.” The article indicates that Sarah Hall rented the property sometime after the war to a Joseph Buller.

By 1868, Sarah had moved with Anna Louisa and Rev. Gustavus Bird to Honesdale, Wayne County, Pennsylvania. In May 1868, Sarah W. Hall sold her property to Patrick Cunningham of Virginia. Born in Ireland circa 1832, Patrick Cunningham and his Irish-born wife Margaret immigrated to the U.S. no later than 1855; in 1860, they were living in Hartford, Connecticut with their three children. In 1870, an Alexandria Gazette advertisement for livestock under Patrick Cunningham’s name indicates that he either worked on the Hooff’s Farm near the Theological Seminary or worked as a livestock agent.

Fairfax County land tax records confirm that there were no buildings on the property when the Cunninghams took ownership; in 1871 tax records include buildings on the property. From the early 1870s through the end of the century, the Cunninghams farmed their property on Leesburg Turnpike. (See Appendix B, Figures 7 & 8) The 1870 Federal Census for the household includes three black farm hands—Joseph Strother, James Smith, and Sandy Lee—who resided on the property with Patrick, Margaret, daughter Mary, and son James. Fairfax County personal property tax records for this period include a number of horses and hogs and a large number of cows. From 15 cows in 1876, his herd grew to 28 cows in 1890. The 1880 U.S. Federal Census identified Patrick Cunningham as a dairyman; his household included Mary McTamany (age 24), a domestic servant born in Ireland, and her brother James (age 23); born in Connecticut, James worked in the
dairy. By 1891, the value of buildings on the Cunningham property doubled to $600 which may indicate the addition of farm buildings for his large livestock herd.57

On March 1, 1897, the Alexandria Gazette reported that Patrick Cunningham “a well-known dairyman, dropped dead in the office of the Alexandria House...The deceased had been delivering milk in the city, as usual, all the morning.”58 For the next four years, his family and the McTamany’s continued to operate the dairy. In 1901, a court case between family members resulted in the public auction of the farm on June 22, 1901. James A. and Mary B. McTamany purchased the farm at the auction.59

Little is known about the McTamanys. Fairfax County tax records indicate that the farm maintained its value until 1911, when the buildings were devalued to $200. James appears to have predeceased Mary since, when Mary died in 1918, James is not mentioned. Mary willed the property to Reverend Louis Smet, the pastor of St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church of Alexandria, for the benefit of the church.60 In 1919, Smet conveyed the church’s interest in the property that included a “comfortable dwelling and outbuildings” to Dennis J. O’Connell, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond.61

In May 1936, St. Mary’s Catholic Church divided 16 small lots that fronted Leesburg Pike from the remainder of the 19.74-acre parcel. (See Figure 8) Lots 2-16 were 50 feet wide by 150 feet deep (7500 square feet); Lot 1 was polygonal in shape (86.3-foot road frontage, 150 feet deep, and 68.15 on the rear). Lot 4 contained a house (later 2924 King Street) which most likely was constructed by the Cunninghams. In 1936, the St. Mary’s congregation confirmed the conveyance of the property to Andrew J. Brennan, then Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond.62
In 1951, the Bishop of Richmond conveyed 16.194 acres to Eppa D. Kane, James A. Gore, James C. Gaines, Clarence M. Wells, and J. Julia Davis, trustees of the First Baptist Church of Alexandria. The acreage included Lots 6 to 16 from the 1936 division as well as the northerly 40 feet of Lot 5. At the time, the First Baptist Church was located on Washington Street in Alexandria; built in 1853, the church building had been remodeled and expanded three times (1887, 1892, and 1910), and the congregation continued to outgrow the facility. In 1952, the church divided their parcel into Lot 500 with 10 acres along King Street and Lot 501 with 6.194 acres to its southwest. On May 9, 1954, the congregation moved into their new church at 2932 King Street.
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Endnotes

1 Nan Netherton et al, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978), p. 195. By the beginning of the Civil War (1861), the roadway was known in maps as the Leesburg Pike.

2 Fairfax County Deed Book T-3, p. 280. January 1, 1853.

3 Alexandria Gazette, March 23, 1852, p. 3.

4 *Alexandria Gazette*, April 21, 1849, p. 3; March 23, 1852, p. 3.

5 1840 Federal Census; Alexandria Gazette June 27, 1839, p. 3. In 1840, his household included two slaves.

6 *Alexandria Gazette*, January 6, 1842, p.3; September 3, 1844, p. 3; April 14, 1849.

7 *Alexandria Gazette*, April 14, 1849, p. 3.

8 *Alexandria Gazette*, March 23, 1852; Fairfax County Deed Book T-3, January 1, 1853.

9 Fairfax Deed Book A-4, p. 222, October 25, 1856. Following this deed is one on p. 223 dated August 12 1858 from James Camp of Kalmath Co., California by attorney Calvin Camp of Fairfax to Sarah W. Hall—although for the same lot of land, the amount of money $291.94 is less than the $1,167.75 of the previous deed. Perhaps this represents James Camp's portion of the sale that wasn't included in 1856.


14 *Alexandria Gazette*, July 21, 1857, p. 3.


17 *Alexandria Gazette*, August 27, 1856, p. 3.


21 O. S. Fowler, *A Home For All on The Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building* (NY: Fowlers & Wells, Publishers, 1854). Fowler provided floorplans for octagonal houses and described the materials and construction techniques to be used with “gravel-wall” buildings.

22 Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1860, 1861, and 1867. The 1860 record book may have been the book for 1860, 1862, 1864, or 1865 because the pages were not labelled with the year.

23 Fairfax County Personal Property Tax Records, 1859 and 1861. Hall does not appear in the personal property tax records for 1862, 1865, 1866, and 1868 which may indicate that she moved out of her house during the Civil War.


27 Kellogg, p. 67. A graduate of the Theological Seminary, Kellogg was born in Troy, New York on March 31, 1837. His also being from the north could explain his biased view of the Alexandria community.


31 Kellogg, p. 67. Thompson, p. 104. “Being of northern origin, they [the Halls] were suspected by the Confederates, and, when they were in possession, subjected to many annoyances. Finally they were obliged to go north, and their house was ransacked, their property pillaged and much of it destroyed.”

32 Capt. B.S. Church, “Reconnaissance in advance of Camp Mansfield by 12th Regiment Engr.,” n.d.

33 Robert Knox Sneden, *Images from the Storm: 300 Civil War Images by the Author of Eye of the Storm* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2001), p.6. Sneden’s depiction of the octagonal headquarters used by Sedgwick has been confused with another octagonal house located closer to Arlington House, perhaps because he completed the drawings after the war. Although Sedgwick used Hall’s house and Sneden was present at that house, Sneden’s later illustration does not reflect the appearance of Hall’s house. See Dean DeRosa, p. 17.


36 Sneden, p. 6.


38 On June 13, 1861, President Lincoln signed an order that created the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a civilian auxiliary to the U.S. Army Medical Bureau. This “largest voluntary association yet formed” in the U.S. grew from the local women’s aid societies that furnished food and clothing to their local regiments and whose efforts were eventually coordinated by the Women’s Central Association for Relief (W.C.A.R.). The U.S. Sanitary Commission “sent bandages, medicine, clothing, food, and volunteer nurses to army camps and hospitals. They provided meals and lodging to furloughed soldiers going and coming from the front.” They also monitored and improved the hygienic condition of the camps and hospitals. McPherson, pp. 480-481.


40 Cashman, pp. 100-101.

41 Photograph, photographer unknown, “Seventh Brigade Hospital—Octagon House—Gen Slocum’s Brigade—1861-1862.” Copy courtesy of the Special Collections Branch, Alexandria Library; original photograph in the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University.

42 Hurd, p. 17. From the end of 1862 until August 1865, the Seminary was used as a general hospital.
43 Cashman, pp. 107-109. Noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted was the executive director of the commission at this time; Bradley knew his assistant, the Reverend Frederick N. Knapp whom she met at the commission the previous year.

44 Cashman, p. 141-155. Bradley remained at the hospital at the camp until it closed in September 1865. After the war, Amy Morris Bradley gained prominence as an educator with the establishment of the Tileston Normal School in Wilmington, North Carolina.

45 Thompson, p. 103.

46 Thompson, p. 105.

47 US Coast Survey, Map of the Ground of Occupation and Defense of the Division of the US Army in Virginia, 1861, Courtesy of the City of Alexandria Planning and Zoning Department. Research to date has been unable to identify who the Cole was.


50 Kellogg, p. 67. Kellogg wrote later that the house “fell within the Union lines, was put to hospital and officers’ uses, and survived the war, only in a time of profound peace to be burned by an incendiary in its owner’s sight while she was on an errand in 1865 to sell it.” Since his article was written in 1917, it is likely that he was mistaken in the year since the Alexandria Gazette clearly records the event in 1866. Alexandria Gazette, November 21, 1866, p. 3. The 1867 Fairfax County Land Tax Records included $4,000 for buildings, but in 1868, the records listed the $4,000 improvements as no longer existing.

51 To date, History Matters has not located any information about Joseph Buller.

52 Fairfax County Deed Book I-4, p. 326; May 15, 1868. The 1870 Federal Census lists Sarah Hall as living in Honesdale in the household of Gustavus Bird, a minister born in Massachusetts and Annie Bird, his wife, born in New York and Hall’s youngest daughter [1870 Federal Census for Honesdale, Wayne County, Pennsylvania, p. 38].

53 1860 Federal Census, 2nd District, Hartford, Connecticut, p. 1223. Since the Cunningshams three children (Edward, 5; Mary, 3; and Rosanna, 2 months) were born in Connecticut, the Cunningshams appear to have immigrated to the U.S. no later than 1855.

54 Alexandria Gazette, September 29, 1870, p. 3.

55 Fairfax County Tax Records, 1868-1872. North Fairfax County, Falls Church Magisterial District.

56 1870 Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, Virginia, p. 22; Fairfax County Personal Property Tax Records, 1876-1890, North Fairfax County, Falls Church District.

57 Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1891. North Fairfax County, Falls church Magisterial District.

58 The Evening Star, March 1, 1897, p. 5.

59 Fairfax County Deed Book W-7, p. 358, August 6, 1902.

60 Mary B McTamany’s last will and testament was recorded March 15, 1918 in the Arlington County Will Book 6, p. 260. Alexandria Deed Book 130, p. 349, September 4, 1936 includes the mention of Mary McTamany’s last will.


First Baptist Church Documentary Study – Bibliography

_Alexandria Gazette_, Alexandria, Virginia. 1784-1876.


City of Alexandria, Virginia
_Alexandria Archaeology Vertical Files and Secondary Reports._
_Circuit Court Archives Land Records: Deeds._
_Library, Special Collections/Local History Branch: Vertical Files and Photograph Collection._


Fairfax County, Virginia Circuit Court Archives
_Land Records: Deeds, Land Tax Records._
_Personal Property Tax Records._
_Wills._

Fowler, O.S. _A Home For All on The Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building_. NY: Fowlers & Wells, Publishers, 1854.


Maps and Plats

1827

1845

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186-
Capt. B.S. Church, Reconnaissance in advance of Camp Mansfield by 12th Regiment Engr. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

1862
*Arnold, E.G. Topographical Map of the Original District of Columbia and Environs Showing the Fortifications around the City of Washington. Library of Congress, Division of Geography and Maps.

1864
*U.S. Coast Survey map (title unknown). NOAA, Office of Coast Survey, Historical Map & Chart Collection.

1865
*Barnard, J.G. Map of the environs of Washington: compiled from Boschkes’ map of the District of Columbia and from surveys of the U.S. Coast Survey showing the line of the defences of Washington as constructed during the war from 1861 to 1865 inclusive. US Coast Survey. Library of Congress, Division of Geography and Maps.

1865

1878

1894
1937

*Georeferenced maps in Appendix B
# Appendix A: First Baptist Church Chain of Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Deed Book</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2, 1952</td>
<td>Alexandria 342</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>A.N. Shuman, James A. Gore, James C. Gaines, Clarence M. Wells, &amp; J.Julia Davis, Trustees of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21, 1951</td>
<td>Alexandria 323</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>Peter L. Ireton, Bishop of Richmond to Eppa D. Kane, James A. Gore, James C. Gaines, Clarence M. Wells &amp; J.Julia Davis, Trustees of FBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 27, 1936</td>
<td>Alexandria 128</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>Plat showing the Subdivision of Part of the property of St. Mary's Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 29, 1936</td>
<td>Alexandria 128</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Brennan to Ireton Power of Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 4, 1936</td>
<td>Alexandria 130</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>Thomas A. Rankin, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Alexandria to Andrew J. Brennan, Bishop of R.C. Diocese of Richmond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30, 1919</td>
<td>Fairfax County L-8</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>Louis J. Smet, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Alexandria first part; John J. &amp; Margaret McWilliams of Alexandria 2nd part; and Dennis J. O'Connell, Bishop of R.C. Diocese of Richmond 3rd part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 6, 1902</td>
<td>Fairfax County W-7</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>James R. Caton, Special Commissioner of Sale to James A. and Mary B. McTamany (sister) of Fairfax County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 1868</td>
<td>Fairfax County I-4</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>Sarah W. Hall of Honesdale, Wayne County, PA to Patrick Cunningham of Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 12, 1858</td>
<td>Fairfax County A-4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>James Camp of Klamath Co., California by attorney Calvin Camp of Fairfax to Sarah W. Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25, 1856</td>
<td>Fairfax County A-4</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>Hester Camp, Mary Camp, Charlotte Camp of Fairfax County &amp; James Camp of Klamath Co., California by his attorney Calvin Camp of Fairfax to Sarah W. Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1, 1853</td>
<td>Fairfax County T-3</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Verlinda Atkinson of Alexandria first part; James W. and Mary (wife) Atkinson, James Grigg and Mary Ann No. his wife, Emmett F. Atkinson, and Alice W. Atkinson, all of the said town of the second part, and Hester Camp, Charlotte Camp, Mary Camp and James Camp of Fairfax County of the third part.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Georeferenced Maps
List of Georeferenced Maps

186-

1862
Arnold, E.G. *Topographical Map of the Original District of Columbia and Environs Showing the Fortifications around the City of Washington.* Library of Congress, Division of Geography and Maps.

1864

1865
Barnard, J.G. *Map of the environs of Washington: compiled from Boschkes' map of the District of Columbia and from surveys of the U.S. Coast Survey showing the line of the defences of Washington as constructed during the war from 1861 to 1865 inclusive.* US Coast Survey. Library of Congress, Division of Geography and Maps.

1865

1878

1894

1937

2016
ESRI Modern Aerial Photograph. AECOM.
1865 US War Department Engineer Bureau Map

Source: ESRI 2016

Figure 5