



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Marking Time

Alexandria's bands

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Image: Alexandria Citizens Band marching west on Cameron Street, 1828. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.

Civic-based musical bands in Alexandria date to at least the 18th century, and the tradition continues today with the Alexandria Citizens Band. Historical newspaper accounts mention various performances of the Alexandria Band at parades celebrating the nation's independence, at election victory parties and at somber events like funeral honors for Chief Justice John Marshall in 1835.

At George Washington's funeral in 1799, the Alexandria Band's performance of a funeral dirge was described in the *Gazette of the United States* newspaper as "a band of music with mournful melody melted the soul into all the tenderness of woe."

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, local bands, like the Alexandria Musical Association, marched in Alexandria's parades and performed at fairs, events that attracted thousands of spectators. Another popular group, the Alexandria Citizens Band, was initially known as the American Indian Guards when it was founded in 1912. It made its first public performance at the George Washington Birthday Parade in 1913 and is still in existence today.

In this 1928 photo, the Alexandria Citizens Band marches west on Cameron Street to Washington Street in the annual George Washington parade. This same photograph has been adapted into a giant colorized mural at the Commerce Bank branch at 119 S. Washington St. Using similar murals of historical images, Commerce Bank incorporates local history elements into all its area branches. To learn more about the Alexandria Citizens Band, visit www.band.alexandriava.us.



"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.