



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Lincoln's Railroad Car

*Alexandria Times, January 29, 2009*

*Image: Lincoln railroad car in Alexandria, 1865. Photo: Library of Congress.*

At the start of the Civil War, the U.S. Military Railroad (USMRR) took over the railroad car shops built by the Orange & Alexandria Railroad in the 1850s. Positioned at the corner of Duke and South Alfred streets, the car shops expanded as the USMRR personnel fixed locomotives and railroad cars, invented tools for damaging the enemy's rails, developed bridges and trestles, and manufactured railroad cars.

Between November 1863 and February 1865, one truly special car was built at the USMRR shops – a coach for President Abraham Lincoln. Measuring 48 feet long, the car had a raised center roof and 12 windows on each side. Painted brown with some gold striping, it had on its side the U.S. seal featuring an eagle with the words “United States” painted above.

This railroad car is believed to be the only one constructed by the federal government specifically for a president. But the one time it transported Lincoln was after he had been assassinated. This car was part of the funeral train that carried Lincoln's body approximately 1,700 miles from Washington, D.C., to his hometown of Springfield, Illinois.

The following year it was sold to Union Pacific where it was used as an executive car. A later owner exhibited it at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and other venues before a Minneapolis man purchased it. It was in a Minneapolis suburb in 1911 when it caught fire and burned, months before it was to have been preserved for a museum.



*“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.*