



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

Volusia

Alexandria Times, May 14, 2009

Image: Volusia. Photo, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Leigh, Jr..

Throughout the Civil War, not only did the Union occupy Alexandria but troops were positioned in rural areas outside the city. Several property owners abandoned their homes but Felix and Amelia Richards remained at their farm, a 155-acre property called Volusia. Though loyal to the Union, the Richards owned several slaves and this photograph, likely taken in the winter of 1861-62, shows two women and five children identified as slaves at Volusia.

Volusia, positioned on the north side of Little River Turnpike near Holmes Run, had streams, fields, orchards, woodland, a two-story mansion house, and several outbuildings including a stable, corn house, barn, and quarters where the slaves lived.

Union soldiers used resources of Volusia, like fencing, timber, tools, wagons, animals and crops, as well as the labor of the Richardses' slaves. Some washed officers' clothing and some left Volusia to aid the Union Army. A teenage boy named Jessie became a servant to an officer camping at Volusia, leaving with the Third New Jersey Volunteers but dying in the summer of 1862 along the James River. Another young man, Wilson, joined the U.S. Colored Infantry in 1864 and served until the summer of 1865.

Felix Richards died in 1864, and his widow later filed a federal claim for the losses Volusia had sustained. Five decades after the war ended, Congress awarded the Richards' estate \$5,300 for damages and losses caused by the Union army. Volusia changed hands several times and after World War II, the property, then in Fairfax County, was purchased for construction of a 2,100-unit apartment complex and shopping center today known as Foxchase.



"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



**Office of Historic Alexandria
City of Alexandria, Virginia**

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.