



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Brown's Mill

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Image: Brown's Mill. Photo, Office of Historic Alexandria.

One of the earliest structures reflecting Alexandria's strong connection to farming remains on Wheeler Avenue today. An old mill building is now home to Flippo Construction but has been known in the past as Phoenix Mill, Old Dominion Mill and, perhaps most often, Brown's Mill.

The four-story brick mill was constructed around 1812 just south of the Little River Turnpike. Several mills processing grain into feeds and flour operated along rivers and runs near the turnpike, which was built in the early 1800s as a private toll road from Duke Street to Loudoun County. Brown's Mill is positioned north of Cameron Run, and its 8,000-foot millrace diverged from Cameron Run near its intersection with Holmes and Backlick runs, rejoining Cameron Run before Hunting Creek.

Brown's Mill, seen in this Civil War-era photograph, was able to produce 10,000 barrels of flour a year. But in the late 19th century, some Alexandria residents explored the possibility of purchasing the mill, then located in Fairfax County, and converting it to a pumping station to supply them with water. With the City already supplied by water from the Alexandria Water Company, this was not a practical option.

It continued functioning as a mill into the early 20th century, and in 1913 it was the repeated target of thieves who stole more than 500 pounds of flour and meal at a time. The Cockrell family operated the mill for more than 40 years, and corn meal was still being ground there in the late 1920s.



"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.