



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Restored Virginia's Capital

*Alexandria Times, September 24, 2009*

*Image: The City Hotel, 1863. Photo, Library of Congress.*

**G**adsby's Tavern and the City Hotel, built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, are noted for their roles in early Alexandria history and their strong association with George Washington and other prominent guests like John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. But it also holds an interesting place in Civil War history--around the time these officers of the First District Volunteers were photographed outside the City Hotel.

In 1863, Governor Francis Harrison Pierpont leased a suite in the City Hotel from where he oversaw the "Restored Virginia" government. After the western counties loyal to the Union became the State of West Virginia, Pierpont moved the headquarters of Restored Virginia from Wheeling to Alexandria. This restored Virginia government consisted primarily of Union-occupied localities like Alexandria and Norfolk and nearby counties.

This government was largely ineffective as most residents of Virginia were loyal to the South. But on occasion, Pierpont was summoned from Alexandria to meet with President Abraham Lincoln, like on December 21, 1863, when a message reading, "Please come up and see me to-day. A. LINCOLN" was sent to Pierpont in Alexandria.

A few days later, John Hay, the president's private secretary, noted in his diary that "The President today got up a plan for extending to the people of the rebellious districts the practical benefits of his proclamation. He is to send record books to various points to receive subscriptions to the oath, for which certificates will be given to the man taking the oath... He sent the first of these books to Pierpont to use in Virginia."

Under Pierpont, a new Virginia constitution was issued in 1864 recognizing the abolition of slavery and creation of West Virginia. The state government moved from Alexandria to Richmond after the war ended in 1865.





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

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*“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.*