



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### George Washington High School Stadium

*Alexandria Times, October 8, 2009*

*Image: The stadium from a 1962 aerial photograph. Photo, U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

When George Washington High School opened on Mount Vernon Avenue in the fall of 1935, its football games were played at Baggett Stadium off of upper King Street. In October of 1937 before a crowd of 5,000, a new stadium was dedicated on the campus of G.W., as the school was known. It would serve not only as the home field for the G.W. Presidents, but also as a host to college and pro games.

The G.W. stadium had lights, which meant that games could be played at night, and thousands of passionate fans turned out for Friday night kick-offs. Over the years, more lights were added and the stadium was enlarged to accommodate growing crowds.

Wooden bleachers were replaced with concrete structures and wooden seats on steel frames, a modern scoreboard was installed, and in 1949, the Chamber of Commerce fronted \$37,000 to increase seating capacity from 11,500 to 15,000.

That year, during a celebration of Alexandria's bicentennial, President Harry S. Truman was one of a capacity crowd on hand to watch the Marine team from Quantico beat Virginia Tech 33-14.

On occasion, pros played pre-season games at G.W. The Redskins lost to the Packers there in 1951 and Joe Namath making his pro debut in an AFL match-up between the New York Jets and Houston Oilers in 1965, just a few years after this aerial photograph of the school and the stadium was taken.

In 1969, citing falling attendance and several disturbances involving disorderly crowds, school officials discontinued night games at GW. In the early 1970s, all public high school students began





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

---

attending T.C. Williams and G.W. became a middle school, its stadium never again holding the thousands of spectators it once had.

*“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.*