



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Mount Vernon Avenue Theaters

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Image: Opening of the Vernon Theater, 3707 Mount Vernon Avenue, 1940. Photo, Turner Studios, Collection of Bob Collins.

Located on Mount Vernon Avenue, the Palm Theater and the Vernon Theater provided entertainment to thousands of people for decades and also served the greater Del Ray community in other ways.

When the Palm opened in 1923 in the space currently occupied by Yoga in Daily Life, it was in the Town of Potomac and often used for community events. The Potomac Fire Department held film screenings there, including *Barriers Burned Away* and *Roaring Fires* during fire prevention week. In 1924, the Palm was the site for George Mason High School's graduation ceremony, and in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Advent Lutheran Church held worship services there.

But most recall this small theater for its movies. On Saturdays, children could see previews, a serial and a main feature for a dime. Despite Sunday blue laws, the Palm sometimes opened for business on Sundays and in 1936, the operator was fined \$10 for doing so. The Palm changed hands in the 1940s and in 1950 became the Guild Theater, an art film house and later a playhouse, before it closed around 1953.

The Vernon, an art moderne building designed by movie theater architect John J. Zink, was located at 3707 Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. Seen in this photo during its opening in December 1940, it had more than 800 seats and hosted worship services for St. Rita's while a new church was built in the late 1940s. The Vernon was later equipped with magnetic stereophonic sound and underwent renovations in the early 1970s, but closed in 1976. The Vernon structure was demolished around 1981.



"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.