



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Knickerbocker Storm in Alexandria

*Alexandria Times, February 11, 2010*

*Image: 400 block of King Street after the storm, 1922. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.*

Between January 27 and 28, 1922, a massive snowstorm dumped more than two feet of snow on the Washington area. The Knickerbocker Storm, as it was dubbed, holds the official Washington record of 28 inches since documentation has been kept.

In Alexandria, snow made the streets impassible and shut down the street car and train service. Firefighters, unable to reach the hydrants buried by snow, had difficulty fighting a blaze that broke out at a church. When funding to remove the snow had been exhausted, the City Council authorized an additional expenditure of \$3,000. A group of 150 workers, like this crew in the 400 block of King Street, cleared streets and removed snow from the hydrants. The snow was packed onto Washington-Alexandria Railway dump cars and hauled away to Hunting Creek.



Within two days of the snow ending, travel between Alexandria and Washington had been restored with cars and a bus line able to make the trip with minimal difficulty. Another priority was removing snow from the roofs of homes and businesses, but the roof of a car garage on South Lee Street did collapse, damaging vehicles inside.

In Washington, the roof of Knickerbocker Theater did cave in and nearly 100 people were killed, with three members of the Fleming family, formerly of Alexandria, among the victims. Joseph P. Morgan, general manager of the company that owned the Knickerbocker, had been married earlier that month at St. Mary's in Alexandria, accompanied by theater owner Harry M. Crandall. The wedding announcement appeared in newspapers the morning of the tragedy. Neither Morgan nor Crandall was at the Knickerbocker when it collapsed, but Crandall never recovered from the disaster and later committed suicide.

*"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  
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*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.*