



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

Old Lincolnia Road

Alexandria Times, March 18, 2010

Image: Old Lincolnia Road, 1952. Photo, City of Alexandria.

A stretch of road in the West End, today extending from Duke Street south toward the Capital Beltway, was evident on Civil War-era maps. Known for decades as Lincolnia Road, the road traveled from the Lincolnia community along the Little River Turnpike south on a route today made up of South Whiting Street and part of South Van Dorn Street below Edsall Road.

This photograph, taken in 1952, shows Lincolnia Road less than two months after it became part of the City of Alexandria as a result of the West End annexation from Fairfax County. Facing north, the image shows wooden bridges across Backlick Run and was underneath where the overpass near Courtney Avenue is today.



Following annexation, many of the West End streets were to be named for Confederate officers, like Beauregard, Pickett and Pegram. In 1953, the section of Lincolnia Road south of Edsall was renamed for General Earl Van Dorn.

The low-lying area was subject to flooding and at times the road at Backlick Run was impassable. A graded railroad crossing to the south also posed risks. Two men were killed in 1959 when a train struck their truck, prompting installation of warning lights there and at other crossings in the city.

Lincolnia Road originally reached Edsall Road just to the west of where they meet today. In the early 1960s, South Van Dorn Street was rerouted slightly to the east, widened, and extended to Duke Street. At the same time, new industrial development emerged in the area, with Newton Asphalt among the earliest. This development coincided with the planning and construction of the Capital Beltway and that highway's interchange with Van Dorn.

“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.



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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.