



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Odd Fellows Hall

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Image: Odd Fellows Hall, 218 North Columbus Street. Photo, Victor Amato from the Ethelyn Cox Collection, Alexandria Library Special Collections.

In 1841, the local lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows acquired the property located today at 218 North Columbus Street.

The lodge, identified as No. 8, was initially chartered in 1839 as the eighth to be formed in the District of Columbia. Following Alexandria's retrocession to Virginia in 1847, the lodge was designated Potomac Lodge No. 38.

Soon after purchasing the North Columbus Street property, the lodge remodeled and expanded the existing building, which had previously served as a school and place of worship. Following renovations, the Odd Fellows Hall was described in 1846 as a two-story brick building covered with wood and measuring 33 feet by 60 feet.

Before the Civil War, the Mount Vernon Guards, a local militia unit, held meetings there. During the war the hall was used as a military prison. Union troops held prisoners there, most of whom were civilians from nearby counties. Following the war, St. John's Academy, a school for boys, used the first floor of the hall through the early 1880s.

The hall was expanded again in the late 1880s with the addition of a new front façade and tower. Many organizations used the hall for meetings and special events, including Confederate veterans, International Association of Machinists and Sons and Daughters of Liberty. In the 1940s, it served as a polling place and as offices for the War Price and Rationing Board, and in the 1950s a dance school operated there.

A small concrete annex, visible in this image, was added during the winter of 1961-62 but it was later demolished after Potomac Lodge No. 38 sold the entire property to developers in 1977. In 1979, Muirs Court Corporation subdivided it into town homes, which stand today.



“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.



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

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.