



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Alexandria High School

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Image: The old high school, Cameron at West Street, ca. 1920. Photo, Library of Congress.

In 1912, Alexandria school officials announced plans to finance a new high school, expected to cost about \$40,000. The City had already purchased land at the northwest corner of Cameron and West streets but there were concerns about proceeding because a large part of that property was located outside the city



limits in what was then Alexandria County. In early 1915, Alexandria annexed the Braddock Heights area, including the rest of the lot at Cameron and West, and construction began that spring.

On July 7, 1915, the cornerstone was set with a metal box containing documents, a local map and a Bible enclosed inside the stone. Construction continued into the fall and in early 1916 Alexandria High School opened its doors.

Alexandria High, seen in this circa-1920 photo, had a debate team, literary society, military cadet program and sports teams, including basketball squads for boys and girls. Students performed school plays and produced *Alecko*, the Alexandria High yearbook. Each June, about 70 to 85 students graduated, with a smaller group graduating in a winter commencement.

In 1934, following growth associated with annexation of the Town of Potomac (now Del Ray), Alexandria announced plans for a new high school to take the place of Alexandria High and George Mason High in Del Ray. Alexandria High held its final graduation ceremony on June 17, 1935 at the George Washington Masonic Memorial and the new George Washington High opened that fall on Mount Vernon Avenue.

The former Alexandria High building became an annex to the Jefferson School, an elementary school located a block north on West. The Jefferson Annex hosted daycare, civic meetings, scout events, and other community oriented activities. Both school buildings were demolished in the late 1960s to make room for construction of a new school, Jefferson-Houston Elementary.

"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
City of Alexandria, Virginia**

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.