



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad

*Alexandria Times, September 9, 2010*

*Image: AL&H station at Princess and Fairfax, during the Civil War. Photo, Library of Congress.*

In 1847, a group of Alexandria businessmen established a company to build a railroad west from Alexandria that would stretch through Fairfax and Loudoun before turning north to the Potomac to reach Harper's Ferry. There, the Alexandria and Harper's Ferry Railroad, led by Lewis McKenzie and George H. Smoot, would be able to connect with another railroad that served the Shenandoah Valley. But before any work began, the new railroad project ceased; the Baltimore & Ohio imposed control of the other line.

Smoot soon became involved in a new railroad in 1850, the Orange & Alexandria, which traveled south to Culpeper and Gordonsville. But he never gave up on the idea of connecting to the west, and in 1853, Smoot, McKenzie and others established the Alexandria, Loudoun & Hampshire Railroad.

Between 1855 and 1858, grading work continued between Alexandria and Leesburg. In Alexandria, a new brick office building that doubled as a station was erected at the northeast corner of North Fairfax and Princess streets. Rails ran north from there and, on May 17, 1860, the first passenger train chugged to Leesburg.

When the Civil War began a year later, Union troops moved into Alexandria and seized the AL&H rails, equipment and buildings. The station at Princess and Fairfax, seen in this Civil War photograph, became the offices of the Quartermaster Department. After the war ended, McKenzie regained control of the AL&H.

The AL&H was renamed the Washington & Ohio in 1870 but later went into receivership. Under new ownership, it became the Washington, Ohio & Western in 1883. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Southern Railroad owned the station and freight yard at Princess, and the 1950s saw the demolition of the brick building.



*"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.*