



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Mount Ida, spared from Union occupation

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Image: Mount Ida was used as a convent from 1942 until the early 1990s. Courtesy photo.

Located in North Ridge, Mount Ida was built about 200 years ago as the home of Charles Alexander, Jr., on land that he inherited from his father. Alexander's property included farmland and this two-story brick house. After Alexander's death, his wife remarried and her daughter Eliza Selden later acquired Mount Ida. Eliza married John Janney Lloyd, an Alexandria attorney, in 1845 and they made Mount Ida their home.

Though many large homes around Alexandria were occupied by Union troops during the Civil War, there is no evidence that Mount Ida was ever used in this way. Immediately after the war ended, John Lloyd sold part of the property to his brother Richard, who built his own home to the south. By 1900, Mount Ida occupied just over 200 acres and was still owned by John Lloyd's heirs.

In 1908, 150 acres and the Mount Ida house were sold out of the family and became the property of James Groves, a land developer who established the Mount Ida Real Estate Company. Groves kept 21 acres and the house, which passed through several owners over the next 25 years following his death in 1917. The portico is believed to have been added during that time frame.

St. Mary's Academy purchased Mount Ida in 1942 and built a large school building on the grounds. The manor house was used as a convent for the Sisters of the Holy Cross when this photograph was taken. St. Mary's Academy operated for nearly 50 years before closing. In the early 1990s, Alexandria Country Day School purchased the school building on Russell Road and the Mount Ida house became a private residence.



"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
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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.