



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

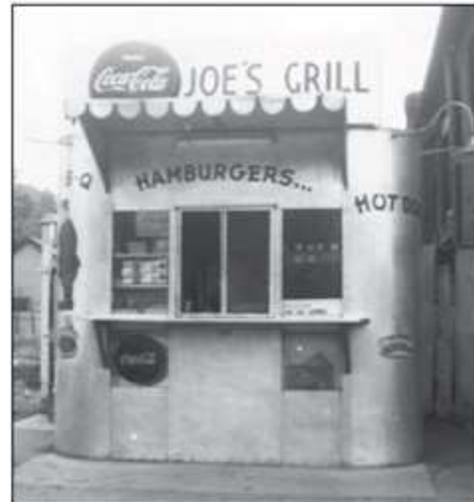
Mighty Midget Kitchens

Alexandria Times, January 6, 2011

Image: This Mighty Midget carry-out was located on the 700 block of Wilkes Street. Photo, Courtesy, the Crowder Family

With names like Tom Thumb, Little Giant, and Tiny Nook, some Alexandria eateries in the late 1940s and 1950s evoked images of miniature dining experiences. But the Mighty Midget carry-outs truly were small scale commercial kitchens.

Mighty Midgets were located, at various times, in the 1600 and 3800 blocks of Mount Vernon Avenue and on the northwest corner of North Henry and Oronoco streets. The same type of efficiency carry-outs were used by George Crowder when he opened Mom's Kitchen in the 400 block of North Pitt Street and Joe's Grill in the 700 block of Wilkes Street. Joe's Grill, seen in this photo, was originally on the south side of Wilkes but was moved across the street to the corner of South Columbus Street in the early 1960s. Permanent buildings eventually replaced both of Crowder's locations.



Customers enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs, candy, soft drinks, coffee and even barbecue from these tiny metal kitchens. Some were open 24 hours a day, making them popular with neighbors and night shift workers alike.

F.W. Corbett Science Laboratories in Glendale, Calif., designed and produced these small metal buildings. But Frederick Wesley Corbett may not have experienced adequate financial success to continue his kitchen production as his business assets, including sheet metal, food service stations, and even aluminum buildings, were auctioned in 1948.

In 1959, the Mighty Midget Kitchen in Leesburg crumpled when three teens in a stolen Triumph crashed into it. Within two weeks, a replacement arrived from Alexandria and the Leesburg carry-out was back in business. It was later moved to another location and survives today as part of a Leesburg restaurant.

“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.