



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Odd Fellows Hall, home of secret societies

*Alexandria Times, April 14, 2011*

*Image: Odd Fellows Hall, 411 S. Columbus Street, in the 1980s. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.*

The Second Empire structure at 411 South Columbus St. was once a smaller building enlarged for an African-American fraternal organization. The Harmony Lodge No. 818 of the Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows was founded in 1846, when Alexandria was still part of the District of Columbia.

In 1869, Alexandrians James Webster, Robert Darnell and John Credit organized the Odd Fellows Joint Stock Company and hired George Seaton to enlarge the small brick building into a two-and-a-half story structure that would serve as the meeting hall for local Odd Fellow lodges.



Joining Harmony at the new hall were R.H. Lancaster Lodge No. 1370, organized in 1868, and G.W. Lodge No. 1431, established in 1869. The Odd Fellows Hall would also serve as a meeting place for other black secret societies and fraternal organizations, including Masonic chapters and a local Elks lodge. Women's organizations like the Daughters of Zion Lodge of the Good Samaritans also used the hall.

The Odd Fellows Hall was the frequent site of music, dancing and other entertainment. The hall hosted lodge and community celebrations, like some of the annual Emancipation Day festivities held in Alexandria in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But it was also witness to solemn occasions such as funerals of deceased members.

When the South Columbus Street and South Alfred Street corridors were redeveloped in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Odd Fellows Hall was spared. The City of Alexandria acquired it through condemnation and sold it to a developer who converted it to condominiums in the mid-1980s, around the time this photo was taken. The Odd Fellows Hall was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

*"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**

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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.*