



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Michelbach House and Mount Ida

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Image: The Michelbach House at Mt. Ida, 2405 Russel Road, 1920s. Photo, Library of Congress.

In 1907, Mount Ida, the former estate of John J. Lloyd, was subdivided among his heirs, with five lots on the west side of Russell Road and three to the east. In April 1922, Lloyd's daughter Nellie Selden Uhler sold a five-acre tract from one of the east lots to Frank Michelbach, owner of a furniture store on King Street, and his wife Irene. Irene died that fall, while they were still living in Del Ray and before her family would be moving into their new Russell Road home, seen in this photo in its final stages of construction.

In the 1930s, at least two of the Michelbach daughters were married at this home and at times, some of the daughters and their husbands also lived there. After Frank Michelbach died at his home in 1942, his heirs sold the estate. The Episcopal Church opened a new school for boys there in September 1944, and 2405 Russell Road became the first home of St. Stephen's school. As the school population grew, the 14-room house was expanded, but in 1955, it was necessary for St. Stephen's to build a new school elsewhere.

In December 1956, the Church Schools in the Diocese of Virginia, Inc., sold the property to Del Ray Baptist Church, which already had a small church nearby. Del Ray Baptist used the former Michelbach estate as an annex until a much larger sanctuary could be built. After a year of construction, the new facility, attached to the west side of the original house, was dedicated in May 1961. Today the old house is surrounded on three sides by newer construction, including an addition in front of where the east portico once stood. The facility is shared by Del Ray Baptist and Alexandria Presbyterian churches.



"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.

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.



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