



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Arch Hall: from Alexandria to Fairfax to street name

*Alexandria Times, May 26, 2011*

*Image: Arch Hall, 815 Franklin Street, around 1937. Photo, Library of Congress.*

Originally located on Franklin Street between South Columbus and South Alfred streets, the home known as Arch Hall was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It served as a town residence for Lewis Lawrence, his wife Nelly Parke Custis, and their children when they stayed in Alexandria and not at Woodlawn, their large estate near Mount Vernon.

The house, initially a one-story frame structure measuring 24 feet by 50 feet, had an attached frame kitchen at the east end. The front elevation faced south and had five bays. The center doorway had an arched transom and sidelights, and the center hallway had an arched ceiling. Later expansion included a lowered basement and renovation of the attic which resulted in relocation of the chimney.

Arch Hall had several owners and tenants after being sold out of the Lawrence Lewis family. In the early 1930s, it was the site of Arch Hall Antiques but shortly after this photograph was taken around 1937, new owners, the Swetnams, restored the property and modernized it, installing a hot water heater, an oil furnace and new kitchen appliances. After the restoration was complete, Arch Hall became a popular stop on local historic home tours.

In the fall of 1950, the structure was removed from its location at 815 Franklin Street, and over the next year, it was reconstructed at a new location near Belmont Bay in Fairfax County. In the 1980s, a new development named Arch Hall was built in the block bounded by South Columbus, South Alfred, Franklin and Gibbon streets, occupying the former Arch Hall site. In 2003, the owners of the Arch Hall property in Fairfax obtained a conservation easement to protect it, and recently, a new street at Potomac Yard was named Arch Hall Lane.



*“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.*