



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Gerald and Betty Ford once called Alexandria home

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Image: The house at 514 Crown View Drive, 1955. Photo, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

In 1954, after living in a Parkfairfax apartment, Congressman Gerald Ford and his wife, Betty, needed more space for their young and growing family. They selected a lot in the new Clover community near Janneys Lane and worked with Viktors Purins, of Grand Rapids, on designs for a two-story home. In September 1954, builder R.J. Beech Inc. received the construction permit, and by spring of 1955, when this photograph was taken, the Ford family moved into their new four-bedroom, two-bath home at 514 Crown View Drive.



In December 1973, Jerry Ford became Vice President, following the resignation of Spiro Agnew. The Fords decided to remain in their Alexandria home, but it had to be renovated to accommodate security measures. To convert the garage into a Secret Service command post, the entrance was bricked up and a bay window was installed for observation purposes. A half-bath and small kitchen appliances were added for the agents' use, additional phone lines and bullet-resistant windows were installed, and the driveway had to be altered for the vice president's armored limousine.

When the City of Alexandria real estate appraisers inspected the property in July 1974, they noted that they were not "allowed in basement. A lot of electronic equipment!" but added that they "got to meet Mrs. Ford."

A month later, when President Richard Nixon resigned, 514 Crown View Drive became the home of the president of the United States and the first lady. For the first 10 days of his presidency, President Ford continued to live in Alexandria as arrangements were made to move into the White House. After Jimmy Carter was elected president, the Fords sold their home and moved to California. Their former home is now a National Historic Landmark and remains 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.