



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### How sweet it is: from military HQ to bank to bakery

*Alexandria Times, July 21, 2011*

*Image: Provost Marshal's Office. Photo, National Archives and Records Administration.*

The building in this Civil War-era photograph is often identified by its wartime use as the Office of the Provost Marshal, but its significance to Alexandria began decades earlier.

The structure was located on the north side of King Street, east of the corner at St. Asaph Street, and it was set back from the road. In the early 1800s, it was home to the Mechanics' Bank but also offered living quarters for, according to one advertisement, "a genteel family." In addition to the dwelling, the property included a stable and carriage house.

In 1834, when the bank became insolvent, the building became the offices of the Marine and Fire Insurance Co. of Alexandria. The name of this company, Marine & Fire Insurance Office, is visible above the second floor windows in this photo. The additional space between the front of the building and King Street was useful when the company offered sales and auctions of stock and land rentals.

During the Civil War, the Provost Marshal -- the law enforcement arm of the military during the Union occupation -- used the building, but it is likely that other high-ranking officers also used it as headquarters while in Alexandria.

In 1874, the German Banking Co. established itself on the same property, then owned by David Appich, and quickly took steps to have the clock on the front of the building repaired. This bank, like the earlier Mechanics' Bank, experienced financial problems and closed in the mid-1880s.

An addition to the front extended the property out to King Street, and Appich, a confectioner, operated his family bakery business there for several years. Around the turn of the century, this structure and one to the west were demolished to make room for a new bank building.



*"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.*



**Office of Historic Alexandria  
City of Alexandria, Virginia**

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