



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

The simple estate of a Confederate veteran and physician

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Image: 113-115 South Fairfax Street, 1960s. Photo, Library of Congress, HABS/HAER.

The Historic American Buildings Survey identifies the two-story structure at 113-115 S. Fairfax St. as the Bedford Brown Building, though only a small part of it existed in Brown's lifetime.

Dr. Bedford Brown, Jr. – a Confederate veteran, physician and son of a U.S. Senator from North Carolina – moved to Alexandria after the Civil War. In 1873, he acquired a home at 117 S. Fairfax St. as well as the vacant lot to the north. Within a few years, a small brick building was erected next to the home, and this structure probably served as Brown's office.

After Dr. Brown's death in 1897, his estate was divided, and his son, noted Washington architect Glenn Brown, received the home and the building next door. In 1918, Glenn Brown sold the properties to Thomas C. Rawlett, who worked as a paperhanger. The following year, Rawlett obtained two permits to build concrete and brick structures at the pictured property, one likely an addition to the existing office. Rawlett located his business at 115, and to the north, 113 offered commercial space on the first floor and an apartment on the second.

In the 1930s and later, this property was generally used as law offices. In the late 1960s, around the time this photograph was taken, 113-115 South Fairfax remained attorneys' offices but was threatened by urban renewal. One of the attorneys, Daniel F. O'Flaherty, argued that the property was not blighted and therefore did not qualify as property that could be seized. While the older home at 117 S. Fairfax St. was preserved, 113-115, noted in the HABS report as "notable for its simplicity," was demolished in 1970.



"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.



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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.