



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Hill House, AKA Shadow House

*Alexandria Times, December 3, 2011*

*Image: 617 South Washington Street, before demolition in 1974. Photo, Office of Historic Alexandria.*

The three-story home at 617 South Washington St. was built around 1854 for Reuben Roberts, who died a short time later. An ad announcing the sale of the home at auction in 1856 described it as a “new, large and commodious brick dwelling house” built in the “most substantial manner with all the modern improvements, with gas and water pipes throughout.”

The following year, Samuel Bancroft Hussey, a sea captain, purchased the home. His daughter, Melissa Hussey, and her new husband, Robert L. Wood, moved in.

The property occupied the northwest corner of South Washington and Franklin streets and the Woods also owned lots on the western edge of the block on South Columbus. The main house, called “The Shadows” and later “Hill House,” had Greek Revival elements, a five-bay façade facing South Washington and in the rear, a three-story wing and a porch. By the early-20th century, the home had outbuildings and a garage.

Hill House remained in the same family through several generations. Around the turn of the century, Ida Wood and her husband George R. Hill, who operated a large cracker factory in Alexandria, lived there. The last resident was Melissa Lovejoy Hill, who often wrote poetry about her family’s home.

When a group of developers purchased the property in the early 1970s, preservationists attempted to save Hill House but were unsuccessful. Some of the interior was salvaged, and in February 1974, when this photograph was taken, Hill House was demolished.



*“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.*