



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Meigs Lodge and the Alexandria National Cemetery

*Alexandria Times, December 22, 2011*

*Image: Meigs Lodge, 1920s. Photo, Library of Congress.*

In 1862 President Abraham Lincoln authorized the acquisition of property to be used as burial grounds for the Civil War dead, establishing the country's first national cemeteries. One of the earliest was Alexandria National Cemetery, opened that same year. After the war ended, Congress passed legislation to protect the cemeteries by ensuring that each would have substantial fencing and adequate housing for the cemetery superintendents.

This resulted in construction of dozens of structures designed under the direction of General Montgomery C. Meigs, who served as the quartermaster general during and after the war. These buildings became known as Meigs lodges. Alexandria's first lodge was seriously damaged by a fire in 1878 but was rebuilt.

The late Victorian Second Empire design with a mansard roof was typical of Meigs lodges at that time, which were usually L-shaped with one-and-a-half-stories, and the superintendent's office on the first floor with living quarters on the second. The Alexandria Meigs lodge was constructed of reddish sandstone and brick and its roof had "fish scale" slate shingles over tin. Some Meigs lodges used a pattern of these hexagonal shingles in contrasting colors to create the letters "U.S."

In 1887, another structure was built nearby to serve as a utility room with a kitchen, tool room and toilet. This brick building was connected to the lodge in the 1920s, around the time this photograph was taken, and a new garage was added years later. The Alexandria National Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.



*"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.*