



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### The history of Hunting Towers on the Potomac's banks

*Alexandria Times, March 22, 2012*

*Image: Hunting Towers, 1950, 1200-1204 S. Washington Street. Photo, Library of Congress.*

**A**t the time of its construction in the early 1950s, the Hunting Towers apartment complex (now known as Hunting Point on the Potomac) was the largest residential project in the City of Alexandria.

Conceived in 1947 in response to the major need for postwar housing, construction was delayed until Federal Housing Administration loans financed the \$14 million project. The plan called for three 82-foot apartment towers, each in an identical cruciform plan. Designed by noted architect William H. Harris, the apartments were to be surrounded by a small shopping complex, tenant parking and underground garages, a swimming pool, a marina, and rolling lawns to the Potomac shoreline.

In this 1950 photograph, the towers rise on the east side of Washington Street, directly across from the three-story Hunting Terrace apartments, also designed by Harris and built around 1943. The new St. Mary's School is in the upper left of the photo, with the St. Mary's and Freedmen's cemeteries separated from both Harris edifices by the old Manassas Gap Railroad line, where the Capital Beltway was constructed a decade later.

At the Towers, Harris "endeavored to combine the best attributes of modern conveniences with attention to the Colonial background of life in Alexandria." This attention relied heavily on scenic views from the site, but also included parquet floors, radiant heating and colored, ceramic tile baths. In fact, Harris varied the design of each tower ever so slightly, incorporating different traditional, art deco and contemporary architectural elements at the front entrance and lobby of each building.

Upon completion, apartments ranging from 380 to 940 square feet rented for \$75 to \$155 a month. Construction of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge resulted in the demolition of one tower, three Terrace apartment buildings and the shopping/office area around 2003.



*"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*



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

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*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.*