



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Cassius Lee's summer home found itself at center of war

*Alexandria Times, April 19 2012*

Image: Menokin, Braddock Road near King Street. Photo, The Winterthur Library.

In the 1850's, Alexandria merchant Cassius Francis Lee and his second wife Anne Eliza built a large two-story summer home in the Seminary area of what was then Fairfax County. The property was bounded by Braddock Road and King Street approximately where the Bradlee Shopping Center now stands. The home was called "Menokin," an Indian name meaning "sweet waters" and named after earlier Lee family estates including that of ancestor Francis Lightfoot Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence who had lived near Warsaw, Virginia.



Cassius Lee was born in May 1808 to Edmund Jennings Lee and his wife Sarah, and grew up on North Washington Street. His first cousin Robert Edward Lee grew up nearby, and the two were close friends and confidants throughout their lives. In 1833 Cassius married Hannah Philippa Ludwell Hopkins and they had five children. Hannah died in 1844, and two years later he married the former Anne Gardner of Newport, Rhode Island. By 1861, seven additional children were added to the family.

Although a slave owner, in the days up to the Civil War, Cassius opposed secession and agreed with Alexandria's representative to the state secession delegation, George Brent, who correctly foresaw that if secession was pursued, the outcome could be a war resulting in total abolition of slavery. Lee chose not to join the Confederate forces, but soon found his home at the center of war. To the west Union forces had constructed Fort Ward to defend the nation's capital, and the adjacent Theological Seminary property was also taken over by Union troops. Fearing arrest, Lee and his family fled to relatives in the north. During this time Menokin was used by the Union Army, possibly as the headquarters of General Irwin MacDowell who commanded a division in the area.

After returning to Menokin in 1865, Cassius restored the badly damaged property. He is seen here standing at the front porch shortly before his death in 1890. The house was demolished in the 1950's.

*"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.*