



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### Bidding adieu to Vaucluse

*Alexandria Times, May 2, 2013*

Image: Vaucluse. Office of Historic Alexandria.

The West End site of Alexandria Inova Hospital, just off Seminary Road at North Howard Street, was once the location of one of the area's most gracious plantations — Vaucluse, named for the French derivative of “closed valley.”

James Craik, a surgeon who was persuaded to move to Alexandria by his friend and military confidant, George Washington, just after the Revolutionary War, originally owned the property. He maintained a primary residence along Duke Street but established his country residence in what was then Fairfax County, where he died in 1814.

Thomas Fairfax, a descendant of the sixth Lord Fairfax of Cameron, then acquired the property. His ancestor had inherited a land grant of more than 1 million acres in Northern Virginia and settled at the plantation Belvoir, now the site of Fort Belvoir.

At the start of the Civil War, Vaucluse was the home of Constance Cary, a granddaughter of Thomas Fairfax and ardent secessionist. After the invasion of Alexandria by Union forces in May 1861, Constance Cary buried two trunks of the family silver in the basement and fled south to Richmond, where she wrote for the Confederate cause under the pseudonym, “Refugitta.”

There, she and two cousins — Hetty and Jennie Cary, known collectively as “the Cary Invincibles” — sewed the first three examples of the Confederate battle flag.

Soon after Constance Cary left Vaucluse, Union forces razed the home as part of construction of the Defenses of Washington. Judith McGuire, wife of the principal at nearby Episcopal High School, wrote of the fate of the plantation in a diary entry dated July 30, 1861: “Vaucluse, too, the seat of such elegant hospitality, the refined and dearly-loved home of the Fairfax family, has been leveled to the earth, fortifications thrown up across the lawn, the fine old trees felled and the whole grounds, once so embowered and shut out from public gaze, now laid bare and open — Vaucluse no more!”

Amazingly, the family silver was recovered after the war.



*“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*



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

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*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.*