



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

The rise and fall of an early Alexandrian

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Image: 518-520 King Street, ca. 1969. Library of Congress.

One of King Street's great losses in the age of urban renewal was the Adam Lynn Jr. house at 518-520 King St., seen in this circa 1969 photograph shortly before its demolition.

Adam Lynn, a baker, owned the lot on the south side of King Street — between South St. Asaph and Pitt streets — at the time of his death in 1786. The property included a dwelling and a bakehouse in which the elder Lynn prepared biscuits and breads. Upon the death of his widow, Catherine, in 1808, the property came into possession of their son, who completed this elegant, three-story, four-bay Federal-style house in March 1812.

Born in 1775, Lynn Jr. became one of Alexandria's most illustrious residents in the early 19th century. Acclaimed as an artisan, Lynn Jr. was highly regarded in a variety of trades, including clock making, hardware, jewelry, gold and silver.

In 1807 and 1809, Lynn Jr. was elected to the Common Council of Alexandria. By 1810, he served as the council clerk while also fulfilling his duties as first vestryman at St. Paul's Church. Politics and religion aside, he also enjoyed a distinguished military career: "Captain Lynn's Uniform Co." in February 1800 participated in the city's first celebration of George Washington's birthday.

Six years later, President Thomas Jefferson appointed him captain of light infantry in the second legion of the District of Columbia's militia. In 1810, he was promoted to major of the second legion, and three years later, he rose to lieutenant colonel. Finally, in 1817, he was appointed brigadier general of the second brigade of the D.C. militia.

Throughout his career, Lynn Jr. often moved his residence and businesses up and down the King Street corridor. When he didn't call his parents' house home, he rented the space during the 10 years he owned the property.

But in 1822, Lynn Jr.'s fortunes declined and he lost all of his property, which was auctioned off by the U.S. marshal. A decade later, he was renting a tiny office on the 100 block of S. St. Asaph St. for a mere \$50 per year.

Lynn Jr. died in 1836, soon after executing a bond to become a notary public.



"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.



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

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.