



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Prominent resident hit hard by Panic of 1819

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Image: 532 King Street, ca. 1969. Library of Congress.

Continuing the story of Adam Lynn Jr. from last week's Out of the Attic — which described his residence at 518-520 King St. — is the nearby “tenement” he built at 532 King St. around 815.

Located on the same quarter-block property he'd inherited after his father's death, this corner spot housed Lynn Jr.'s silver shop soon after the building was completed. Originally, the structure looked quite similar to the one built earlier at 518-520 King St., but the gabled roof and dormers were removed around 1900.

A full story and Italianate cornice were added at that time. As seen in this photograph — taken before the building was demolished as part of urban renewal efforts in 1969 — the building had been modernized for commercial use by the mid- 20th century.



In the early years of the 19th century, Lynn Jr. was a well respected member of the community and moved in the city's highest social circles. His skills at commerce — and deft hand as an artisan — were surmounted only by his shrewd ability to take advantage of emerging consumer trends and speculative business opportunities.

He constantly moved his home and business locations along the King Street corridor, acquiring new properties and increasing his income through rentals and risky real estate ventures. At the same time, he proudly served Alexandria during the “Era of Good Feelings” as a community leader, staying heavily involved in the religious, political and military affairs of the city.

But as a businessman, Lynn Jr.'s fortunes were closely aligned with those of the city. When economic setbacks befell Alexandria after the War of 1812, Lynn Jr. was one of the first to suffer.

Alexandria banks largely escaped the impact of the nation's first peacetime financial crisis, but Lynn Jr. was hit hard by the Panic of 1819. Overextended, he immediately attempted to liquidate a few of his properties, including 532 King St., which he tried to convey to his niece's husband, Thomas Childs, in 1820 for \$3,000.

But the transaction was contingent on release of a trust held on the property since 1817, which he was unable to remove. With the real estate market in collapse, and crippled by a serious decline in income associated with Alexandria's economic woes in the 1820s, Lynn Jr.'s financial fate was sealed. Ultimately, this property joined all of his holdings at a public auction in February 1822 and sold for a mere \$2,040. Despite greatly reduced circumstances, which left him renting the residence he once owned, Lynn Jr. remained a well-loved Alexandrian until his death in December 1835.



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

"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.