



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

A city home to architecture of 'no equal'

Alexandria Times, October 17, 2013

Image: 100 block Prince Street. Library of Congress

In 1946, the Curtis Publishing Co. released an illustrated coffee-table book authored by Richard Pratt simply titled, "A Treasury of Early American Homes."

A marvelous resource for architects, designers and lovers of period American homes and furnishings, the book instantly became a valued resource on the nation's historical dwellings. Additional printings of the popular tome were initiated for years thereafter.

The book actually had been compiled by popular demand after 22 separate articles in a regional series that ran in the *Ladies Home Journal* magazine. The project, featuring beautiful color photographs of homes largely unseen before, was economically feasible only because it was underwritten by a major magazine, popular with millions of readers throughout the country.

To prepare the project, Pratt traveled across the United States, visiting regions far afield — from New England to the Deep South and California — at different times of the year. Photographs were taken when they would present a property in its best light, mostly in the spring or fall, when flowers were in bloom and trees were just transitioning.

In the end, though, Pratt admitted that it was a bit unnecessary to create spectacular backdrops, since the homes were "sufficiently wonderful by themselves."

Usually, Pratt wrote about the chronology of the homes he profiled or the regional geographic area from which they hailed. But he took great pains to deliver a two-page spread highlighting Alexandria, which was described as one of the most beautiful early American cities.

Pratt was amazed that at almost every turn in the older parts of Alexandria, one could take advantage of views of handsome and important architecture. He featured three representative properties for his article, including the Holland House off Wolfe Street, then owned by Berenice Fleming-Holland, and the Dulaney House at 601 Duke St., then owned by Mr. and Mrs. John Howard Joynt.

It was the third area along Prince Street — between South Union and South Fairfax streets — that truly captured his eye, including the row houses seen here in a 1940s view of 103-133 Prince St.

"These two blocks of Colonial and Federal houses on Prince Street have no equal anywhere for period completeness," he wrote.



"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.



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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.