



# Alexandria Times

*Established in 1797 as The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### The West End Emerges

*Alexandria Times, August 6, 2015*

*Image: Alexandria's West End neighborhood, Matthew Brady Studio, 1864. Photo, National Archives.*



**T**his view of Alexandria documents the emergence of Alexandria's original West End neighborhood, seen in the foreground of this March 20, 1864 image taken a photographer from the Matthew Brady studio. The view is looking southeast, with the Maryland hills and Potomac River far in the distance.

At the bottom of the photograph is the dirt trail of King Street entering Alexandria along what was the lower left-hand diagonal boundary of the formerly diamond-shaped District of Columbia, whose lands in Virginia were officially retroceded back to the commonwealth in 1847. At a point at the base of Shuter's Hill, King Street makes a sharp turn to the left at what is now the intersection of Callahan Drive.

At the time this image was taken, Shuter's Hill was occupied by the Union Army's 44<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, which camped at the site from January 24 to April 29, 1864, as seen in the lower right-hand corner, and whose duties included protecting westbound railcars from Confederate attack.

At the far left edge, the old Francis Peyton homestead is the last residence at Alexandria's western limits, and the dark spot midway between that house and the large tree in the center is the tiny wooden bridge across Hooff's Run, whose ever-changing course constantly menaced travelers in the city.



## Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia

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Following the creek southward from King Street, the open field of Hooff's Meadow and a white barn associated with the slaughterhouse operation at that site are clearly visible. This is one of the few photographic records of Hooff's Run, before it was encased underneath Daingerfield Road decades later.

In the photo's mid-frame can be found the steeples of Downtown Baptist and St. Mary's Churches, the huge Wolfe Street Hospital, and the Round House, used to turn rail engines on a circular turnstile. The massive white building right of center is the recently-built "Soldier's Rest" facility, for the rest and recuperation of battle-scarred Union soldiers, and the smokestack above it is that of the Machine and Locomotive Repair Shop operated by the U.S. Military Railroad.

At the extreme right edge, the old Catt's Tavern, also known as the Drover's Hotel, sits on the north side of Duke Street, just west of Diagonal Road. That establishment was built in the early 1800's to serve cattle dealers who drove cattle to Alexandria for over a century. The building also served as an election headquarters and site for political meetings in the eastern part of the Fairfax County, where it was once located.

One of the more interesting aspects of that building's history is that for nearly fifty years before the Civil War, the building also served as a unofficial employment center of sorts for employers and itinerant job-seekers who met there on New Year's Day each years to contract for labor services.

*"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.*