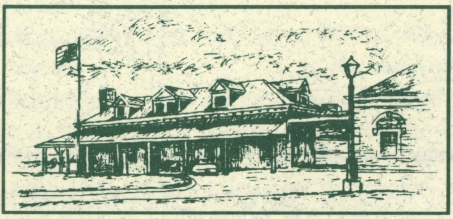
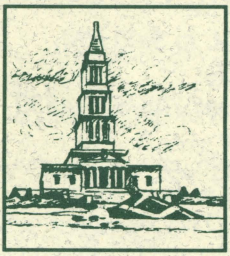
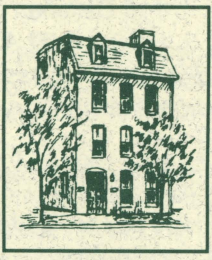
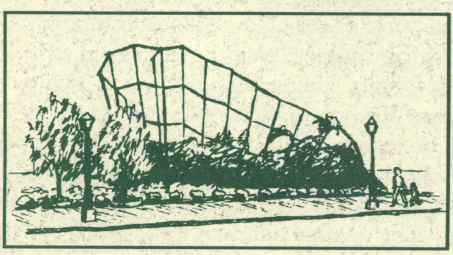
UPPER
OLD TOWN

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

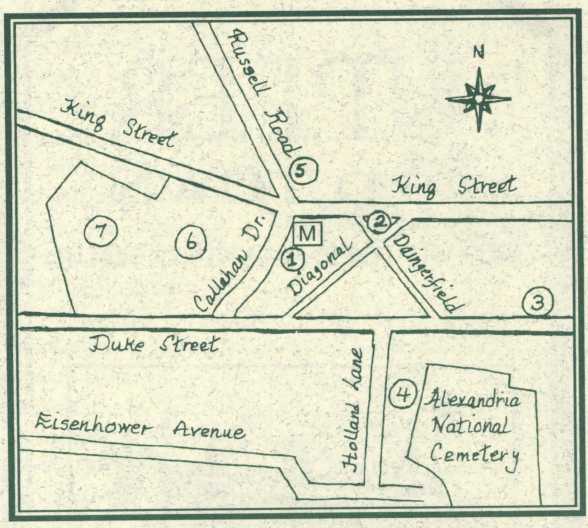








ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



1 Union Station of Alexandria

110 Callahan Drive
Hours: 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Handicapped Accessible
For more information, call 703-836-4339

Between 1900 and 1906, railroad companies relaid their tracks from the midst of Alexandria's downtown area to its edge. They thought it time to build a new passenger station and freight terminal. The architect of the Union Station is unknown, but copies of the original plans are on record at the city's Barrett Library. Union Station's style of architecture is Federal Revival, befitting Alexandria's character.

On September 1, 1905, Union Station opened for business. It had an inviting interior with an open vaulted wooden ceiling supported by exposed scissors trusses. The original building was divided by "Jim Crow" walls, which separated the travelers by race. These were removed at the end of segregation.

Although rail travel is not as important as it once was, railroads in this region provide commuters with

an alternative to driving. Alexandria and a commuter rail line called Virginia Railway Express (VRE) have worked together and recognized the importance of Alexandria's Union Station. In 1997, Union Station was restored to its original condition. Today, the station provides an important rail link for Amtrak passengers and suburban VRE commuters.

2 King Street Gardens Park

At the intersection of King Street, Diagonal Road, and Daingerfield Road

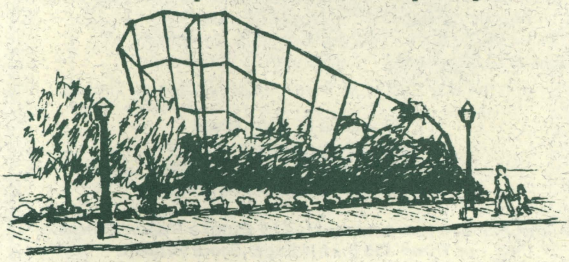
Hours: Open all day
Admission: Free Handicapped Accessible

King Street Gardens Park opened on Saturday, October 4, 1997. Visual artists Laura Sindell and Buster Simpson, landscape architect Becca Hanson, and architect Mark Spitzer designed the 15,000-square-foot area after competing in a nationwide contest.

The park's dominant feature is an extensive 35-foot-high metal topiary covered with ivy and other vines. Its shape alludes to three aspects of Alexandria during the 1700's: George Washington's tricorn hat, a ship's prow, and a plow. Benches are shaded by the topiary.

East of the topiary is a garden of vines and flowers growing along trellises. It symbolizes the area's noted historical and contemporary gardens. At the end of this garden is a water fountain for pets and by it a metal tri-cornered hat meant to look as if a traveler had left it there after stopping for a drink.

West of the topiary is a sunken garden of cattails and water irises. It commemorates Hooff's Run, a marsh that used to cover the area but lies now underground. Much of the park's pavement consists of personalized bricks. They were purchased by individuals and companies to raise money for the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission, which in turn helped build and develop the park.



3 Franklin and Armfield Office

1315 Duke Street

For more information, call 703-836-2858

Currently the headquarters of the Urban League of Northern Virginia, this building was a center of the regional slave trade before the Civil War. Slaves were kept in a basement pen, where the original brick walls still stand. The slaves were sent South and then sold to owners in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The business was owned by Isaac Franklin, who owned 10,000 acres in the South, and his nephew (by marriage) John Armfield. Between 1828 and 1836, they sold and transported 10,000 people to the South. They made $24 million in today's dollars before selling the company to George Kephart in 1836. It was operated by Mr. Kephart until 1861.

In the mid-1800's, Lewis Henry Bailey was sold out of this building (by Birch and Company, another slave trader working here). He ended up in Texas and was freed in 1863. Though illiterate, he made his way back to Alexandria by foot, then being 21 years old. Thirty-four years later he married a 25-year-old and had four children, one of whom was Annie B. Rose. She later became the first black president of the Alexandria Civic Association and a board member of the Northern Virginia Urban League. Rose was a fine orator and persistent in bringing different races together. She died at 96, in 1989.

During the Civil War, the building served as a prison for captured Confederate soldiers. Afterward, it housed the Alexandria Infirmary from 1878 to 1886. This was the third location of Alexandria Hospital. Later, the building was used for apartments. The site is now a National Historic Landmark, as designated by The Department of the Interior.

4 African American Heritage Park

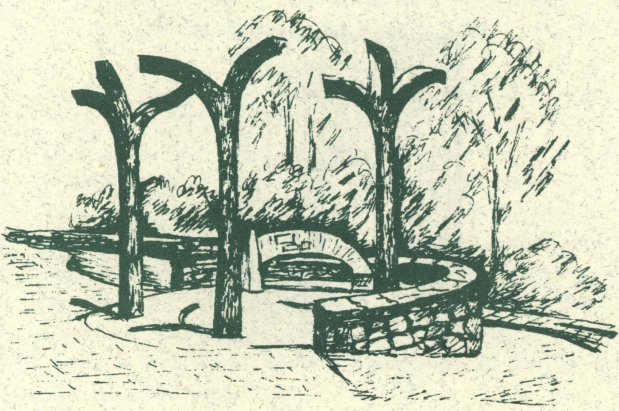
Located on Holland Lane, off Duke Street
Hours: Open all day
Admission: Free Handicapped Accessible

Dedicated on Juneteenth—June 19th—in 1995, this nine-acre park recognizes the contributions that Black Americans have made to the city.

The park's centerpiece is Jerome Meadows' sculpture "Truths That Rise From the Roots—Remembered." A trio of bronze tree patterns reaches 12 to 15 feet toward the sky and surrounds a bronze and limestone grave mound, symbolizing the cemetery and churches in the vicinity. Smaller sculptures are also scattered throughout the park. They make reference to historic African American communities in the city as well as to the cemetery nearby.

The property holds much historical importance. In 1885, the Black Baptist Cemetery Association established the land as a burial ground. Six of twenty-one known burials are still marked with their original headstones. The land was also used for transport. Hooff's Run, which was a passageway for local tradesmen, passes through the park as it flows to the Potomac River. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, railroad tracks were laid in the present day park and used by railroad companies such as the Orange and Alexandria line from the heart of the city west and south to various parts of the state.

In addition, the park offers a habitat for wildlife. Mallard ducks, crayfish, and painted turtles live in the wetlands.



5 Washington, D.C., Boundary Marker

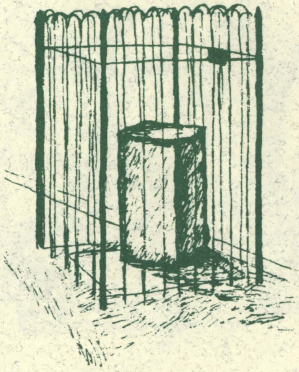
Located on Russell Road, near the corner of Russell Road and King Street

This is a replica of one of 40 sandstone markers that surveyors placed when they located the boundaries of Washington, D. C., during 1791 and 1792. The whole boundary includes four corner markers plus stones set at one-mile intervals. Marking the boundaries was significant because Washington, D.C., was created of land from both Virginia and Maryland and given over to the Federal government. Thirty-seven markers still exist today.

Each marker was mined from a sandstone quarry in Aquia, Virginia, south of Alexandria. Each included the same information: magnetic compass reading, year of placement, miles from a cornerstone, the words "Jurisdiction of the United States," and whether the stone was located in Virginia or Maryland. The "zero" mile stone marks the south boundary corner at Jones Point, Alexandria. The other stones were measured from this one and were placed by moving clockwise from Jones Point. "Jurisdiction of" was a temporary term for the District before it was named Washington, D.C.

The Russell Road marker is actually a replica placed here in 1925. The original would have been a few feet to the west, near the middle of King Street. The stone's official number is SW 2, but there are no carvings on this replica.

Today the markers are protected by Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Beginning in 1915, the organization erected iron fences around each one and laid down brass plaques, recognizing the DAR's contribution. Four markers still exist in Alexandria.



6 Shuter's Hill

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial is located on this hill

In the late 18th century, Shuter's Hill was owned by Benjamin Tasker Dulany, who lived here with his wife and children. The Dulany family was acquainted with George Washington and George Mason. Mrs. Dulany had been a ward of both of them, and Benjamin and his son often accompanied Washington on hunting expeditions. Both men were members of the Alexandria-Washington Masonic Lodge No. 22. Benjamin died in 1816, and records note that he is buried on Shuter's Hill.

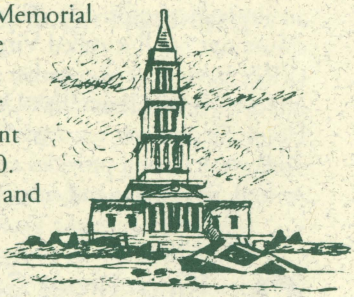
Shuter's Hill became a strategic stronghold during the Civil War. On the day Virginia seceded from the Union, May 23, 1861, President Lincoln ordered his close friend Colonel Elmer G. Ellsworth to attack Alexandria early the next morning and to occupy it with Union troops. The assault was successful but Ellsworth was killed. A circle of forts was planned to defend the city of Washington. Shuter's Hill was chosen as the site of one of these forts. Lincoln named it "Fort Elmer G. Ellsworth" in his friend's honor. Shuter's Hill today is the site of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. It is also the site of archaeological digs undertaken to uncover its varied past by the city archaeologists.

7 George Washington Masonic National Memorial

101 Callahan Drive
Hours: 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Guided tours given each half hour in the morning and every hour in the afternoon
Closed: New Year's, Thanksgiving, Christmas
Admission: Free Handicapped Accessible
For more information, call 703-683-2007

On the summit of Shuter's Hill rises the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, one of Alexandria's most prominent buildings. Commissioned in 1908 and constructed from 1922 to 1932, the structure marked a collaboration of Masons across the country who sought to honor their fellow Mason George Washington and his views on government, religion, and freedom. The monument preserves and presents priceless Washington artifacts now owned by the Masons and on display in the Replica Lodge Room.

Directly inside the Memorial is a 17-foot bronze statue of George Washington, sculpted by Bryant Baker and dedicated by President Harry S. Truman in 1950. To either side are murals and stained glass windows by Allyn Cox depicting scenes from Washington's life.



The monument's seven upper levels feature numerous rooms and displays. The Royal Arch Room contains an elaborate replica of the Ark of the Covenant, as well as Egyptian and Hebraic art. The Assembly Room presents twelve dioramas of events in Washington's life. The Tall Cedars of Lebanon Room features a model of the inside of King Solomon's Temple, and the Children's Room shows a miniature moving Shriner's parade accompanied by music.

Dedicated in 1999 to mark the 200th anniversary of George Washington's death, a Masonic emblem was built in front of the memorial. Designed by Donald Robey, the 60-by-70-foot concrete sculpture signifies to visitors and even plane passengers leaving and approaching Reagan National Airport that the building is a Masonic memorial. The massive "G" stands for the Masons' devotion to God and also for their interest in geometry. Depictions of two tools used by early stonemasons, a square below the "G" and a compass above, are also symbols. The square, originally used to check two faces of rock for accurate shape, symbolizes "squaring" a person's behavior in the presence of God and humanity. The compass symbolizes the restricting of desires within certain borders.

Acknowledgments

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This walking tour was created by Brooke Robert Stoddard of Troop 135 for his Eagle Scout Project.