



Alexandria Civil War Hospitals Walking Tour

This approximately 90-minute, 33-block tour of Old Town Alexandria’s Union Hospitals starts at the site of the Mansion House Hospital, the setting of the PBS drama *Mercy Street*. Alexandria was occupied by Union troops throughout the Civil War, and served as a logistics and hospital center. The Union Army established over 30 hospitals which treated both Union and Confederate soldiers as well as freed slaves, who were referred to as contrabands. Many of the hospitals were in large public buildings and homes. Many are still standing. Take a leisurely stroll through Old Town’s interesting streets to see them as they are today and to learn a little of their history.

More information about and images of these and other nearby hospitals including stories and first-hand accounts from the nurses, doctors, patients, and visitors to Union hospitals can be found at: alexandriava.gov/historic/civilwar

Produced by:

Alexandria Archaeology, Office of Historic Alexandria

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1 Mansion House Hotel Hospital (121 N. Fairfax Street)

A top hotel owned by the Green family, it became a Union military hospital by December 1861. With 500 beds, it was the largest of the confiscated buildings used as military hospitals in Alexandria. *Mercy Street*, based on diaries and letters of nurses, doctors and patients, is set here.



2 Carlyle House (121 N. Fairfax Street)

In 1855 an addition to the Mansion House Hotel was built directly in front of 18th century John Carlyle House. The addition was torn down in 1973 to restore the house, now the Carlyle House Historic Park, which highlights the decor and early history of the house including its importance in the French and Indian War.



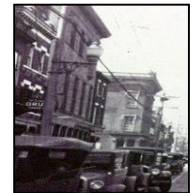
3 King Street Hospital (200-204 King Street)

Prior to the war, these brick buildings contained shops and banks with a residence on some upper floors. During the war, the hospital had 100 beds. Today, the buildings contain a private residence and shops including the former Why Not Toy Shop and the Market Square Shop.



4 Washington Hall Hospital (622-626 King Street)

Opening as a meeting hall and theater in 1855 with a concert by Swiss Bell Ringers, it had seating for over 600. During the war, it became one of the many small hospitals clustered nearby. The building was torn down in the early 20th century and replaced by shops near the busy corner of King and Washington Streets.



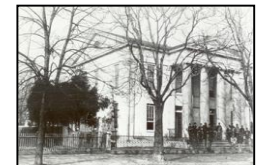
5 Washington St. Methodist Church Hospital (109 S. Washington Street)

Known then as the Methodist Episcopal Church, it was occupied by Union forces in January 1862 because of the congregation's Southern sympathies. According to church archives, the upstairs sanctuary became a hospital and the first floor was used as a stable.



6 Lyceum Hall Hospital (201 S. Washington Street)

Built as library and meeting hall in 1839, the Lyceum was the intellectual and cultural center of Alexandria. In the spring 1861 it was seized by the Union Army and used as a hospital with 80 beds. Now it is Alexandria's History Museum (with a shop and public facilities).



7 Downtown Baptist Church Hospital (212 S. Washington Street)

Became a hospital in July, 1862. A Quartermaster map shows stables and a sink (privy) behind the church. A December 1864 hospital census listed this hospital as supporting 150 of the 993 beds in the hospital division that included most of Alexandria's church hospitals.



8 Prince Street Hospital (806 Prince Street)

Originally a private residence built in the 1850s by the rector of St. Paul's Church, it became a branch of Mansion House Hospital and later a branch of Alexandria's 2nd Division General Hospital together with the house on the opposite side of the street. Later owned by the Sons of the Confederacy.



9 Fowle (Powell) Hospital (811 Prince Street)

This elegant 3-story masonry home was built in 1854 and later purchased by a prominent Alexandria merchant who left Alexandria with his family for Richmond as the war began. This hospital was considered part of the Prince St. Hospital across the street.



10 Grace Church Hospital (207-209 S. Patrick Street)

Consecrated in 1860 when two Episcopalian congregations joined together, the new church was seized in June 1862 for use as a hospital. It served that function until April 1865. Today, after extensive renovations, the building houses condominiums.



11 Contraband School and Hospital (321-323 S. Washington Street)

These side-by-side residences originally belonged to two brothers: one left Alexandria, the other remained but refused to sign an oath of allegiance. As the number of former slaves (called contrabands) grew, relief workers used the buildings to store supplies for them. In 1863 one section became a hospital.



12 Friends Meeting House Hospital (600 Wolfe Street)

When built in 1811 it was described as "60 by 36 feet and two stories...." As a hospital it was associated with two other Wolfe St. hospitals. After the war it became a school and then a church which was razed in 1880s. Now it is the site of the Little Theatre of Alexandria.



13 Wolfe Street Hospital (510 Wolfe Street)

This residence belonged to Francis L. Smith who served as Robert E. Lee's attorney in his 1870 failed attempt to regain possession of Arlington House. First, the Union used the house as a residence for Alexandria's military governor. It then became a hospital with 100 beds. Now a private residence.



14 Tuscan Villa Hospital (500-502 Wolfe Street)

This large house was built in the Italianate style that became popular in the U.S. in an earlier part of the 1800s. It was associated with the other Wolfe St. hospitals. Photos of the house are sometimes incorrectly labeled as the Quaker Meeting House in early 20th century references.



15 St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hospital (228 S. Pitt Street)

In 1817 B. H. Latrobe, an architect for the White House and the Capitol, was selected to design the new church. After an infamous incident involving the arrest of its minister, the military established a hospital in the lecture room and parsonage. The hospital remained open until February, 1865.



16 Second Presbyterian Church Hospital (Prince & S. St. Asaph Streets)

Originally built in the Greek revival style in 1840, during the war it was used as a hospital for the Provost Guard, forerunners to the U.S. Military Police. A new facade was added in the 1880s. More recently it has been used as retail and office space.



17 McVeigh Hospital (Cameron & N. St. Asaph Streets)

Until November 1862 the home of a wealthy businessman who was tried in absentia for secessionist activities. After the hospital closed in 1865, the house was the focus of two Supreme Court Cases involving ownership. Today, it is a parking lot.



18/19 Old & New Hallowell Hospitals (200 & 215 N. Washington Street)

On opposite sides of the street, both locations were owned by the Hallowells, a Quaker family known for its educational efforts. Robert E. Lee attended school here. Both were replaced by office buildings.



20 Grosvenor Hospital (414 N. Washington Street)

Built around 1830, it opened as a hospital in August 1862 with 160 beds. A Quartermaster map shows wooden barracks used as hospital wards and outbuildings on the west side of the residence. The house was razed in 1960 and replaced with offices.



21 Grosvenor Branch Hospital (Oronoco & N. Washington Streets)

Known as the Lee-Fendall House, it was built by members of Robert E. Lee's family. The first successful blood transfusion in North America was performed here during the war. Now houses the Lee-Fendall House Museum.



22 Queen Street Hospital (603 Queen Street)

Originally the Bellhaven Female Institute, a popular school, it was a hospital from April 1862 through April 1865. An 1858 addition was advertised as "fully supplied with gas and water, and thoroughly heated with flues." Later converted into the Anchorage House condominiums.



23 Fairfax Street Hospital (209-211 N. Fairfax Street)

Built in 1805 as elegant residences, in the 1840s this large property, with its distinctive loggia facing a rear garden and the river, became a female seminary, or school, run by Benjamin Hallowell. In August 1861 it became a branch of the Mansion House Hospital. It now contains condominiums.



Alexandria in the Civil War

In 1860, Alexandria was a vibrant southern city boasting a population of 12,652 with 96 firms producing a wide variety of goods. Because of Alexandria's strategic importance as a railroad center and port, and its proximity to Washington, D.C., federal troops invaded the town on May 24, 1861. The war transformed Alexandria into a major logistical supply center for the army. Private houses, churches, and public buildings were commandeered for military barracks, hospitals and prisons. Union facilities were constructed throughout the town to support the war effort. Stockades were erected across the major east-west streets to thwart threatened Confederate cavalry sorties against the extensive military train yard complex. As the war progressed, African-American refugees, most of them former slaves, streamed into Alexandria contributing mightily to the Union labor force but putting major stress on the area's ability to house, feed, and care for the multitudes.

This walking tour description is designed to be printed at home or can be downloaded and read on most mobile devices. Clicking on images above take you to the Alexandria History website for more images of and information about this hospital including first-hand accounts by nurses, doctors, patients and visitors.

A virtual tour of the hospitals for mobile devices is also available at:

