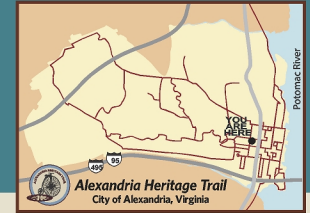
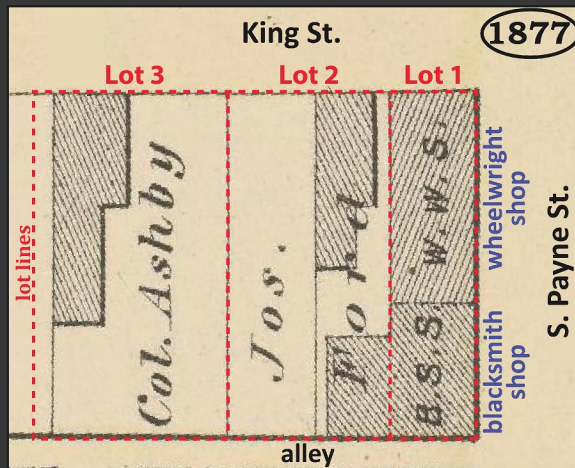


The Growth of Upper King Street



Throughout most of the nineteenth century, three buildings stood on this section of 1300 to 1312 King Street, on what previously had been vacant land. The main structures on Lots 1 and 2 have been preserved, whereas the building on Lot 3 was razed around 1930. These are their stories.



This detailed map of Alexandria compiled in 1877 depicts the three developed lots at that time. Josiah Ford operated a wheelwright and blacksmith shop on the corner lot at 1300 King St. The standing structure at 1304 King St. served as a residence for a variety of tenants over the years, including Ford's son, Stephen, in 1877. Elizabeth Ashby and her husband, Col. Turner Ashby, owned the adjacent property at 1310 King St. and rented it out to a series of tenants.

Alexandria Archaeology, Office of Historic Alexandria
G.M. Hopkins, City Atlas of Alexandria, 1877

Lot 1: 1300 King St.

Benjamin Baden, a brickmaker by trade, built the Federal style building on the corner lot by 1814, probably making the bricks for the structure himself. The house was assessed at \$1,800. Between 1814 and 1900, more than a dozen people either owned or rented the property and it housed an array of mixed uses including a wheelwright shop, a blacksmith, a paint shop, a flour mercantile, a tin shop, a dwelling, and even a grocery. By the 20th century, the buildings at 1300 King St. had undergone a series of exterior alterations, but the main block retains its historic integrity to this day.



North and east elevations of 1300 and 1304 King Street, 1964.

Alexandria Public Library, Special Collections

Lot 2: 1304 King St.

John McKinney, a merchant, built the first house on this end of the block at 1304 King St. in 1806, an indication that the town was expanding into the upper reaches of King St. Like the property next door, this one passed through the hands of a host of owners and tenants.

Perhaps the most notable resident was wheelwright Josiah Ford, who owned and occupied both Lots 1 and 2 for some 20 years (ca. 1860-1880). Ford became a well-respected tradesman in the community; in 1868, the local newspaper praised the new fire company wagon produced in his shop.

HANDSOME WAGON.—The wagon of the Hydraulion Steam Fire Company has just been finished and turned out of the shop of Mr. Josiah Ford, on King street, and is one of the handsomest things of the kind we have seen.

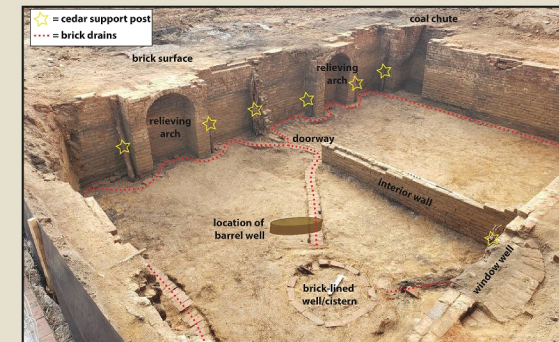
Alexandria Gazette, August 19, 1868:3, "Local Items"

Office of Historic Alexandria

Lot 3: 1310 King St.

In 1820, grocer John Lanham built a large two-story brick building at 1310 King St. that included a 25 ft. by 35 ft. basement. More than a century later, the building was torn down to make way for a used car lot. Before its demise, various owners and tenants used the property primarily as a residence and mercantile, grocery, or shop.

In 2022, archaeologists excavated the basement and documented several unique features, including two relieving arches that supported full chimneys above ground, a barrel well, and a later brick-lined well or cistern. As the building aged, the owners set cedar posts against the foundation walls at regular intervals to shore up a sagging floor. Flooding also proved to be a problem, as later owners installed a network of brick box drains along the walls that emptied into the brick well that had been converted into a sump.



Photograph of the excavated basement at 1310 King St., facing southeast.

Courtesy of Dovetail Cultural Resources Group, 2022



Credits: The Holladay Corp., The Foundry Companies, Dovetail Cultural Resources Group, Alexandria Archaeology



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA EST. 1749