A L E X A N D R I A ‘ S

MAIN STREET RESIDENTS

SW Corner of King and Pitt Streets (left), ca. 1900 (Alexandria Library, William F. Smith Collection)

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE

500 BLOCK OF KING STREET

by

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Foreword

by

Dr. Pamela J. Cressey

Introduction: Aims and Methods

The social history of Alexandria, Virginia, is a rich and largely unexplored domain. The archival resources are substantial, though scattered and punctuated with the inevitable gaps. The city is blessed with a newspaper, published continuously since 1784. Tax records, in one form or another, extend in a nearly unbroken chain back to 1787. Ownership of land within the city can be traced to the original colonial grants. Church records and the membership lists of some clubs and lodges are extant for almost the entire history of the city. In addition to the decennial Federal Censuses, the city conducted its own local censuses for several years in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[1] With these important sources, the historian can piece together a picture of the social structure of the city as it developed from a small tobacco port in the eighteenth century through its vacillating fortunes in the nineteenth to its present status as suburb and tourist center.

The aim of the archival research on the south side of the 500 Block of King Street in 1977 was twofold: first, to begin the exploration of these resources, thus establishing a method for future research by Alexandria Archaeology; and second, to learn as much as possible about the men and women who lived and worked on the 500 Block between its first habitation until 1900 for the fullest interpretation of the archaeological materials. During the research we encountered many difficulties; gaps appeared in the records, methods which seemed feasible failed to work, and parts of the history of the 500 Block remain obscure. But we assembled a large body of data about the people associated with the 500 Block, we learned much about the documentary history of Alexandria, and

1 Endnotes are listed at the end of the text.

we came to believe that the history of the 500 Block in many ways reflects important trends in the larger city. What follows is a distillation of the history of the 500 Block. In order to avoid a tedious recitation of names, occupations, and economic details, we have opted in this report to emphasize key and representative figures in each of several major periods. Thus, the history appears anecdotal and impressionistic. But it is based on research as exhaustive as could be designed.

Since the focus of the archaeological activity in this project was a limited, precisely described geographical area–one city block–the first step in the historical research, obviously, was to establish a comprehensive list of those people who had lived and worked on the block throughout its occupation. There is an important difference between this approach and that of the social history of the time. Whereas historians like Stephan Thernstrom and others in the new social history have explored the social structure and, among other things, the economic mobility of populations defined by class or ethnic background, the research on the residents of the 500 Block was circumscribed from the start by a strict geographical limitation.[2] We had a relatively small population, seldom more than twenty families, and could therefore develop their history with considerable detail, so long as the documentary evidence was available and useful, which was not always the case.

To establish the names of the occupants of the block, we first had to trace the ownership of the individual lots. Working from the present backward, we traced the titles of each lot back to the original colonial grants (with occasional gaps, where title transfers simply failed to appear in the Alexandria deed books or in the wills of known owners.) A list of owners, however, was not necessarily a list of actual occupants; in many cases occupants rented or leased from the owners. But with the names of the owners we could move to the tax records, for in Alexandria the tax assessor noted the owner as well as the occupant (if different) of each lot in town. Since these tax records,

i.e., the assessor's books, were organized geographically according to the route of the assessor as he walked up and down each city street and alley, we could find our block in the books, then find the names of the owners of each lot, and finally find the name of the occupant of each lot. To be sure, there were many cases when it was not so simple. The tax books for many years have been lost, and even for those years for which the books exist, particularly in the late eighteenth century, the occupancy was difficult to establish with any degree of certainty. Handwriting was often nearly illegible, the geographic sequence was occasionally impossible to understand, and some lots were inexplicably omitted.[3] For some of the years for which the tax records were either unavailable or useless, we could turn to city directories, but the number of these is disappointingly small.

Despite these problems, a list of names was gradually assembled. There are certain years for which we simply do not know who lived in some of the houses on the block, and there are others for which we have made more or less informed guesses. But we do have the names of nearly a thousand people who lived, worked, or both lived and worked, on the 500 Block between 1780 and 1900.

Assembling the list of names of residents, however, was just the first step. A list of names means nothing until we know something about these people– what was their ethnic group, their profession, their religion? Were they rich, poor, or in between? Where did they fit into the social and economic structure of Alexandria? We planned to gather biographical information about our population in the following categories: first, vital statistics, including ethnic background, birth, death, marriage, and number of children; second, occupation; third, power connections, including political offices held and memberships in important churches and clubs; and, fourth, wealth. All of these would be useful in assessing the position of the individual within the larger community.

The vital statistics of birth, ethnic background, and number of children were easy to

establish for any person listed in the Federal Censuses after 1840. Beginning with the 1850 Census, all persons (excluding slaves in 1850 and 1860) were listed by name; in 1850 and 1860 "color" and place of birth were provided. In 1870, whether or not a person's parents were foreign born was indicated. In 1880 and 1900 (Census schedules for 1890 have been entirely lost), the exact location of each person's birth and of his parents' was added.[4] For people who lived on the block in postbellum years but not in a Federal Census year, as well as for all those living on the block before 1850, the other useful sources of this type of biographical information were church records, including gravestones and newspaper obituaries. For many individuals these proved sufficient; for others, we were simply unable to provide even this level of basic information.

Far more important (and often even harder to come by) than simple biographical data like year and place of birth is information concerning occupation, wealth, and status in the community. The significance of profession or occupation in indicating the position of the individual in society has been recognized and emphasized by social historians.[5] Some historians have also pointed out the shortcomings and pitfalls of using only occupation as a status indicator.[6] While aware that occupation alone is not the sole determinant of status in America, we nonetheless believe that it can be one of several key indices. Therefore, we put particular emphasis on trying to establish the occupation of as many residents of the 500 Block as we could. The chief sources of this information were local and Federal Censuses; the few local censuses, conducted between 1797 and 1816, usually supplied occupation, while the Federal Census began to do so in 1850. City directories, when available, were useful, as were newspaper advertisements and some of the tax records. As with the rest of our research, the inevitable gaps appeared here as well: for some of our population, we were unable to establish profession.

The category of power connections embraced church and club membership, political

activity, and marriage and friendship ties. The importance of political office to our needs is obvious: a man who was elected mayor or to the Town Council, clearly enjoyed the respect of his fellow citizens. Equally important was the matter of a person's associates. If a person who lived on our block went to church, attended lodge meetings, and witnessed the wills of the identifiable leading citizens of Alexandria, then it seems reasonable to assume this person was within or close to the inner circle of the town's elite. To assemble the data on this subject, we checked through church records, where extant, looking for membership or mention of baptism, marriage, or death.[7] The records of the Masonic Lodge are available (i.e., Brockett 1899), and thus we were able to determine which of our population were members of that important early Alexandria club–important in as much as George Washington and other identifiable town leaders were members throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Information on political office was assembled by checking the election-day issues of the *Alexandria Gazette*.[8]

Finally, how much money a person has influences community position in America. Beyond its obvious effect on material welfare, wealth plays an important role in shaping how a person is perceived by his fellows (Pessen 1976:278-80). We discovered an approach to this crucial subject in the city tax records. In addition to the books that the tax assessor carried with him as he walked through town assessing real property, other forms of tax records have survived. These include the books kept in the assessor's office which recorded the total tax each citizen owed on both real and personal property.

Because the process of collating turned out to be too time consuming and because these tax records were all owned by the State Library in Richmond, we chose several key years (1801, 1810, 1830, 1850, 1870, 1888) for which we had reliable data on the identities of the 500 Block residents and sampled the total population in the tax books. The sample was 10 percent of the city's taxed population for each year. The next step

was to take this sample population and compile it according to amount of taxes. This provided a profile of the economic structure of the city, giving a rough estimate of the distribution of taxable wealth in Alexandria. More important for our purposes, it provided a valuable litmus test against which to measure the wealth of the residents of the 500 Block. That is, we could easily determine the total taxes of the block's heads of household, and then see where they fit into the tax structure of our sample population for the entire city.

Taken together with occupational, associational, political, and other biographical data, these figures on wealth round out our picture of the residents of the 500 Block. Throughout our research, we emphasized information about the particular individuals who lived and worked on the block. In our research, unfortunately, we discovered very few personal documents, such as letters, diaries, etc. Except for wills, we found virtually no echo of the actual written words of the block's population. But the information we did uncover, coupled with what other historians have discovered about the economic, social, and political life of Alexandria, provides a mosaic–with the inevitable missing pieces–of the history of a city block.

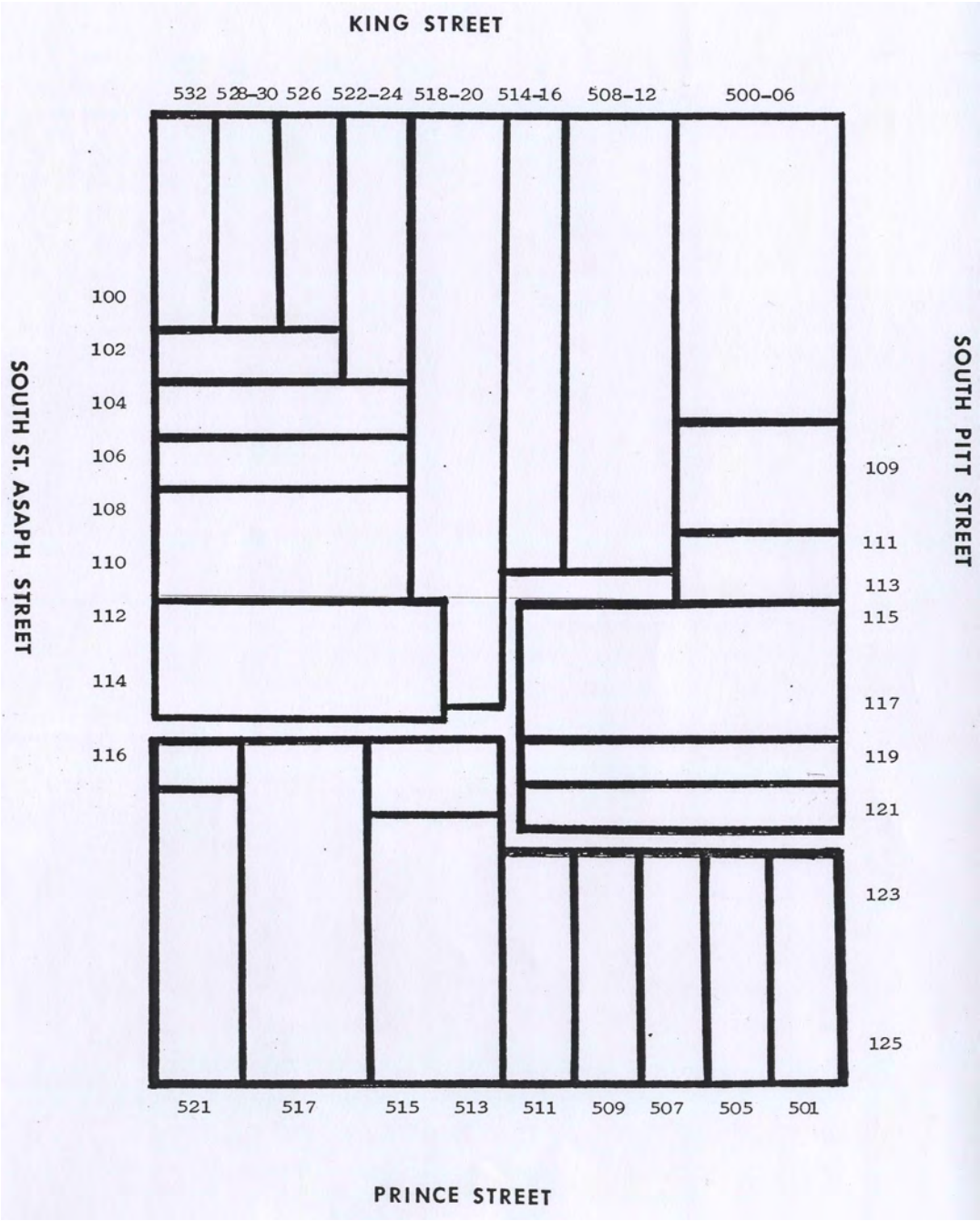
In the course of this research, we also fulfilled one of the further goals of the entire 500 King Street Block Project–to locate, examine, and assess the value of the archival resources relative to the social history of Alexandria. In this respect, the archival side of the research on the 500 Block was a test to see whether sufficient material existed, whether it could be put to efficient use, and whether the methodology for studying the entire city could be developed through a primary study of a small part of the city. The archival resources uncovered in researching the 500 Block can clearly be used in developing a social history of the city as a whole. The tax-survey mechanism can be used to establish a picture of the economic structure of the city at any given time and to understand the distribution of wealth, and thus of power. Throughout our research, we

have hoped that future researchers might be able to use many of the same resources and techniques in working on other neighborhoods of Alexandria. The ultimate goal is an understanding of the social, political, and economic organism that is an American City.

Two final notes: in this history of the 500 Block, property lots are referred to by their 20th century addresses, although arbitrary lot numbers (1 - 27) were used in the research files throughout the span of this project. At the time of building demolition in the 1960s, the block was divided into 27 separate lots of tax parcels. Thus we have 27 lots on each of the maps of the block we use to illustrate its history, even though there were not always the same number of separate lots (Figure 1). For example, the 20th century lot at 526-30 King Street was actually two different lots during much of the nineteenth century. Since it was one lot when the research on the block began, it was assigned one number. When title research showed that this one lot had been formed out of two formerly separate properties, these were identified as the west half and the east half. These were designated 2W and 2E.

The second item concerns the time periods into which this report is divided. For the most part, they derive from the article by Terry Sharrer, "Commerce and Industry," in Alexandria: A Towne in Transition, where Sharrer makes a strong case for the existence of distinct periods in the economic history of Alexandria (1977: 16-38). In one case, however, we have adapted Sharrer's dates to fit developments on the 500 Block. Even though the economic depression hit Alexandria in 1819, a few years after the War of 1812, we have stretched the second period of the report to 1821 in order to address the financial collapse of an important 500 Block resident, Adam Lynn.

FIGURE 1 - Plan View of the 500 Block of King Street



1763 - 1800: Beginnings

The establishment of the town of Alexandria in 1749 answered a need for a trade center and port in northern Virginia. The region's growing commercial activity, chiefly involving the export of tobacco and the import of various goods for planters and their families, led the Virginia Assembly to charter a new town on the Potomac, in the hope that it would be "commodious for trade and navigation."[9] From its inception, the town was dedicated to commerce; it was to be a marketplace where goods were bought and sold. Throughout its history, until fairly recently when the town was absorbed into the commuters' suburbs of Washington, D.C., the life of Alexandria–economic, political, social–has been characterized and dominated by commerce. When trade was good, Alexandrians prospered; when trade declined, the city suffered.

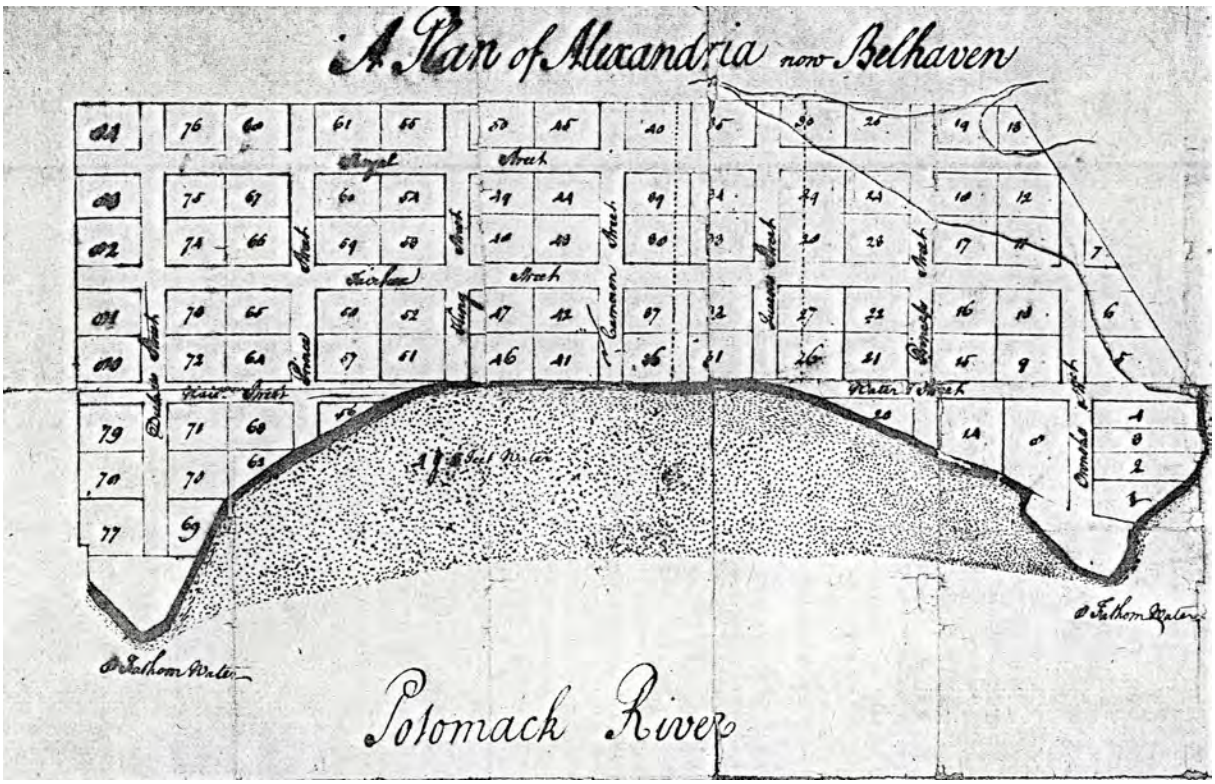
No less commercial than the city of Alexandria was the south side of the 500 Block of King Street between Pitt and St. Asaph streets. From the time of its first occupation in the 1780s, until most of its buildings were razed to make way for a new City Courthouse in the 1960s, this block has generally been a neighborhood of shops and shopkeepers. In the King Street frontage, retailers vended their wares in the street-level shops and often lived with their families on the second and third floors. On much of the rest of the block lived shopkeepers and merchants whose place of business was only a short walk away. There were exceptions to this, of course; at one time or another parts of the block were occupied by various types of artisans and light industry. But for the most part, the 500 Block, like the city at whose heart it lay, depended on commerce, on the buying and selling of goods, for its life's blood. Today, a restaurant, an optometrist and coffee store are the vestiges of the block's retail function.

During the first few years of Alexandria's existence, however, the 500 Block was not at the town's heart: it was not even within the town boundaries. The western limit of the original town of Alexandria was a line halfway between Royal and what later

became Pitt Street (Cox 1973: 10) (Figure 2). In 1763, the State Assembly approved a measure enlarging the town, pushing the western limit to a line between Pitt and St. Asaph Streets (Hening 1820:7: 604-07). Thus, the eastern half of the modern 500 Block came within the bounds of the 1763 city. The owner before this annexation was John Alexander, Jr., of Stafford County. His family, part of the planter aristocracy, had owned land in northern Virginia since 1669, including the land on which Alexandria was originally established (Preisser 1977: 38-39, 199). It is thought that the town was named after the Alexanders. In 1763, pursuant to the act of the Assembly, John Alexander, Jr., conveyed the land owned by him included in the annexation, to the trustees of the town. The act specified that the land was to be divided into half-acre plots, each plot being one quarter of a block, to be sold at an auction. On May 9, 1763, the auction was held, and lot 114, the half-acre at the corner of King and South Pitt streets (the northeast quarter of the 500 Block), was bought by John Alexander himself for 40 pounds (Figure 3). Lot 112, immediately to the south of 114, was sold to George Washington for 30 pounds (proceedings of the Board of Trustees, Alexandria, 1749-1767: 50-51). These two lots constituted exactly one half–the eastern half–of what would become the 500 Block, or the block bounded by King, South Pitt, Prince, and South St. Asaph streets (Figure 3).

The city had no trouble disposing of any of the lots within the annexation. The town was growing and real estate did not go begging for a purchaser. The two lots of the 500 Block, moreover, were apparently seen as especially valuable pieces of property. The average price for a half-acre lot throughout the annexation was 15.8.11 pounds, ranging from the 50 pounds paid for a lot on the waterfront to the 1.1 pounds paid for a marshy lot at the corner of North Fairfax and Pendleton streets. The sums paid for lots 112 and 114 were twice the average price of those auctioned–or even more. (Preisser 1977: 195). The southwest quadrant of the 500 Block, equal in size to and immediately west of lot 112, Alexander leased for 13.5 pounds per annum. The average rent for Alexander's lots

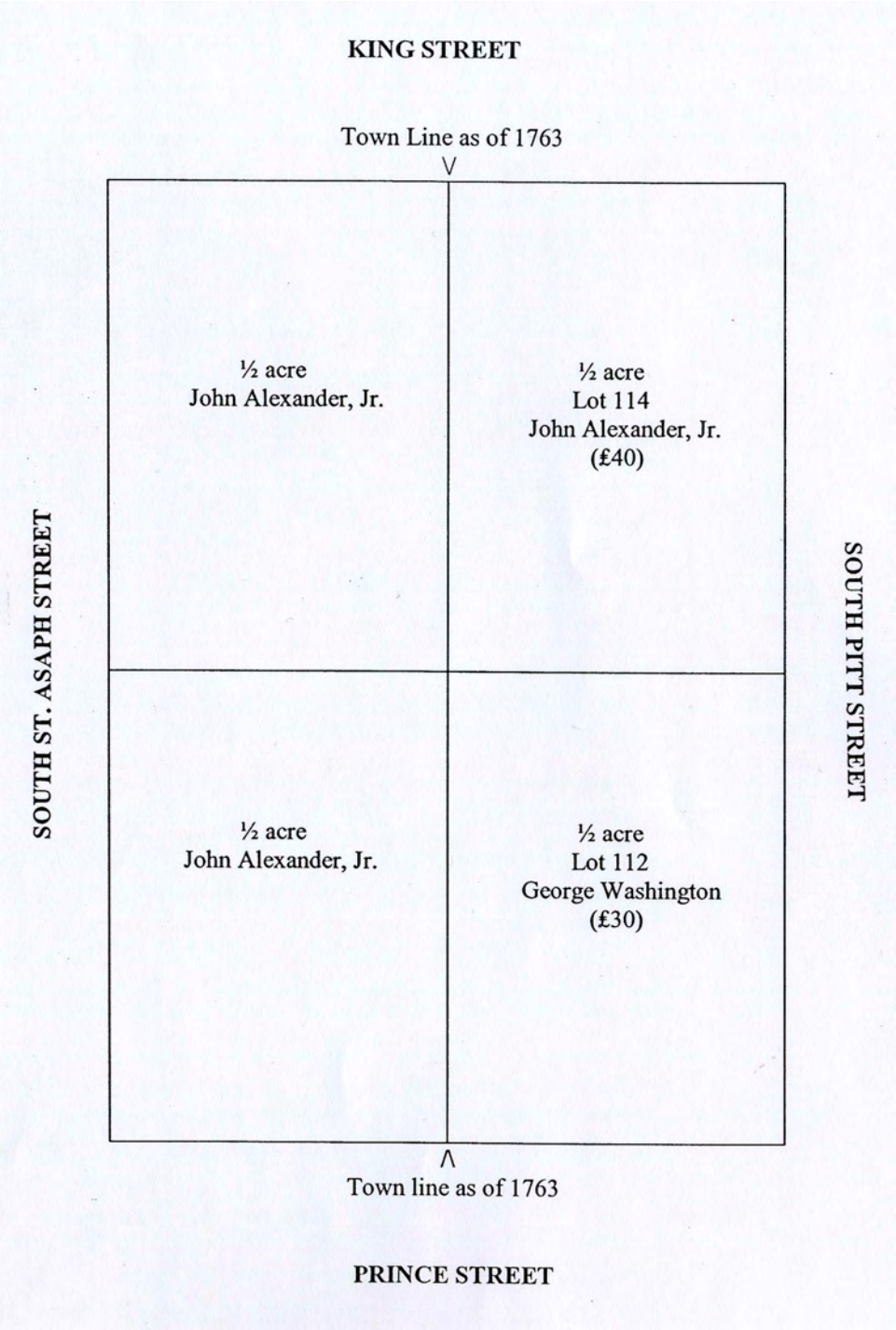
FIGURE 2 - Map of Alexandria in 1749



(Tidewater Towns, p.208, Maps Division, Library of Congress.)

NB: The future 500 block is outside these original bounds: it would lie just west of the half blocks numbered 61 and 55.

FIGURE 3 - The 500 Block of King Street in 1763



Thus, whether acquired through lease or sale, the lots on the 500 Block were clearly seen by the purchasers or lessees as prize real estate, worth more than other lots in town. In a commercial town, before the age of rapid transit, the center is the part of town where one wants to live and work. Although this block was not the geographical center of the 1763 town, it was on the commercial corridor only one block from Market Square.

In 1779, the General Assembly extended the bounds of the town to include the remaining one half of the 500 Block (Hening 1820:10: 172 and 192) (Figure 4). Property on the block had already been changing hands, and men whose families would be associated with the block for many years bought and began to occupy lots on the 500 Block. These included Jesse Taylor, a merchant who settled in Alexandria in about 1780. By the mid-1780s he was living on his property at 500-06 King Street (King and South Pitt streets corner) and operating a store there. Next door, 508-12 and 514-16 King, were purchased by William Halley in 1792. Halley, a millstone maker, lived on the block for several years with his wife and family. The entire northwest quadrant passed into the hands of Adam Lynn, a baker, in 1774. Lynn or his descendants owned property on the block for more than a century; their fortunes often reflected the ups and downs of the Alexandria economy. The story of the early years of the 500 Block, particularly of the northwest quadrant, largely revolves around Adam Lynn's family. By 1785, Lynn was living in a frame house at 518-20 King Street. There he pursued his trade as a baker and vended his bread to the people of Alexandria.

Where Adam Lynn came from before arriving in Alexandria is not known, but he obviously earned the respect of the citizens of his adopted town. In the 1760s, he held the important post of Flour Inspector, and he was elected to the first Town Council in 1779.

FIGURE 4 - Alexandria Town Plan, 1798

NB: The 500 Block of King Street is colored in red

Shortly after the commencement of hostilities with Great Britain, Lynn was commissioned an ensign in the 3rd Virginia Regiment. Advertisements for his bakery business appear in the town newspaper, as well as notices of real estate for rent and bricks for sale Figure 5).[10] Shortly after Lynn and his family moved to the 500 Block, he died, and his property was divided between his wife and five children (Figure 7). Through the rest of the 1780s and the 1790s, some of these lots were improved and were occupied by their owners or renters.

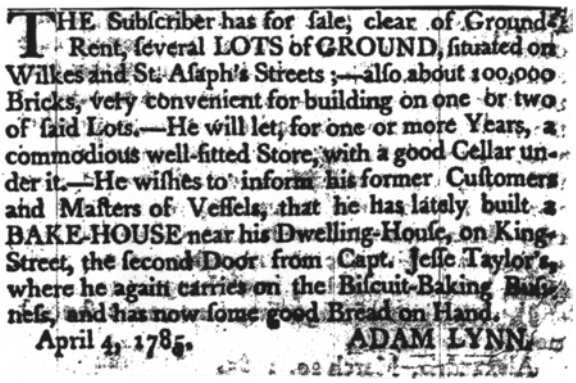

THE Subſcriber has for ſale, clear of Ground-Rent, ſeveral LOTS of GROUND, ſituated on Wilkes and St. Aſaph's Streets;—alſo about 100,000 Bricks, very convenient for building on one or two of ſaid Lots.—He will let, for one or more Years, a commodious well-fitted Store, with a good Cellar under it.—He wiſhes to inform his former Cuſtomers and Maſters of Veſſels, that he has lately built a BAKE-HOUSE near his Dwelling-Houſe, on King-Street, the ſecond Door from Capt. Jeſſe Taylor's, where he again carries on the Biſcuit-Baking Buſineſs, and has now ſome good Bread on Hand.
April 4, 1785. ADAM LYNN.

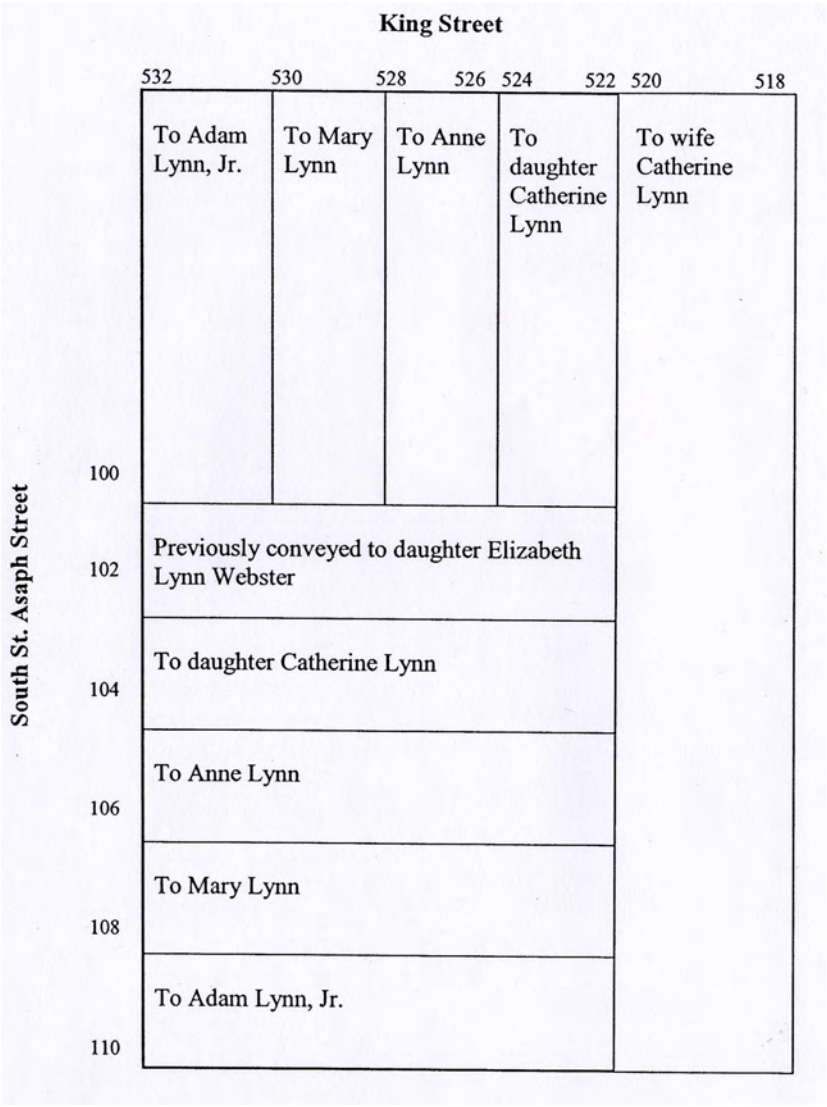
Figure 5 - Lynn Advertisement *Alexandria Gazette* April 14, 1785.

A few houses were appearing on the rest of the block during this period, including the frame house at 517 Prince Street (lot 20), which was probably the first house on the block and is now one of the oldest surviving frame house in Alexandria (Figure 6). The first owner of this dwelling was Patrick Murray, a blacksmith. Most of the King Street frontages were also developed by the end of the eighteenth century, although the southeast quadrant, owned by George Washington, remained mostly vacant.

Figure 6 - 517 Prince Street, 2006 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

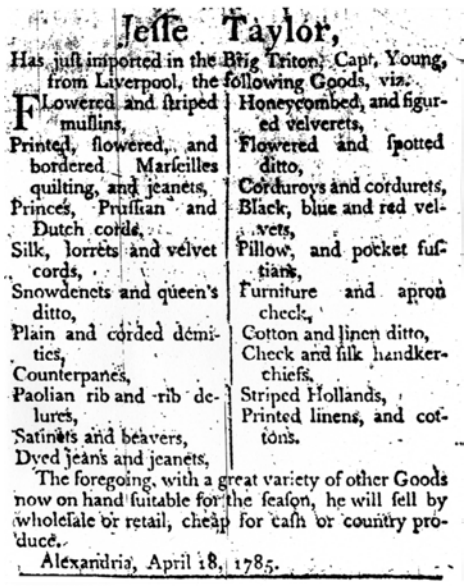
At the end of the eighteenth century, the 500 Block had been largely subdivided and improved. The King Street frontage was nearly fully developed, and a number of dwellings were occupied on South St. Asaph and Prince streets, along with one on South Pitt. The commercial character of the shops and residents of the block, moreover, was well established. Groceries and dry goods shops were on King Street. The occupants of the other houses on the block were usually craftsman and artisans, including blacksmiths, a watchmaker, and a millstone maker.

FIGURE 7 - The Will of Adam Lynn, Sr., 1785



The owners or renters of all the dwellings on the 500 Block were white, but several owned African American slaves, who lived on the property with their owners or employers. A 1799 City Census reveals that of the thirteen households on the block in that year, eight included blacks. The total ascertainable population was 102, of whom 75 were white, the other quarter were black. As elsewhere in 18th century Alexandria, merchants enslaved the largest number of blacks: Jesse Taylor - 8; J. T. Rickets - 6; William Newton - 6. Only one craftsman, William Halley, millstone maker, owned more than one black.

What kind of people were these first inhabitants of the 500 Block? The 1799 Census identifies thirteen heads of families living on the block (Figure 9). Of these, several were prominent Alexandria merchants. Jesse Taylor, who lived with his family at 500-06 King Street on the corner of Pitt Street, was a dry-goods merchant, who was born in the British Isles and had arrived in Alexandria by the 1780s. He enjoyed respect in his adopted town, was elected to the Common Council in 1787, and served as alderman in 1791. He advertised expensive consumer goods– silver, mahogany furniture, etc.–for sale in the local newspaper and speculated in real estate throughout the immediate vicinity (Figure 8). Although his financial affairs apparently became tangled and were in considerable disarray by the time he died in 1799, he was clearly a man of substance in late eighteenth-century Alexandria. (Powell 1928: 312).[11]



Jesse Taylor,

Has just imported in the Brig Triton, Capt. Young, from Liverpool, the following Goods, viz.

Flowered and striped muslins,
Printed, flowered, and bordered Marseilles quilting, and jeanets,
Princes, Prussian and Dutch cords,
Silk, lorrets and velvet cords,
Snowdenets and queen's ditto,
Plain and corded demities,
Counterpanes,
Paolian rib and rib delures,
Satinets and beavers,
Dyed jeans and jeanets,
Honeycombed, and figured velverets,
Flowered and spotted ditto,
Corduroys and cordurets,
Black, blue and red velvets,
Pillow, and pocket fustians,
Furniture and apron check,
Cotton and linen ditto,
Check and silk handkerchiefs,
Striped Hollands,
Printed linens, and cottons.

The foregoing, with a great variety of other Goods now on hand suitable for the season, he will sell by wholesale or retail, cheap for cash or country produce.

Alexandria, April 18, 1785.

Figure 8- *The Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, April 21, 1785

Several of his neighbors on the block were similarly prominent. Living on the next lot west of Taylor at 508-512 King Street was William Halley, a millstone maker. Although not as prosperous as Taylor, he nonetheless held public office as Street Commissioner in 1800, and was able to manumit six slaves between 1797 and 1800. When he died in 1808,

his estate included silver utensils and jewelry (Alexandria Census 1791; *Alexandria Gazette*, Feb. 20, 1800; Deed Book I: 184-88 and C: 153).

Adam Lynn, Jr., the son of the Adam Lynn who had purchased the northwest quadrant of the block in the 1770s, lived with his mother at 518-20 King Street. His fortunes rose significantly after the turn of the century. At the time of the 1799 Census, he was a jeweler and had begun what would become an active career in real estate speculation.[12]

One can safely say that the people owning property on the 500 Block at the close of the eighteenth century were not laborers or those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. It is clear that at least some of the residents were at or near the core of the town's commercial and political life.

The years that saw this initial development of the 500 Block were years of economic growth and promise for the city itself–promise reflected in the speed with which the block was subdivided and improved. After the Revolution, Alexandria merchants held high hopes for their economic future. These hopes revolved around the town's potential as a trade center for the land to the west, provided that internal improvements would make the connection between Alexandria and the West efficient and reliable. In 1785, the Potomac Company was organized to build a canal around the falls of the Potomac River. In the same year, the first turnpike toll gates in Virginia were set up to pay for keeping the roads leading west from Alexandria open and passable (Sharrer 1977: 16). From 1790 to 1800 the population of Alexandria nearly doubled, growing from 2,758 to 4,971. In the same decade, the number of households on the 500 Block increased from three to thirteen.

The next twenty years would see continuing growth for both the town and the 500 Block. During this period, the economy of Alexandria centered on the flour trade with the West Indies and South America. Waterfalls near Alexandria helped to stimulate a trade in flour and Alexandria maintained a position as a leading flour exporter (Sharrer 1977: 18-19). Throughout this period, Alexandria merchants continued to emphasize the

role of internal improvements in guaranteeing local prosperity. Despite the fact that Alexandria was legally part of the District of Columbia, the town was economically tied to the surrounding Virginia counties and the Shenandoah Valley. If the town were to fulfill the dreams of its merchants, its future depended on continuing trade with Western Virginia.

FIGURE 9 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1799

Address	Head of Household	Occupation	Own or Rent	White Occupants	Black Occupants	Comments
532 King	Vacant					Lot improved but unoccupied
528-530 King	Vacant					
526 King	Vacant					Lot improved but unoccupied
522-524 King	Josiah Coryton	Watchmaker	O	4	1	Husband of Catherine Lynn.
518-520 King	Adam Lynn Jr.	Jeweler	O	4	1	Lynn lived with his mother, widow of Adam Lynn Sr.
514-516 King	William Billington	Grocer	R	3	1	Rented from William Halley.
508-512 King	William Halley	Millstone maker	O	3	4	
500-506 King	Jesse Taylor	Merchant	O	6	8	
109 S.Pitt	William Frazer	Blacksmith	O	10	0	
111-113 S.Pitt	Vacant					
117 S.Pitt	Vacant					
119 S.Pitt	Vacant					
121 S.Pitt	Vacant					
501 Prince	Vacant					
505 Prince	Hugh Barr	Grocer	O	5	0	
507 Prince	Ezra Lunt	Merchant	O	6	1	
509 Prince	Vacant					
511 Prince	Robert Gordon	Grocer	O	1	0	
513-515 Prince	J.T. Ricketts	Merchant	O	8	6	
513-515 Prince	Vacant					
116 S. St. Asaph	Vacant					
112-114 S. St. Asaph	John Woodrow	Carpenter	O	7	0	
106 S. St. Asaph	Vacant					
104 S. St. Asaph	Vacant					
102 S. St. Asaph	Vacant					

1801 - 1821: The Rise and Fall of Adam Lynn

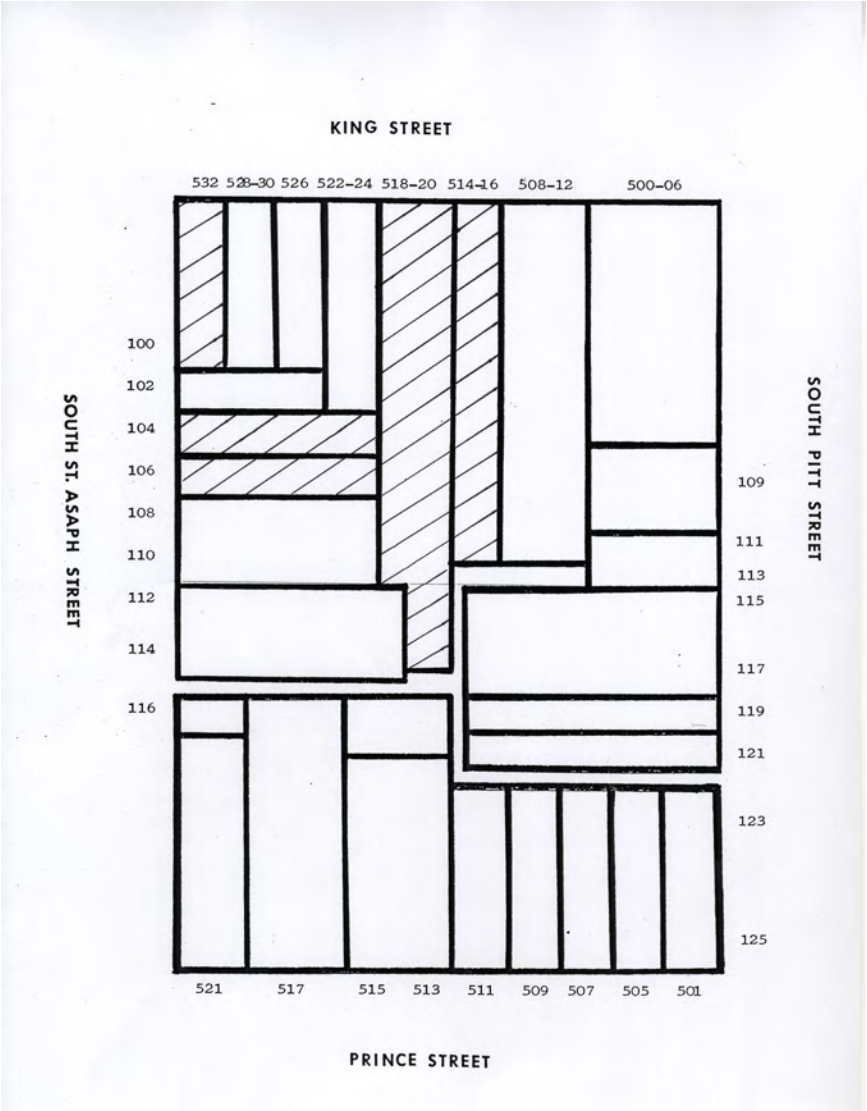
During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Alexandria was the third largest exporter of flour in the United States, ranking behind only Baltimore and Philadelphia; trade in other commodities flourished as well. The tolls collected on the Little River Turnpike, Alexandria's newly established link with the land to the west, reflected the commercial activity of the city. The first stretch of this road opened in 1806, and tolls increased annually; in 1812, the first year the road was open all the way to Aldie, tolls provided revenues of $11,361. Tolls continued to increase until 1818, when a total of $30,719 was collected. Thereafter, toll revenue began to decline as Alexandria entered a period of economic eclipse. While economic factors were positive, the population of the city rose. In 1800, the population was 4,971, and by 1820, it was 8,218, with most of the growth occurring during the first decade of the century (Sharrer 1977: 19-22; Terrie 1980: 10). The general pattern established on the 500 Block in the 1790s persisted as shops with living quarters above them lined the King Street frontage and residences lined St. Asaph Street; vacant lots alternated with residences on Prince and Pitt streets. Some of these dwellings and shops were occupied by a series of short-term renters, while others were occupied by the same families for many years.

518-520 King Street - Adam Lynn

The key figure in the history of the 500 Block during this period is Adam Lynn, Jr. (Figure 10). He inherited two lots in the northwest quadrant and bought several others. In 1795, he began a career as a gold- and silversmith. His first partner was his brother-in-law, Josiah Coryton, but he soon went into business on his own. By the turn of the century, he had expanded his business to include the sale of hardware and imported crystal and silverplate. At about the same time, he began speculating in real estate (Figure 11). In addition to purchases on the 500 Block, he bought two lots in Washington D.C., near the site of the new Capitol, as well as extensive holdings in rural Virginia.

FIGURE 10 - Portrait of Adam Lynn Jr. in 1805 (ref pending)

FIGURE 11 - The 500 Block Holdings of Adam Lynn, Jr., 1815



The headquarters for all of Lynn's activity was the 500 Block; Lynn apparently lived on the block all of his adult life, even after personal financial reverses forced a change from owning to renting. In 1801, he bought the house at 518-20 King Street from his father's estate and began living there with his mother, who died in 1808. In 1811, the frame house was razed and construction began on an elegant brick, three-story house (Figure 12). In 1813, Lynn moved into the new home, which was assessed at twice the value of the building it replaced (Historic American Building Survey (HABS), No. VA - 687).[13]

Figure 12 - Adam Lynn Jr.'s House, left (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

The new house was in the Federal-style, popular throughout Alexandria in this period. Like many buildings on King Street, this one had a ground floor devoted to commerce and second and third floors for residential use. The house was four-bays wide, with fine exterior detailing in the doorway and windows. From 1816 to 1818, Lynn appears to have lived in his building at 532 King Street while this house was unoccupied. But in 1818, he was definitely back at 518-20 King Street and he lived there until his death in 1836.

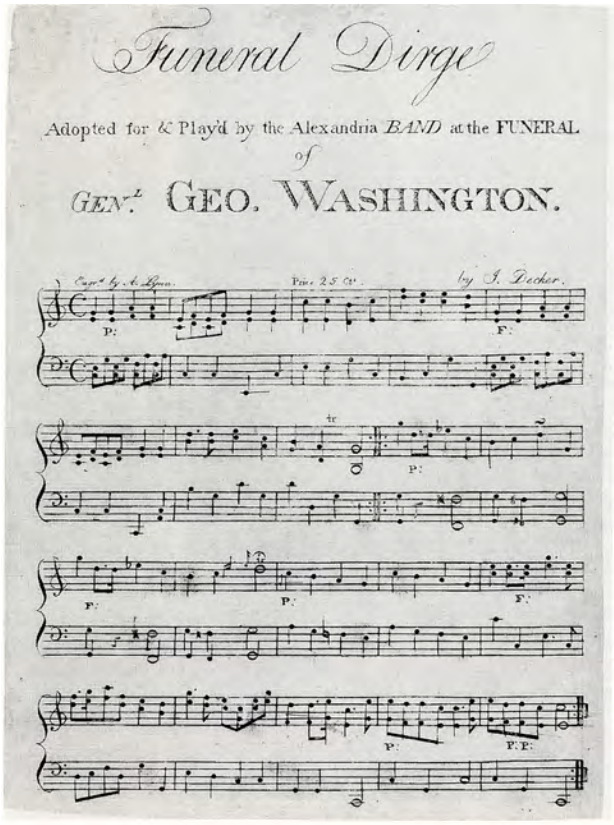


Figure 13 - Sheet of music engraved by Adam Lynn, 1799 (Ref pending)

It shows the title on a ribbon with rococo foliage, Alexandria in shaded letters with flourishes, and "Lyn sculpt" in script under the ribbon. Adam Lynn continued a variety of silver smithing and engraving interests, with an ever-changing list of partners until April 1819 (Hollan 1995: 76-77)

An example of Lynn's non silver engraving is the broadside sheet of music played by the Alexandria City Band as the Funeral March for the town's ceremony honoring George Washington at his death (Figure 13). It was probably printed from a copper plate that Lynn would have engraved. This appears to have been a souvenir and was sold for twenty-five cents per sheet about the same time Lynn engraved the bill head for the City Tavern Hotel run by John Gadsby (Figure 10).

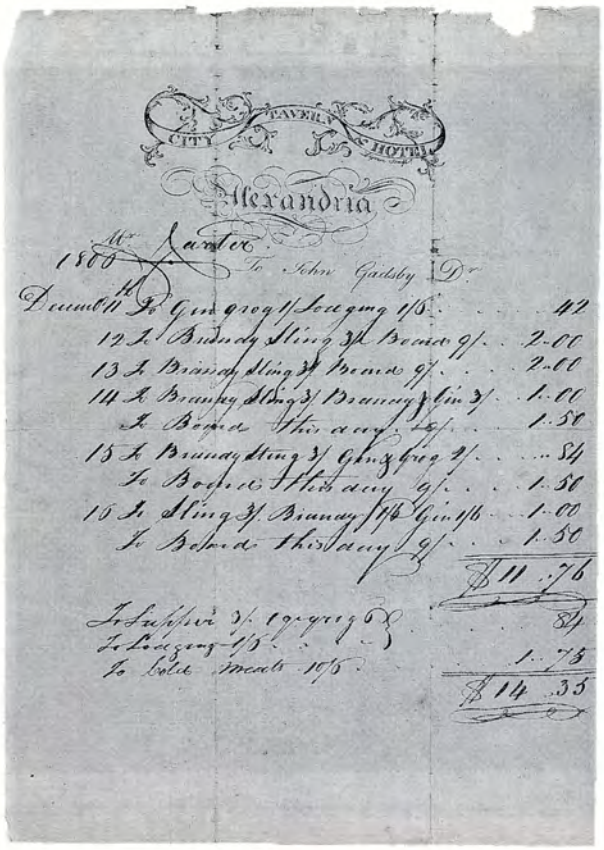


Figure 14 - City Tavern Bill with header engraved by Adam Lynn (Courtesy of the Lyceum, Collection of May and Howard Joynt)

In1810, Lynn advertised in the *Alexandria Daily Gazette* a "new hardware store" under the name Adam Lynn & Company, offering imported "ironmongery, cutlery, saddlery, japanned and brass ware" (Figure 15). Five years later, he was advertising a great variety of articles ranging from hardware to looking glasses, jewelry being the commodity most closely related to silver.

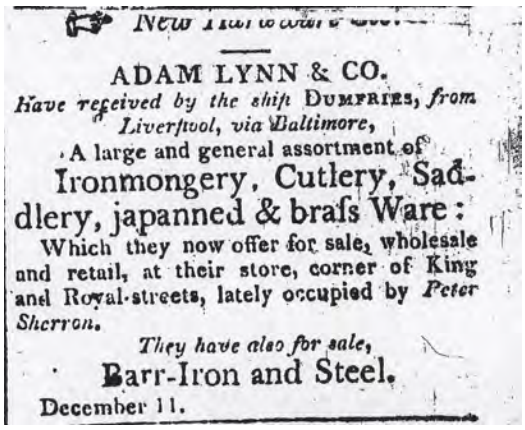

ADAM LYNN & CO.
Have received by the ship DUMFRIES, *from Liverpool, via Baltimore,*
A large and general assortment of
Ironmongery, Cutlery, Saddlery, japanned & brass Ware:
Which they now offer for sale, wholesale and retail, at their store, corner of King and Royal-streets, lately occupied by *Peter Sherron.*
They have also for sale,
Barr-Iron and Steel.
December 11.

Figure 15 - *Alexandria Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1810

In the meantime, Lynn became active in local politics. He served on the Town Council and often was an elections commissioner. Lynn was a member of the First Vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and was an officer of the prestigious Local Lodge of Masons. By 1819, he was clearly a prosperous and prominent member of the inner circle of Alexandria society. But the real-estate speculations of Adam Lynn–and of many other Americans during this period–were leading toward financial disaster. From the end of the War of 1812 to 1819, land speculation was rampant in the United States. The result was a depression, brought on in part because too many land purchases were financed on credit by state banks and federal credit. Investors like Lynn became overextended. When Alexandria, along with the rest of the country, entered economic hard times during the Panic of 1819, banks were forced to call in their debts. Adam Lynn was apparently unable to raise the funds he needed and began selling his property, much of it within his family. These transactions took several years, but by 1822, Adam Lynn did not own a square foot on the 500 Block. He continued to enjoy prestige in the community and held public office until his death in 1836. But, as of 1822, he was finished financially.[14]

108-110 South St Asaph Street - Mordecai Miller

While Lynn's fortune was declining, another 500 Block resident's fortune was rising. Mordecai Miller bought the north half lot of 108-110 South St. Asaph Street in 1801 and the south half in 1805; the enlarged lot would remain in Miller's family until shortly

before the Civil War. Since the tax assessment on Miller's lot jumped sharply in 1805, it is likely that he built a house in that year. Miller lived there until 1818, when he built a new house on Washington Street.

Mordecai Miller was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, of a Quaker family (Figure 16). He was in Alexandria by 1791 and was pursuing trade as a silversmith. In 1792, he married Rebecca Hartshorne, the daughter of a prominent Quaker Alexandria merchant, and joined the mercantile and shipping firm of his father-in-law. This marriage, coupled with his own innate talents, set him on the road to prosperity. Until his death in 1832, he was active in Alexandria business life, in the local Society of Friends, and as a founding member of the Alexandria Library. In the meantime, he became one of the richest men in town (McCloud 1980).

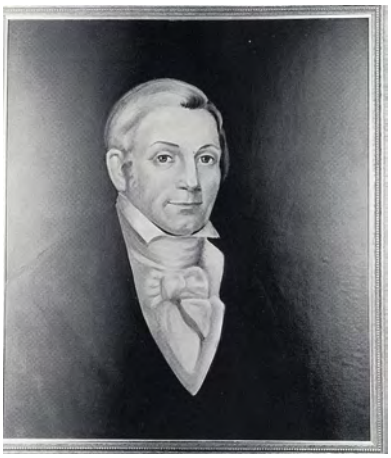


Figure 16 - Photo of a portrait of Mordecai Miller, about age 50 (Ref pending)

Summary, 1801-1821

During the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, the 500 Block was occupied by many different businesses and families, some owning and some renting. The socioeconomic classes ranged from the elites, such as Adam Lynn and Mordecai Miller, to the working class of Richard Jenkins, the laborer who lived at 102 South St. Asaph Street in 1810 and 1811. Racially, the block continued to be predominantly white, with a handful of blacks living on properties with their employers or owners. Of the sixteen households identifiable in the 1810 City Census, all but four included blacks. Likewise, of the twelve households identifiable in the 1820 Federal Census [only the families on the north half of the block appear; the schedules for the fourth ward, which included the south half, apparently were lost], all but one included blacks.

The tax records for these years give us the names of more families living on the block (but not any information on the total number of people, nor of their ethnic group). In 1810, according to the tax records, nineteen families or businesses occupied buildings on the 500 Block. Of these, only four owned the structure they lived or worked in. In 1820, the tax records identify eighteen households or businesses on the block, of whom five were owners, the rest renters. This ratio of owners to renters is in striking contrast to the situation in 1799, when owners constituted twelve out of thirteen households. One explanation for this difference is that during these two decades Alexandria experienced both a growing population and an active boom in real-estate speculation. Adam Lynn, for example, in 1810 owned five different lots and their improvements on the 500 Block. At the same time that the population of Alexandria was increasing, ownership of much residential property was being concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of prosperous merchants, who were then able to rent out their property with little difficulty. While a survey of the owner-vs-renter patterns for the whole city has not been made, the situation on the 500 Block suggests that increasing numbers of families were living in rented homes and that wealthy white merchants, like Adam Lynn, were acquiring extensive real-estate holdings.

Economically, the residents of the 500 Block during these twenty years included some of the wealthiest men in town. Most of the other residents were middle class. The tax records were studied for the years 1801 and 1810, and they show that the people living and working on the 500 Block were mostly prosperous and that some of them were unarguably rich–at least in comparison with their fellow Alexandrians.

In 1801, two 500 Block taxpayers paid more taxes than 90% of the taxpayers in Alexandria: William Halley, the millstone maker who lived at 508-12 King Street, and the estate of Jesse Taylor, whose granddaughter-in-law remained at 500-06 King Street (Figure 17). Adam Lynn, who was just beginning his economic rise, paid more taxes than 70% of his fellow citizens. Other relatively prosperous residents of the 500 block included William Newton, whose taxes put him in the second decile of taxpayers, and

Edward Martin, who was in the third decile with Adam Lynn. None of the 500 Block residents whose taxes can be determined was in a decile lower than the fifth. In other words, the resident of the block who paid the least taxes nonetheless paid more taxes than did half the population of Alexandria (Figure 17).

FIGURE 17 - Tax Deciles, 1801

Address	Name	Tax decile
522-524 King Street	Josiah Coryton	5
518-520 King Street	Adam Lynn, Jr.	3
508-512 King Street	William Halley	1
500-506 King Street	Jesse Taylor's Estate	1
109 S. Pitt Street	William Frazer	4
505 Prince Street	Hugh Barr	5
511 Prince Street	Robert Gordon	5
517 Prince Street	William Newton	2
112-114 S. St. Asaph	John Woodrow	5
109-110 S. St. Asaph	Edward Martin	3

Roughly the same situation continued in 1810. Adam Lynn's taxes by this time put him in the first decile of wealth, where he was joined by Mordecai Miller. Several neighbors were prosperous, if not in the same elevated circumstances as Lynn and Miller. Mathias Snyder, who lived at 511 Prince Street, was in the second decile; Hugh Barr at 505 Prince Street was in the third (Figure 18). This ratio of the wealthy to the merely comfortable persisted throughout the nineteenth century. In every year for which the tax records were examined, at least two or three of the highest-taxed citizens of Alexandria lived on the 500 Block, and the remaining households were generally in

the mid-range. As the 500 Block entered the third decade of the nineteenth century, it remained a block of mostly white, relatively prosperous retailers and artisans. Among its residents, the block counted some of the wealthier, more influential citizens of Alexandria, while the majority of its inhabitants were middle class.

One of the block's most prominent occupants, Adam Lynn, suffered severe financial reverses between 1819 and 1822. Lynn's problems, moreover, were paradigmatic of economic woes faced by the city as a whole. The sources of Alexandria's economic travail were both local and national. Locally, Alexandria lost much of its trade with western Virginia to Richmond and Baltimore (Sharrer 1977: 23). At the same time, the entire nation was going through the Panic of 1819 and the subsequent depression. While this economic crisis was only briefly felt in most eastern cities, it was lengthy in Alexandria, which depended on western markets for its commercial health and suffered further because most of Northern Virginia was entering a period of minimal agricultural productivity; this era of diminished crop yield lasted until nearly 1850. Thus, while most eastern port cities prospered between 1820 and 1830, Alexandria languished (Hacker 1971: 98-99; Dangerfield 1965: 72-96; Faulkner 1960: 225-26). One index of the extent to which Alexandria was suffering economically was the sale in 1820 of a wharf with storehouse, valued at $17,000 for only $1,250 (Sharrer 1977: 23). In Alexandria, at least, Adam Lynn was not alone as he surveyed the rubble of his financial collapse. _____

FIGURE 18 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1810

Address	Head of Household	Occupation	Own or Rent	White Occpts.	Black Occpts.	Tax Decile	Comments
532 King	Vacant						
528-530 King	Nathaniel McAllister	Shopkeeper	R	2	1		
526 King	James Ward		R				
522-524 King	John Nelson	Seaman	R	4	1		
518-520 King	Adam Lynn	Merchant	O	4	1	1	
514-516 King	James Hamilton	Merchant	R	3	1		
508-512 King	Frederick Koones	Baker		3	4		
500-506 King	Thos Patten	Merchant	R	8	3		
109 S. Pitt	Robert I. Taylor	Lawyer	R	1	0	1	
111-113 S. Pitt	Stable Lot						
117-121 S. Pitt	George Gordon	Wheelwright	R	6	1		
510 Prince	Vacant						
505 Prince	Hugh Barr	Shopkeeper	O	2	1	3	
507 Prince	Philip Cohn	House Joiner	R	9	4		
509 Prince	Vacant						
511 Prince	Matthew Snyder	Tinman	O	7	1	2	
513-515 Prince	David Smedley	Merchant	R	8	1		
517 Prince	Chas. Chapman	Clerk	R	3	2		
521 Prince	Vacant						
116 S. St. Asaph	Vacant						
112-114 S. St. Asaph	Edward Martin	Blacksmith	R	3	0		
108-110 S. St. Asaph	Mordecai Miller	Merchant	O	12	3	1	
106 S. St. Asaph	Vacant						
104 S. St. Asaph	Ann Buckland		R	6	0	5	
102 S. St. Asaph	Richard Jenkins	Laborer	R	4	0		

1821-1846: Hard Times

Three main themes dominated the efforts of Alexandrians to cope with the economic troubles that beset them beginning in 1819. The first involved internal improvements and continuous attempts to open better transportation arteries to markets and producers in the West. The second was agitation to have Alexandria retroceded from the District of Columbia back to Virginia. And the third theme was the slow introduction of various forms of industry to the city's economic picture. By 1843, the opening of the Alexandria Canal with its connection to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal seemed to provide the solution to the transportation problem. In 1847, Alexandria became part of the Commonwealth of Virginia once more. Throughout these years, industries gradually began to make their contribution to the economic conditions of the city (Moore 1978: 126-135; Rice 1948; Sharrer 1977: 27-30). Residents of the 500 Block figured in all of these activities.

This period of two and a half decades was one of general economic stagnation for Alexandria, and the newspaper was full of complaints about the horrible burden of being a political chattel to the District of Columbia. One correspondent to the *Alexandria Gazette* compared the rule of the United States Congress over Alexandria to "the tyranny of the British ministers of 1774" and called for the same spirit among Alexandrians that had led to American independence. He condemned Congress for "trampl[ing] on the rights and liberties of the people" of Alexandria and hoped that "our good old mother Virginia, who in an evil day bound us out to a task-master to learn to be slaves, will open her arms and receive us back into her bosom" (*Alexandria Gazette* August 15, 1840). The source of this wrath was the correspondent's belief that the decline of Alexandria's trade was attributable to the unsound economic policies of the Congressional District Committees. But despite this ostensible obstacle to progress, some Alexandrians prospered in this period. The city remained a locus of commerce, although it lagged behind its competitors to the north and south and industry never developed to the

extent that it did in New England. Some members of the Alexandria commercial establishment, including residents of the 500 Block, maintained or even improved their positions in the local economic hierarchy.

On the 500 Block, many of the individual lots remained in the hands of their original owners, their descendants or devisees. The Adam Lynn family continued to dominate ownership on the northwest quadrant. The estate of William Halley owned a lot on the northeast quadrant until 1832. George Washington's heirs still owned property on the southeast quadrant in 1837. But the users of these lots and their improvements were various renters and eventual purchasers, representing the same general stratum of shopkeepers, artisans, and merchants who had occupied the block since the late eighteenth century. Several people who appeared on the block at the beginning of this period lived or worked there for many years.

522-524 King Street - Lewis McKenzie

Some residents were wealthy, many were middle class, and a few, the first identifiable blacks on the block, were at the bottom of Alexandria's socioeconomic ladder. One of the most interesting residents was Lewis McKenzie (Figure 19), who from 1835 to 1843 occupied the second and third floors of the combination shop-dwelling at 522-24 King Street. Although the years of McKenzie's greatest activity in town affairs came after he moved off the block, he was nonetheless one of the most controversial and prominent men to live there. He served as the mayor of Alexandria during the Civil War and was a staunch supporter of the Union cause. During the war, he also served a term in the United States House of Representatives. A remark in his will emphasized his loyalty to the Union and suggested the calumny he must have endured from his fellow citizens who sympathized with the Confederacy. Among his possessions was a gold-tipped cane presented to him

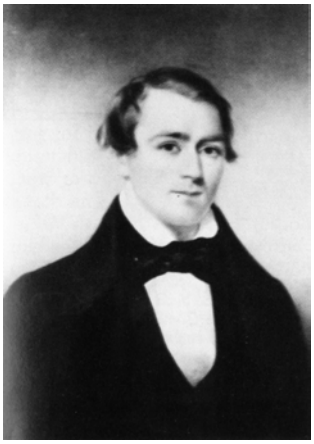


Figure 19 - Portrait of Lewis McKenzie (Alexandria Library, Ames W. Williams Collection)

"during the war of the Rebellion by the 8th Illinois Cavalry Regiment." The cane was left to his nephew "with the hope that it will always remain in the hands loyal to the government of the United States" (Alexandria Will Book 2: 120). Sentiments like these were not popular in most Alexandria circles during the war, nor were they for many decades thereafter. McKenzie was also involved in projects vital to the economic future of Alexandria. In addition to his profession as commission merchant, he was president of the Alexandria and Harpers Ferry Railroad and the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad; was on the Board of Directors of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank and the Potomac Insurance Company; and was vice president of the Alexandria Board of Trade. He was also a member and elder of the Presbyterian Meeting House and a Trustee of the Female Orphan Asylum. He was buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery on Wilkes Street (Goldfield 1977: 56-57).[15]

518-520 King Street - Adam Lynn

Even though Adam Lynn had been forced to sell 518-20 King Street including the house, he continued to live there until he died in 1836. Nor was he living in abject poverty. He was involved in business as the local representative of a New York retail cleaning and dying service, and his assessments for the city furniture tax suggest that his material possessions were as fine as those of any Alexandrian (Munson 1979).[16] He also continued to hold public office, being a justice of the peace for several years in the 1820s.

Two incidents from the last years of Adam Lynn suggest that he may have been difficult to get along with after his financial collapse, although one also shows that he never lost the allegiance of the upper class in Alexandria. The first of these was a comic-opera duel, fought with pistols near Oxon Hill, Maryland, in 1825. Lynn's antagonist was a Captain McGuire, and the cause of their enmity has not survived. In the duel no one was hurt, and the bullets fired came closer to the observers than to either of the principals (HABS VA - 676).

The second event involved Lynn's administration of his duties as justice of the peace. In 1828, three Alexandrians filed a petition with the United States Senate asking that Adam Lynn be removed from this office. He was charged with examining witnesses in a criminal prosecution in the absence of both the accused and his counsel, of instructing a town constable to lie in his report about a certain case, and refusing to accept bail even though the accused man before him was able to furnish bail and the offence was "bailable" (Petitions and Memorials to the Senate Committee, Sen. 20A-G4-4-5.1). In subsequent papers and letters, Lynn was defended by nearly every important businessman and politician in Alexandria. Each charge was dismissed as malicious and unfounded. Among those rising to Lynn's defense were several of his current or former neighbors on the 500 Block, including Mordecai Miller. When Adam Lynn himself wrote to answer the charges, he suggested that one source of the difficulty was the low social station of the accusers, maintaining that their lack of "respectability and standing in society" was such that the allegations ought to be dismissed summarily. Whatever else this episode reveals, it is clear that Adam Lynn enjoyed the friendship and respect of the men who controlled Alexandria's political and economic life and that when he was attacked by people outside this circle, the members of the local elite closed ranks behind him.

Craftsmen on the Block

Other 500 Block occupants included a grocer, a saddler, a vendor of hardware and cutlery, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, a house painter, a huckster, a tobacconist, a tugboat captain, and several merchants, laborers, and slaves. Two features of life and work on the block deserve special mention. The first was the appearance of the block's contributions to the nascent industrialization of the city. In 1827, a blacksmith was operating a smithy with stable and shed on one of the lots still owned by the estate of George Washington on the southeast quadrant. By 1840, this business was owned by John Summers, who soon turned to the manufacture of carriages and eventually railroad

cars. His sons were still engaged in this business at the end of the nineteenth century. The Summers Carriage Factory was the only local manufacturing enterprise located on the 500 Block.

African Americans on the Block

The other noteworthy event in this period was the appearance of the first black residents whose names can be established. Beginning in the 1830s, a number of identifiable blacks were living on Prince and South St. Asaph street frontages. The tax assessors usually spelled their names with casual indifference to consistency, but it is often clear that the same people were being referred to in the tax rolls. It is particularly interesting to note that in Alexandria, a city where slavery still existed and where we can assume that racial fears and prejudice were powerful factors in the town's social and political life, blacks and whites lived side by side. For example, next to 507 Prince Street, which was inhabited by blacks from 1836 until 1851, was the house bought in 1835 and occupied the next year by Isaac Buckingham, a prosperous tobacconist, who served several terms as mayor of Alexandria and as commissioner of elections. Neighborhoods in Alexandria were not segregated by social or economic class. To be sure there were legal restrictions on the freedom of both free blacks and slaves in the antebellum city, but blacks and whites, rich and poor often lived next door to one another (Powell 1928: 361; Wade 1964: 48-49, 64 and 75). Free black neighborhoods did start developing in the first years of the 19th century, as an increasing population sought places to establish homes (McCord 1985).

112-114 South St Asaph Street - African American Households

In 1839, a black woman, whose name was variously spelled McDella or McDelley (first name Maria) and her family, was living at 112-114 South St. Asaph Street and stayed there until 1846 (Figure 20). The low assessment of the lot and its improvements

Figure 20 - 112-114 S. St. Asaph St in middle background, ca. 1870. At the time of McDella's occupation the frame house had only one story (Alexandria Library, William F. Smith Collection).

suggests that this house, like those on Prince Street inhabited by blacks, were of considerably lower quality than the houses on the block occupied by whites.

By 1846, there were three black families on the 500 Block living on lots not also occupied by whites. The 1840 Federal Census provides interesting data about the characteristics of these families. The family of Maria McDella on 112-114 South St. Asaph Street included both free blacks and slaves; the free blacks included one boy under the age of ten, two females between ten and twenty-four, and two females between twenty-four and twenty-six. The slaves in the household were two boys and one girl under ten and one female between twenty-four and thirty-six. Given the form of the census schedules of that year, we cannot establish the relationships among these people, only that the oldest member of the household, who must have been Maria McDella herself as only her name appears on the tax rolls and the census schedule, was female and under thirty-seven years old. It was not unusual in antebellum Southern cities for related free blacks and slaves to occupy the same dwelling.

The other two black families who lived in the two houses at 505 and 507 Prince Street were free blacks. In both cases, the head of household as given in the Census was a female; and in both families, the total number of members was five, which was smaller

than the average size of white families on the block in that year–6.5 whites per household.

108-110 South St. Asaph Street - the Miller Family

Next to the house occupied by Maria McDella and her family was the house built by Mordecai Miller at 108-110 South St Asaph Street. In 1820, Miller moved to his new house and rented the 110 South St. Asaph Street house to Dr. Richard C. Mason, who was active in Alexandria's efforts to improve connections with the West. Dr. Mason eventually became chairman of a Committee of Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Stockholders, representing the stock held by the State of Virginia.[19] In 1821, William H. Miller, a son of Mordecai Miller, moved into this house and lived there with his family until 1832. William Miller, like the other members of his family, was a prominent merchant and was active in Alexandria's commercial life. The 1831 tax rolls identify him as a retail dealer in furniture. He also served as president of the Columbian Insurance Company and as a director of the Bank of Alexandria and was engaged in Alexandria's shipping affairs. The house in which Miller lived was not opulent, but if we may judge from the assessments of real property, his life inside the house was elegant as Miller, in 1830 through 1832, paid the highest furniture tax on the block.

While William H. Miller was living in his father's house, the property continued to belong to Mordecai Miller. In 1833, however, as part of the settlement of the estate of the senior Miller, the property passed to Robert H. Miller, another son, who immediately moved in with his family. The papers of that settlement described the house as being of frame construction and two stories. Robert H. Miller occupied the house until 1852.

Figure 21 - Portrait of Robert H. Miller (ref pending)

Robert H. Miller was an active and prosperous businessman (Figure 21). In addition to running a large store dealing in china and crockery at the corner of King and Fairfax streets, he

was a partner in his father's shipping concern and was president of the First National Bank of Alexandria. He was also at the center of efforts to improve the general economic situation for Alexandria: he served on the Board of Directors of the Alexandria Canal Company; was one of the incorporators of the Mount Vernon Cotton Manufacturing Company, one of Alexandria's largest antebellum industrial concerns; and was an officer of the Mount Vernon Hotel Company and the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad. While he was involved in financial activity, Miller was also assuming cultural and charitable responsibilities, lecturing often at the Alexandria Lyceum and serving as a trustee of the Female Orphan Asylum. His cultural interests became part of his reputation; one local historian notes that Miller "was fond of reading the best English prose and poetry." He read in the scientific literature of the day as well. He built a unique water purification system on his St. Asaph Street property. His interest in clean water eventually extended to the supply for the entire city; he was one of the founders of the Alexandria Water Company and was its president at the time of his death in 1874. It is not surprising that Miller's fellow Alexandrians trusted him with public office; he served on the Town Council for several terms, and in 1861 he was chosen to represent the city in the sensitive negotiations with the newly arrived Federal troops. All of this commercial and civic activity led to considerable wealth. Robert H. Miller, according to the tax records, was one of the richest men in Alexandria: his tax returns placed him in the wealthiest 1% of the taxpaying population of the city. (Alexandria Deed Book U-2: 450, 1834 Alexandria Directory; *Alexandria Gazette*, Apr. 19, 1845, and Sept. 8, 1858; Sharrer 1977: 29).

Summary, 1821 - 1846

From 1821 through 1846, the 500 Block continued to be a neighborhood of predominantly white, middle-class families. But living among the retailers and artisans were both wealthy, prosperous white merchants, such as Robert H. Miller, and members of the very lowest socioeconomic class – black slaves. Throughout the period, more lots

on the block were occupied by renters than by their owners. In 1825, of nineteen identifiable occupants of 500 Block lots, fourteen , or 74%, were renters. Over the next twenty years, the ratio changed slightly in the direction of more owners: in 1835, 72% of the occupants were renters, and in 1845, 61% were renting.

There was a substantial black population on the block throughout the period. In 1820 (for which the figures are only partial, the schedules for the southern half of the block apparently were lost), 27% of the population of the block was black; in 1830, it was 19%, and in 1840, 29%. After 1840, the number of blacks on the block sharply declined. Among the blacks, moreover, were families living in houses without whites – which was not the case, as far as we can tell, before the 1830s.[20]

Economically, the relative status of 500 Block residents remained about the same. Persons in the middle range of taxable wealth predominated, while a few of the block's residents were among the very wealthy. The richest man actually living on the block in 1830 was James Van Sant, the saddler who lived and worked with his family at 514-16 King Street. In that year he paid $35.56 in taxes, which was more than 90% of the taxpayers in Alexandria. He was the only resident in the first tax decile, but there were several in the second. Most of the other residents of the 500 Block fell in the fifth decile or above, with some exceptions. Adam Lynn paid only $5.00 in taxes in 1830, barely in the fifth decile.

By 1845, many Alexandrians believed that the city was emerging from the economic hard times which had troubled it for more than twenty-five years. When President Polk signed the order of retrocession in that year, Alexandria merchants hoped that their return to the Commonwealth of Virginia would mean better government relations and thus more money spent on public projects vital to the city's needs. Among the city's citizens who had been active in seeking this change of status were several residents of the 500 Block. Lewis McKenzie, William H. Miller, and Robert H. Miller were among the signers of a petition submitted to the City Council in 1841 reminding the Council of the

results of a plebiscite favoring return to Virginia. (Sharrer 1977: 29-30; Fraley: 4; *Alexandria Gazette*, Mar. 6, 1845).[21]

Residents of the 500 Block were also active in the two other major concerns of this period – internal improvements and industrialization. When the United States Congress passed legislation in 1830 appointing commissioners of the Alexandria Canal Company, William H. Miller was one of the original commissioners. Railroads also engaged the attention of 500 Block residents. In addition to involvement of Lewis McKenzie in railroad development, R. H. Miller was one of the first stockholders of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. And Miller, as has also been mentioned, was active in efforts toward industrializing the Alexandria economy. The Mount Vernon Cotton Manufacturing Company was small compared to New England mills, but it was seen as an important, modern addition to Alexandria's economic structure. The promise of industrialization would be pursued with increasing vigor in the next decade, as Alexandrians entertained high hopes for their entrance into the national economy (Sharrer 1977: 30-32; Caton 1933: 137 and 148).

FIGURE 22 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1830

Address	Head of Household	Occupa-tion	Own Rent	White Occpts	Black Occpts	Tax Decile	Comments
532 King	George White	Auctioneer	R			3	Commercial use only
528-530 King	George Grubb		R	8	0	6	
526 King	Vacant						
522-524 King	Isaac Cannell	Merchant	R	7	2	3	
518-520 King	*Second and Third Floors:* Adam Lynn, Jr.	Magistrate	R	3	1	5	Street level occupied by C. and I. Thompson, dry good merchants.
514-516 King	James Van Sant	Sadler	O	9	1	1	
508-512 King	William Morgan	Shoemaker	R	12	3	2	Esther Halley (widow), owner.
500-506 King	John Corse	Lottery Office	R	14	3	4	Street level occupied by Green and Hepburn, confectioner and grocer. Commercial use only.
109 S. Pitt	James McKenzie		R	7	1	7	
111-113 S. Pitt	Stable		R				
117 S. Pitt	William Smith	Blacksmith	?			2	Not a residence. Gap in titles, owner unknown.
119 S. Pitt	Vacant						
121 S. Pitt	Alexander Johnson	Painter	R			7	May have been at 501 Prince Street (below)
501 Prince	Vacant						
505 Prince	Richard Burke		R	2	4	7	
507 Prince	Ms. Stott		R	8	0		
509 Prince	Vacant						
511 Prince	Reuben Bowie	Painter	O	6	1	3	

513-515 Prince	James Cloud		O			2	
517 Prince	J.D. Brown	Merchant	O	7	2	2	
521 Prince	Joseph Ferrell	Schoolmaster	R			8	Used as school lot
116 S. St. Asaph	Joseph Ferrell	Schoolmaster	R			8	Used as school lot
112-114 S. St. Asaph	Jos Atwell	Tailor	R	5	0	8	
108-110 S. St. Asaph	William H. Miller	Merchant	R	6	3	3	Property owned by Mordecai Miller, W.H. Miller's father.
106 S. St. Asaph	George Wise, Jr.		R			6	
104 S. St. Asaph	Ann Buckland and Thomas Whittle	Grocer	O	6	2	2	
102 S. St. Asaph	Vacant						

1847 - 1876: High Hopes, Civil War, and Recovery

Between Alexandria's retrocession to Virginia and the onset of the Civil War (1847 - 1864), the town experienced a period of growth and prosperity. In the decade between the Federal Censuses of 1850 and 1860, the population grew from 8,734 to 12,652, the greatest increase of the nineteenth century. The city's nascent manufacturing sector was producing, among other things, boats, wagons, fertilizer, tinware, and locomotives. The emergence of industrialization, coupled with improved transportation arteries, seemed to be offering Alexandria unprecedented prosperity (Sharrer 1977: 27-32). A shopkeeper who moved to the city in 1853 recalled these high hopes in a letter to his daughter: "Certain Rail Roads terminating here had just been completed–property was high, and the general expectation was that these R. Rds. would bring great business to the town" (Letter to Mary Ogden, 1862, on file, Barrett Library). The arrival of Federal troops in 1861, however, ended the hopes of Alexandria's merchants. Although certain shopkeepers pursued thriving businesses during the war (including a number on the 500 Block), the city as a whole entered a period of economic stagnation. And, although Alexandria escaped the physical ravages that destroyed the economic base of the rest of the South, it did share in the hard times that followed the war. Its markets and suppliers of raw materials had always been in Virginia, and as long as Virginia's economy was moribund, Alexandria remained economically depressed. Recovery from this condition did not begin for about ten years after Appomattox (Faulkner 1960: 344-45; Hackett 1971: 178-79).

Men and women appeared on the 500 Block during this period who would still be there at the end of the century, including a substantial number of European immigrants who came to Alexandria around mid-century. In 1846 the block was predominantly the same middle-class, Anglo neighborhood of shops and shopkeepers which it had been since its first occupation. In 1876, this ethnic group was still the largest single constituent of the block's population, but on the northwest quadrant, a significant number of German-Jewish immigrants had taken up residence. The arrival of these new faces and

the increasing length of residency of many of the block's occupants are the two most important elements of the history of the block during the period from 1846 through 1900.

518-520 King Street - The Schwartz Family

Of the several German-Jewish families who lived and worked on the 500 Block in the second half of the nineteenth century, the most important was that of Henry and Isaac Schwartz, who began their tenure on the block in Adam Lynn's old house at 518-20 King Street. Before the end of the century, Isaac Schwartz, the younger of the two brothers, would reconsolidate much of the 500 Block property formerly owned by Adam Lynn. And the name Schwartz would be as important on the block as Lynn had once been.

Henry Schwartz was born in Bavaria about 1833. When he immigrated to Alexandria is not known, but he was definitely here by 1855, when he was selling dry-goods in partnership with Leopold Strauss, from a shop at 518-20 King Street until after the Civil War. He then moved to Philadelphia, where he also sold dry goods. He moved back to Alexandria in the 1870s, opening another dry-goods store; but he soon returned to Philadelphia and lived there until he died. While he lived in Alexandria, Henry Schwartz was an officer of the Hebrew Literary Society, sang in the local German choral group, and in 1859 was a founder of the Beth El Hebrew Congregation.

Isaac Schwartz lived with his brother, Henry, at 518-20 King Street by the time of the 1860 Federal Census (Figure 12). Isaac was younger than Henry by about one year and took over his brother's dry-goods business on King Street when Henry moved to Philadelphia. Henry served as a Confederate officer during the Civil War and fought at Bull Run. In 1866, Isaac Schwartz was listed as the chief occupant of that property in the city's tax records. He was still there in 1898 when he died, having bought the lot and its improvements from the estate of a member of Adam Lynn's family in 1884. Although Isaac Schwartz was young and starting out professionally in 1860, by 1870 when the Federal Census for that year measured the value of real and personal property, he owned a more valuable personal estate than did over 80% of the citizens of Alexandria. During

all the years in which he maintained his home and business on King Street, his house was occupied by many of his fellow immigrants. The census schedules and tax records indicate a steady procession of Germans who lived in Isaac Schwartz's house and worked in his business. Many of these went on to open businesses of their own (Baker 1978: 30-31, 40).[22]

522-524 King Street - Michael German

Figure 23 - The house at 522-524 King Street, 1967 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

Another recent immigrant who began to be active on the 500 Block during this period was Michael German, a German Protestant, who rented the building at 522-24 King Street from 1849 to 1853 (Figure 23). In 1854, he bought the building next door at 526 King Street and lived there with his family until the end of the century. A baker and confectioner, German was a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church and the Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. The story of Michael German provides an important index of the changing nature of the occupants of the 500 Block and of life in Alexandria itself. German was a solid, prosperous, and industrious member of the town's commercial class. The tax records indicate that he achieved considerable wealth, paying more in taxes than did more than 90% of his fellow Alexandrians. Yet, he was not active in the town's political life. Unlike his 500 Block counterparts of the first half of the nineteenth century who occupied a parallel niche in the city's economic structure, German was not among the group of men who controlled the political offices in town. He was not alone in this respect. We shall see that the block continued to be occupied by men who were among the wealthiest in Alexandria, but we see a diminished involvement of 500 Block residents in politics. The fact that many of these men were Jewish does not explain the decreasing number of town officeholders on the block. For other men in the immigrant Jewish community did

achieve high levels of political involvement. For example, Henry Strauss, a German Jew, served as the mayor of Alexandria, and other Jews sat on the Town Council. Thus, neither xenophobia nor anti-Semitism explains Michael German's and other 500 Block merchants absence from town politics after the Civil War. The explanation probably lies in the increasing population: as the town grew, it became less likely that any single man would achieve political prominence.

Summary, 1847 - 1876

The arrival and subsequent successes of Isaac Schwartz and Michael German were part of a pattern of growing stability on the block. A number of families and businesses appeared or continued on the block in this period and were still there at the end of the century. Among these was the shoe store at 508-12 King Street. Since 1822, this site had been used by makers and venders of shoes. In 1850, it was sold to Peyton Ballinger, who worked on the site until 1896, after which the lot continued to be used as a shoe store by Ballinger's partner, Philip Bradshaw. At the corner of South Pitt and Prince, John Summers continued the manufacture of coaches and carriages. Elsewhere on the block, several of the residences of Prince and South St. Asaph streets remained in the ownership of the same families for several decades.

The houses occupied by long-time residents were usually owned by their occupants, whereas the short-term occupants were generally renters. A comparison of the owner-renter ratio on each side of the block reflects this. In 1850, seven out of eight lots were occupied by renters on King Street; in 1875, the number of owners had increased to three out of seven with one lot vacant (Figures 24 and 25). On the South Pitt frontage, the only buildings were the stable and John Summers Coach Factory at 109 South Pitt Street, where there was little change in these years. But on Prince Street, where some long-term residents appeared in these years, the ratio of owners to renters remained heavily weighted on the owner side. In 1850, five out of six occupants were owners, and in 1875, all five identifiable residents were owners. Conversely, the South St. Asaph frontage

remained a locus of short-term renters: in 1850, four out of five occupants were renters, and in 1875, all six occupants of dwellings on that side of the block were renters. This general pattern persisted until the end of the century. These figures, moreover, indicate that even on this one city block there were clearly differentiated residential zones. While one row of houses might be occupied by long-term residents who owned their homes, right around the corner were houses occupied by short-term renters. The average assessment for a dwelling on the Prince Street frontage of the 500 Block in 1863 was $3,500; for South St Asaph, the average assessment was $1,560; home owners were more prosperous than renters and therefore likely to occupy more expensive dwellings.

There is, moreover, a correlation between prosperity and persistence. If we use the value of real and personal property provided in the 1870 Federal Census, we can compare the relative prosperity of the occupants of these respective zones. The average value of the personal and real property owned by residents on the Prince Street frontage in 1870 was $20,610; for South St. Asaph Street, the corresponding figure was only $406. This is a rather startling difference, and we must bear in mind the small number of households on each block and the proportionately large margin for error in such averages: a mistake on the part of the census taker in estimating the value of the possessions of one household would skew these averages badly. Nonetheless, these figures add further evidence to the suggestion that distinct zones of affluence were developing on the block.

On the King Street frontage, as well as on the Prince Street side of the block, lived relatively prosperous families. Of the five families who were definitely living on King Street in 1870, Michael German was in the first decile of wealth, another was on the line between the first and second, and three were in the second decile. In fact, the average wealth decile for the King Street families is exactly that of those on Prince Street – 1.6. It is interesting to note, moreover, that of the five King Street families, the head of household of three was born outside of the United States, whereas the Prince Street families were all headed by persons born in America. Of course, we do not know in what circumstances these immigrants arrived in the New World, and cannot insist that they

rose from rags to riches. But it is certainly clear that in 1870, they were economically comfortable. In the case of Michael German, who was living on the 500 Block in 1850, a year for which a survey of the tax records was taken, we can say that in the twenty years before 1870 he rose from the middle of the town's taxpayers to the ranks of the wealthiest men in town.

The subject of whether residents of the 500 Block were American or foreign-born is one that we can begin to discuss with certainty only with the 1850 Federal Census, when census schedules began to include information on place of birth of all persons enumerated. From that year until the end of the century, we can see an interesting pattern developing. We see a rising number of foreign-born through 1880 and then a decline as some of the original immigrants died and their homes passed to their American- born children. Throughout this fifty year period, despite the influx of foreign-born, most 500 Block residents were born in the United States. Indeed, in each of the Federal Census years, a majority of the people living on the 500 Block were born in Virginia (see Figures 22, 24, 25, 29).

In 1850, the heads of twelve households out of eighteen were born in Virginia. Two more were born in the District of Columbia and a border state, one in the rest of the United States, one in the United Kingdom, and two in the rest of Europe. In 1860, three heads of household were born outside the United States, in 1870 there were four, in 1880 the number was eight, and in 1900 the number declined to three. Throughout this period, the majority of the foreign born lived on the northwest quadrant of the block.

While the German-born Jews were making their contribution to the population of the 500 Block, another ethnic group was dramatically declining. In 1840, blacks constituted 29%, or 40 out of a total of 138, of the block's population. This was the last year in which blacks made up a significant fraction of the block's residents. In 1850, the number of identifiable blacks was only 14 out of 107, and in 1860, only 8 out of 98. By 1870, there were 4 blacks out of a total of 88. The apparent drop in black residences may be the result of the enumerating process, whereby slaves were counted on a separate schedule in 1850,

which, for Alexandria, has not survived. More likely, it can be explained by the retrocession of Alexandria from the District of Columbia to Virginia in 1846. As soon as Alexandria once more became part of the Commonwealth, many of its free blacks moved across the Potomac, fearing the repressive nature of Virginia's laws (Jackson 1942: 25). The decline in the overall population of the block, therefore, derives from the decline in the black population: the number of whites remained more or less the same.

These figures, of course, represent people actually living on the block, that is, people counted and named in the Census schedules, added to those indicated in the tax records, but omitted from the Census. The relative ratio of blacks to whites remained the same for the rest of the century as it existed in 1870: six blacks lived on the block in 1880, and four in 1900. Through 1840, then, the black-white ratio in the 500 Block population approximated that of the city. In terms of ethnic groups, at least, the block was a mirror of Alexandria. Beginning in 1850, however, the block was no longer racially representative of the city as a whole. It became a predominantly white enclave in a city that still had a significant black population. Although the block remained economically integrated, it became racially homogeneous (Wade 1964: 275-77).

FIGURE 24 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1850

Address	Head of Household	Occupation	Own/ Rent	White Occpts	Black Occpts	Tax Decile	Place of Birth	Comments
532 King	John McCormick	Grocer	R			1-2	VA	Store only
528-530 King	F. M. Weedon	Locksmith and bell hanger	R	7	0		VA	
526 King	Richard Nixon	Silversmith	R	7	0	6-8	PA	
522-524 King	Michael German	Confectioner and baker	R	8	0	5	Germany	
518-520 King	Aquilla Lockwood	Retired merchant	R	4	2	1	MD	
514-516 King	John Muir	Hardware	R	7	0	2	VA	
508-512 King	William Morgan	Shoemaker	O	3	0	2	Ireland	
500-506 King	William B. King (+ misc. shops)	Shoemaker	R	6	0		VA	
109 S. Pitt	John Pascoe		O			2		Apparently missed by census
111-113 S. Pitt	Stable rented by William Legg	Innkeeper	R					
117-121 S. Pitt	John Summers	Carriage maker	O			1-2	VA	Shops only. Summers lived nearby on Prince St.
501 Prince	Benjamin Hughes	Huckster	O	5	0	3	VA	
505 Prince	Robert Taylor	Laborer	O	5	0	4-5	VA	
507 Prince	Betsy Anderson	Slave	R			6-8		Tax records only
509-511 Prince	Isaac Buckingham	Tobacconist	O			1	IND	Mayor in 1849-1850. His wife was born in England.
513-515 Prince	John C. Graham	Tug boat captain	O	3	6	2	Prussia	Tax records indicate 2 slaves, census records indicate 4 free blacks.

517 Prince	Mary Brown	Widow of J.D. Brown	O	5	0	3	VA	
521 Prince	Vacant							
116 S. St. Asaph	Vacant							
112-114 S. St. Asaph	Harriet Williams	Slave	R	0	6	8-10		Combined from census and tax records.
108-110 S. St. Asaph	Robert H. Miller	Merchant	O	15	0	1	VA	
106 S. St. Asaph	George Duffey	Silversmith and watchmaker	R	5	0		VA	
104 S. St. Asaph	Samuel Lindsay	Insurance Agent	R	4	0	3	VA	Lindsay had retired by 1850.
102 S. St. Asaph	Ellen Barker	Son Wesley Barker, laborer	R	3	0	8-10	VA	

FIGURE 25 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1870

Address	Head of Household	Occupation	Own/ Rent	White Occpts	Black Occpts	Tax Decile	Birth Place	Comments
532 King	Fred. Recker	Grocer	R					Store only
528-530 King	?							
526 King	Michael German	Baker and Confectioner	O	7	0	1	Bavaria	Mother in law from Prussia, apparently also living here.
522-524 King	David Bendheim	Dry goods	R	6	1	2	Baaden	Emma Carty, black domestic servant, 50 y/o
518-520 King	Isaac Schwarz	Dry goods	R	7	0	2	Bavaria	Isadore Brown, age 22, also living here and born in Bavaria. White domestic servant, age 22, Matilda Ford.
514-516 King	J.H. Devaughn	Furniture	O	5	0	2	VA	White domestic servant.
508-512 King Store	Peyton Ballinger	Shoemaker	O					
508-512 King Res.	R.C. Acton	Jeweler	R	4	0	1-2	MD	Wife born in Scotland.
500-506 King	Jos Kaufman and misc. shops	Fancy store	R					
109 S. Pitt	Laura Tatsapaugh	Keeping house	R	4	0	3	VA	
111-113 S. Pitt	Vacant							
117-121 S. Pitt	John Summers	Coach factory	O				VA	Factory only
501 Prince North	Frank Cook	Huckster	R	7	0	4-5	VA	
501 Prince South	Benjamin Hugues	Huckster	O	7	0	2	VA	
505 Prince	Robert H. Wade. James F. Taylor	*Wade:* Night watchman, *Taylor:* liverystable	?	*Taylor:* 5	*Taylor :* 0	*Wade:* 2	*Wade:* MD Taylor: VA	Two families were apparently living here.

507 Prince	Susan Wheat	Widow	O	4	1	1		Matilda Dickson, black domestic servant, age 40.
509-511 Prince	Mary Buckingham	Widow	O	7	1	1	England	John Field, a tobacconist and her son-in-law was living with her. Eliz Harris, a black domestic servant, age 47, also living here.
513-515 Prince	J.C. Graham	Tug boat captain	O					
517 Prince	J.W. Hooff	Cashier	O	5	1	2	VA	Ann Ewell, black domestic servant, age 43.
521 Prince	Vacant							
116 S. St. Asaph	Vacant							
112-114 S. St. Asaph	M. Pohlman	Shoemaker	R	4	0	6-10	Germany	
108-110 S. St. Asaph	H.K. Bradshaw	Clerk		3	0	3-4	NY	
106 S. St. Asaph	James F. Walsh	Plumber	R	4	0	5	VA	
104 S. St. Asaph	Augustine Hudson	Clerk	R	5	0	3		
102 S. St. Asaph	John Keys	Tailor	R					

1877-1900: Stability

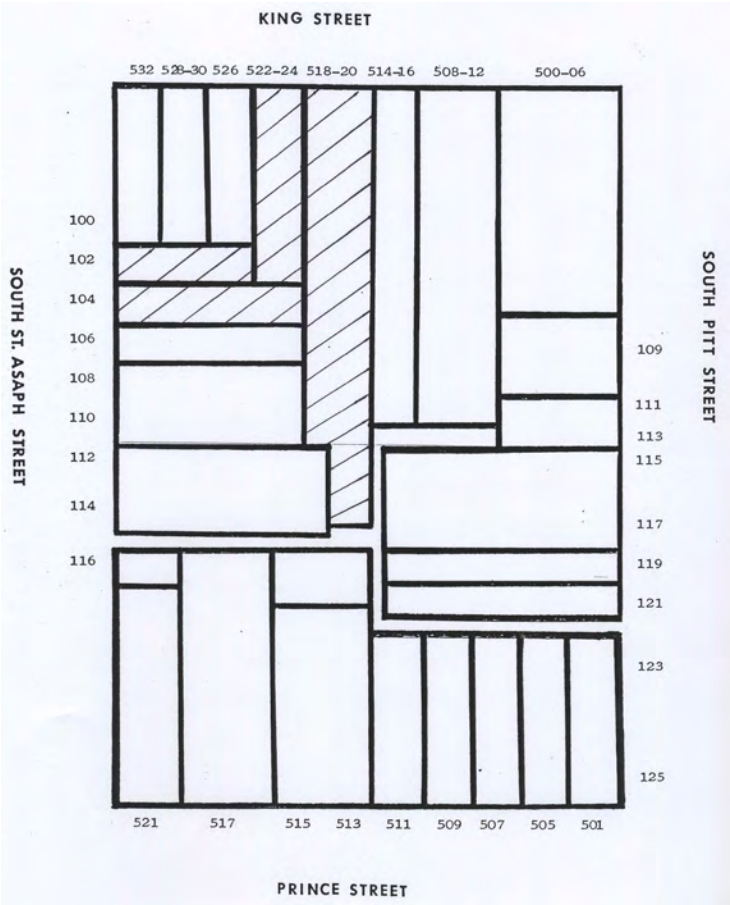
In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Alexandria experienced new industrial growth and an end to the decade-long economic stagnation that followed the Civil War. While the population remained relatively stable, increasing only about 1,000 between 1870 and 1900, the business situation generally improved (Sharrer 1977: 32-34). On the 500 Block, the circumstances of economic life were reflected by the low turnover of King Street businesses and the long-term occupancy and relative prosperity of many of the block's residents. Many of the families and businesses on the block in 1877 were still there in 1900. In the case of those lots that had different occupants in 1900 from those in 1877, we nonetheless see far less of the rapid turnover that characterized the previous years of the nineteenth century. However, the houses along South St. Asaph Street continued to have a fairly high turnover rate. On King Street, a remarkable number of the merchants and families who were occupying shops and residences in 1877 remained on the block through the end of the century.

518-520 King Street - Isaac Schwartz

Isaac Schwartz prospered in this period and quickly became active in local affairs. He embraced the Confederate cause, became a sergeant in the Mount Vernon Guards, and fought at the battle of Bull Run. Ads for the family dry-goods business at 518-20 King Street appeared under his name in the local newspapers as early as 1865, and he pursued that trade until the end of his life in 1898. During that time he joined the Masonic Lodge and other local clubs, was active as a member of B'nai B'rith and an officer of Beth El Hebrew Congregation. By 1888, the last year for which we have made a survey of the tax records, Schwartz was one of the richest men in Alexandria: his tax return for that year put him among the wealthiest 2% of the town's taxpayers. In the meantime, he was buying real estate on the 500 Block. In 1883, he bought the store and residence at 522-24 King Street (lot 3), and the following year he bought his own store and residence at 518-20 King Street (lot 4). Finally, in 1887, he bought the properties at 102 and 104 South St. Asaph Street (lots 27 and 26) with their improvements.

All four of these lots were purchased from people or estates connected by blood or marriage to the family of Adam Lynn, and when they passed to Isaac Schwartz, the association of the Lynns with the 500 Block came to a close (Figure 26). In a sense, the career of Isaac Schwartz mirrored, inversely, that of Adam Lynn, Jr. Whereas Lynn's career was marked by an economic eclipse and the loss of his property, Isaac Schwartz achieved economic success and maintained it, owning at the time of his death much of the property once possessed by Adam Lynn (Alexandria Deed Books 13: 201; 14: 533; 18: 481 and 484). Schwartz's success illustrates the American dream. An immigrant clothier, he rose to economic prominence. One of his daughters, Edith, married Charles Bendheim, the son of another German-Jewish immigrant family. Charles Bendheim became a prominent Alexandria attorney, a member of the City Council, and a Virginia Assemblyman. Edith and Charles Bendheim's son – Isaac's Schwartz's grandson – Leroy Bendheim, was mayor of Alexandria in the 1950s and served in the Virginia State Senate.[23]

FIGURE 26 - The 500 Block Holdings of Isaac Schwarz, 1898



508-512 King Street - Ballinger and Bradshaw

Peyton Ballinger, who had been selling boots and shoes at 508-12 King Street (lot 6) since 1852, was joined in the venture in 1891 by Philip Bradshaw, and until 1895 these two men worked as partners. Thereafter, Ballinger was in retirement and Bradshaw ran the business on his own. Before entering this profession, Bradshaw had been working across the street, first as a clerk, and in 1888, as a bartender. Bradshaw's shoe store remained on the 500 Block until 1966 and continued in Northern Virginia into the 1970s (Figure 27).

Figure 27 - Bradshaw's shoe store, 1967 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

500-506 King Street

In 1874, John Lannon bought the large lot on the corner of King and South Pitt from Robert H. Miller's estate. He erected a large two-story brick building containing shops on the King Street frontage, a billiard parlor and restaurant on the Pitt Street side, and an opera house on the second floor (Figure 28). Lannon was a wholesale dealer in feed, hay, grain, and liquor. The building he erected remained on the site until 1969 and served a number of functions. In the King Street shops, a succession of retailers vended an assortment of wares, including jewelry, shoes, stoves, and hardware. At 504 King Street throughout this period was the barbershop of Thomas Dulaney, the first black man to engage in business on the 500 Block, having opened his tonsorial parlors here in 1873 (HABS VA-675). In the urban milieu of late nineteenth-century America, barbering was an important and prestigious profession for a black man, to whom many

Figure 28 - King St frontage of Lannon's brick building , 1967 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

of the professions open to whites were closed. Thomas Dulaney maintained a dwelling on North Columbus Street, was a member of the "Colored Communicants of Meade's Chapel" at Christ Church, and trained several apprentices in barbering at his shop, including a son. In 1899, the shop was called "Dulaney and Son" (Christ Church Register; 1888 Alexandria Directory).

On the Pitt Street frontage of Lannon's building were a billiard parlor and restaurant. Beginning in 1844 these establishments were under the supervision of Louis Brill. In that same year, in partnership with Simon Waterman, Brill purchased the house at 109 South Pitt Street and used it as a residence and also as an extension of his restaurant. Brill was apparently still living in this house in 1900, although it had been sold in 1898 to the Robert Portner Brewing Company. On the second floor of Lannon's grand building was an elaborate theatrical area in which the popular entertainments of the day were presented. In 1886, for example, the *Alexandria Gazette* reviewed D'Ennery's The Two Orphans, praising its "attractive features" and "moral instruction" (Apr. 9, 1886, cited in HABS VA - 675). In the twentieth century, the theater was replaced with bowling alleys.

Summary, 1877-1900

The last quarter of the nineteenth century on the 500 Block was characterized by increasing stability and prosperity among the King Street occupants and by the maintenance of the prosperity already enjoyed by most of the Prince Street residents. However, the South St. Asaph Street houses were still occupied by short-term, less affluent renters. The Summer's Coach Factory and the Lannon Opera House with its pool hall and restaurant on Pitt Street provided industrial and recreational activities.

By 1900, five out of eight of the King Street buildings were occupied by their owners. These owners were Samuel Schwartz, son and chief heir of Isaac Schwartz; John Cockey, confectioner; Michael German; Emily Devaughn, heir of James H. Devaughn, furniture maker; and Philip Bradshaw. All of these except Cockey represented families that had been living and working on King Street for many decades. In 1888, the last year for which the tax records were surveyed to establish economic status, Isaac Schwartz, Michael German, and James Devaughn were all in the

wealthiest 10% of Alexandrians. Although these men were successful businessmen, they were not as active in the town's political life as had been their predecessors on the King Street frontage of the 500 Block. Nevertheless, these were prosperous merchants, pursuing the purpose for which Alexandria had been founded over a century and half earlier – the purveying of goods.

On South St Asaph Street was a row of fairly similar houses, all built early in the nineteenth century. They had been occupied before the Civil War by some of the movers and shakers of Alexandria's commercial, social, and political life. After the war, they increasingly became the homes of less affluent tradesmen, who rented the houses for short terms and then moved on. Whereas the King Street residents were generally owners of shops and stores, the residents of the South St. Asaph houses were generally artisans and blue-collar workers with occupations such as tailoring, shoemaking, plumbing, and door-to-door sales. An exception to this was John R. Zimmerman, coal and wood dealer, who enjoyed considerable wealth and owned the Miller house at 108-110 South St Asaph Street.

The residents of the homes along Prince Street included men as wealthy as the merchants of King Street but generally of different professions. Here we find "professional" men – a banker, a dentist, a lawyer – although near the end of the century, the houses at the east end of the frontage – at 505 and 507 Prince Street – began to be occupied by tradesmen and artisans like those on South St. Asaph Street.

On South Pitt, the construction of the Lannon Opera House added the presence of a billiard hall and a restaurant, both of which opened onto Pitt. This must have added considerably to the tenor of activity along this street. And in 1888, the sons of John Summers, heirs to a thriving business and what must have been a sizable fortune, built new houses at 119 and 121 Pitt Street.

FIGURE 29 - Profile of the 500 Block of King Street, 1888

Address	Head of Household	Occupation	Own/ Rent	Tax Decile	Comments
532 King	G. W. Ramsey	Grocer	R		
528-530 King	Max Pretzfelder	Dry goods	R		
526 King	Michael German	Baker and Confectioner	O	1	
522-524 King	J.G. Cockey	Baker and Confectioner	R	3	
518-520 King	Isaac Shwarz	Dry goods	O	1	
514-516 King	J.H. Devaughn	Furniture	O	1	
508-512 King Store	Peyton Ballinger S.F.Dyson	Shops Bookseller	O R		
508-512 King Res.	James Javins et al.	Boarding House	R		
500-506 King	Lannon Opera House. Misc. shops.		O R		
109 S. Pitt	Louis Brill	Restaurant	O	3	
111-113 S. Pitt	Scott, Monroe, Devaughn	Home repairs	O		Monroe was the owner.
117 S. Pitt	J. Summers Co.	Carriage Factory	O		
119 S.Pitt	Wm. J. Summers	Carriage Factory	O	2	
121 S. Pitt	J. W. Summers	Carriage Factory	O	2	
501 Prince North	?				
501 Prince South	Benjamin Hughes	Huckster	O	2	
505 Prince	William Cline William Robey	Carpenter Shoemaker	 R	5-10 5-10	
507 Prince	?				
509-511 Prince	Anthony Armstrong	Lawyer	O	1	

513-515 Prince	Grahams			1	
517 Prince	E.S. Fawcett J.W. Hooff	Dentist Banker	 O	1 1	Fawcett was Hooff's son-in-law.
521 Prince and 116 S. St. Asaph	Home repair shop		R		
112-114 S. St. Asaph	?				
108-110 S. St. Asaph	J.R. Zimmerman	Wood and coal dealer	O	1	
106 S. St. Asaph	Mary Walsh	Teacher	R		
104 S. St. Asaph	William E. Atwell	Tailor	R	3	
102 S. St. Asaph	J.T. Brammell	Dying and scouring	R	5-10	

Conclusion

From 1780 until 1900, the 500 Block underwent many changes, but at the same time much of its commercial character remained the same. First occupied by shopkeepers in the eighteenth century, the block was still mostly a neighborhood of shops and merchants at the end of the nineteenth. But there were some fundamental differences in the nature of the block in 1900 from what it had been in 1780. We find an increasing presence of commerce with a concomitant decline in purely residential use. When the first occupants appeared on the block in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, even some lots on King Street were used for residential purposes only. By 1900, three out of the eight lots on this King Street Block were wholly commercial in function, and some lots on all the other three frontages were either commercial or mixed commercial-residential. But, although the block was only partially developed in 1799, the first year for which reliable population figures are available, the population for 1900 is virtually the same as it was a hundred years earlier–despite the fact that every lot except 509 Prince Street was improved. The population of the block in 1799 was 102, and in 1900, there were 107 residents.

In between these two dates, the population grew to a high of 138 in 1840. The difference between this figure and the lower ones is explained by the presence in 1840 of 40 blacks. After Alexandria's retrocession to Virginia, the black population of both the city and the block declined. Thus, the size of the white population of the block remained more or less the same throughout the nineteenth century. The concentration of whites per household also remained fairly constant throughout the century. In 1799, there was an average of 5.8 whites per household, and in 1900 the average was 5.3. During the years when many blacks lived on the block, the average number of people per household was higher, but that does not mean that living space for whites was more crowded. Blacks, either free or enslaved, would have lived in outbuildings, in small quarters over the kitchen or smokehouse and basements or slept in hallways (Wade 1964: 37).

Throughout the one hundred and twenty years studied here, the residents were primarily white. In 1850 and beyond, when the Federal Census schedules became more detailed, the block was not only mostly white, but Virginia-born. In 1850, 83% of the 500 Block residents, including

free blacks, listed in the census schedules were Virginia-born, with 9% from the rest of the South, 1% from the rest of the United States, 2% from the United Kingdom, and 5% from Europe (these figures do not account for slaves living on the block). In the following census year, 1860, we find the largest fraction of the block's inhabitants still born in Virginia, but the number of foreign-born had risen to 18%. The percentage of foreign-born in 1880 was 16%, and in 1900, only 8%. In 1900, in fact, many of the immigrant families still occupied the property into which the first generation had moved, but by this time a number of the foreign-born parents -- Isaac Schwartz, for example -- had died, and the houses had passed to American-born children.

In terms of economic status, the block's population remained predominantly middle-class; most of the residents were financially comfortable, while at any given time, a few were clearly quite wealthy and others were marginally poor. Throughout the nineteenth century, some of the richest men in Alexandria lived on the 500 Block: these included Jesse Taylor, Adam Lynn, Mordecai Miller, Robert H. Miller, Isaac Buckingham, Isaac Schwartz, and John R. Zimmerman, among others. At the same time, at least one or two of the block's lots were always occupied by people whose taxes placed them at the bottom rung of the town's economic ladder. Often the rich and the poor lived side by side. As the century progressed, distinct zones of affluence appeared on the block–certain rows of houses became more likely to be occupied by a particular economic stratum. The houses on Prince and King streets developed into relatively affluent zones, while the row of houses on South St. Asaph Street were the residences of the less well-to-do.

Simultaneously, the general level of affluence for the entire block rose. Although the figures from the surveys of the tax records and the 1870 Federal Census should be treated with caution, there seems to be a discernible trend in the total wealth of the block. The average wealth decile for the entire block for each of the years surveyed is as follows:

1801	3.4
1810	3.5
1830	4.1
1850	3.4

1870 2.6

1888 2.2

For the first half of the nineteenth century, the level of affluence remained more or less the same. After that, time affluence rose. The increasing persistence rate of the block's residents probably explains the rising degree of affluence. Those merchants whose economic situation allowed them to stay in one place, pursuing one trade and occupying one house, were better off financially than those whose circumstances required frequent relocations. Since these indicators of wealth have value only in relative terms; that is, since they do not supply information concerning the absolute wealth of any person, it is impossible to generalize more than this about the apparently rising degree of affluence on the block. It is conceivable, in other words, that a man whose taxes put him in the first wealth decile in 1888 was actually less wealthy than the man in the third decile in 1810. We can say, however, that relative to the rest of Alexandria, the residents of the 500 Block in 1888 were wealthier than their counterparts in the first fifty years of the century.

In the twentieth century, the 500 Block continued to be commercial in character, but it suffered from the general decline of the downtown area before the revitalization of Old Town. The shops on King Street were used by a variety of merchants, some occupying their lots for decades. Shuman's bakery at 514-16 King Street became an Alexandria institution, as local politicians and businessmen made it a popular meeting place. Next door, Bradshaw's Shoe Store continued to serve the community until the 1960s (Figure 27). Others of the King Street shops changed hands often. By 1967, 532 King Street had become a shoe store, while the houses on Michael German's two lots, 526 and 528-30 King Street, were razed and replaced by Hayman's Department Store after World War I (Figure 30). Over this store were apartments, but these were occupied by renters, as were most of the King Street residences. Owners and

Figure 30 - Haymans Store, 1967 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

shopkeepers seldom lived over their King Street shops in the twentieth century. The trend toward commercial use of 500 Block buildings also worked its way down South St. Asaph Street. Buildings that had been used as residences were turned toward commercial purposes, with rented apartments above. Ann Buckland's old house at 104 South St. Asaph Street served as a print shop and laundry; 102 South St. Asaph Street housed an annex of Hayman's Department Store, and 116 South St. Asaph Street held an insurance office (Figure 31). The houses at 112-114 and 108-110 South St. Asaph Street were razed long before the rest of the block to make space for a large parking lot that occupied the central portion of the block. At 521 Prince Street became the site of an ornate building was constructed and owned by the Second Presbyterian Church. The houses along the Prince Street frontage escaped the rapid changes of the twentieth century, providing a visual reminder of what the block was like, architecturally, throughout its history.

Figure 31 - 116 S. St. Asaph St, 1967 (ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION)

On the Pitt Street side of the 500 Block, John Summers' Carriage Factory became an automobile shop and, eventually, part of the parking lot. The evolution of this parcel of land–from blacksmith to carriage factory to car shop to parking lot–illustrates the development of a major force at work in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Alexandria. As has been the case in other urban areas, the character of life in downtown Alexandria has been shaped by the availability of various forms of transportation. John Summers built carriages during the horse-drawn era. In those days, people necessarily lived closer to their businesses than many do today. As the emergence of the automobile eliminated the need for the products of Summers' factory, it also allowed King Street merchants to leave the residences above their shops and live in houses beyond walking distance from the commercial district of town. These same merchants–or their successors–eventually experienced a further effect of the increasing influence of the automobile on all features of American life. As people increasingly depended on their cars, shopping malls appeared in previously undeveloped areas on the edge of town. This development, in turn, led to the

declining viability of the King Street corridor as a commercial district. One of the products of this phenomenon was urban renewal, including the purchase of most of the remaining structures on the 500 Block by the city, their demolition, and the erection of the new city courthouse in the 1970s.

NOTES

[1]The location of the major sources used in this project is as follows: tax records through 1855, on microfilm at the Barrett Library, the branch of the Alexandria Library where all its primary and secondary sources connected with local or state history are stored; tax records for the remainder of the nineteenth century, at the State Library in Richmond, or in various city offices or repositories in Alexandria; title records and wills, in the record room at Alexandria's Court House; the *Alexandria Gazette* and its variously named predecessors, city directories, census schedules, transcriptions of Alexandria gravestones, church records, associational records, and town ordinances either on microfilm or photocopy at the Barrett Library.

[2]See Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), passim. Since Thernstrom was focusing on a class, he was able to trace the mobility, or lack thereof, from one generation to another. On the 500 Block, since our interest stemmed originally from the material culture left behind, our research was restricted to the actual occupants of the block during the time of their occupancy. In a few cases, this occupancy involved more than one generation, and in others we were able to observe the lives and careers of former occupants of our block after they moved elsewhere in the city. But in general, our research and our interpretative efforts began and ended with the 500 Block. C. f., the essays in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, EDS., Nineteenth-Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), especially Stephan Thernstrom, "Immigrants and WASPs: Ethnic Differences in Occupational Mobility in Boston, 1890-1940," pp. 125-64; Stuart Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Antebellum Philadelphia," pp. 165-208; and Michael B. Katz, "Social Structure in Hamilton, Ontario," pp. 208-44. Or see James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979).

[3]Tax Assessor route maps for 1790 are currently available at the Alexandria Archaeology Research Center from the research of John F. Stephens.

[4]As anyone who has worked with census schedules knows, problems abound. To begin with, many people were simply never counted in the decennial censuses, the poor and the non-white are most likely to be under represented. See John B. Sharpless and Ray M. Shortridge, "Biased Underrenumeration in Census Manuscripts: Methodological Implications," Journal of Urban History, 4 (1975): 409-39. Or the discussion of problems with census manuscripts in Sam Bass Warner, Jr., Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 171-74. In dealing with a single city block, inhabited throughout the period here under examination by a predominantly white, middle-class population, however, we do not encounter these problems to the extent that historians of blacks or the poor do. To be sure, we find the inexplicable omissions, but the census schedules, particularly later in the nineteenth century, are a valuable resource for this project.

[5]Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, is perhaps the best and most well-known example.

[6]Edward Pessen, "The Social Configuration of the Antebellum City: An Historical and Theoretical Inquiry," Journal of Urban History, 2 (May, 1976): 267-306, offers a convincing critique of using profession as a status indicator. He argues that in America, if any one factor can be construed as determining status, it is wealth. Accordingly, we have tried to assess wealth, where possible, for our population.

[7]This search was made considerably easier by the transcriptions of local church records and gravestones in the Barrett Library.

[8]This was facilitated by referring to Jeanne Given Plitt, "An Analytical Index to the Acts and Notices to and from the Common Council of the Town of Alexandria, Virginia, As Published in the *Alexandria Gazette*, 1784-1816" (Unpublished M. S. L. S. Thesis, Catholic University, 1968).

[9]The statute establishing Alexandria may be found in Waverly K. Winfree, The Laws of Virginia, Being a Supplement to Hening's Statutes at Large, 1700-1750 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1971), p. 443.

[10]Adam Lynn and his family have been the subject of considerable research by James Munson. Much of the information in this report comes from Munson's unpublished paper, "The Several Alexandrias," 1979, on file at the Barrett Library, Alexandria, Virginia.

[11]Photocopies of all Alexandria City censuses are in the Barrett Library, Alexandria, the originals being in Richmond.

[12]Other evidence leading to this conclusion was found in the *Alexandria Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1784; April 21, 1785; March 23, 1786; June 8, 1786; Feb. 22, 1787; March 29, 1787; Alexandria Deed Book p. 87.

[13]This Adam Lynn, as well as his father, is described with considerable detail in James Munson's, "The Several Alexandrias."

[14]This and other HABS descriptions of 500 Block buildings and their histories were written by Mrs. Hugh B. Cox in 1968 and edited and updated in 1975 by Antoinette J. Lee.

[15]The events of Adam Lynn's financial collapse are chronicled in J. Munson's, "The Several Alexandrians." On the land bust of 1819, see Louis M. Hacker, The Course of American Economic Growth and Development (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), pp. 95-99.

[16]David R. Goldfield observes that "Lewis McKenzie was the most energetic leader in Alexandria." See also Carrie White Avery's transcriptions of Alexandria gravestones (photocopy at Barrett Library); Alexandria City Directories for 1860 and 1876 "Papers of the City of Alexandria, Va.", Manuscripts Dept., University of Virginia Library, Ms. M2269P-M2270P; *Alexandria Gazette*, April 19, 1854.

[17]The Alexandria City Council voted a furniture tax in 1830. The amount of the furniture assessment for each taxpayer provides a picture of the relative material wealth of each household.

[18]Ted McCoro's Book Accross the Fence But a World Apart; The Coleman's Site, 1796-1907 details the development of the free block neighborhood, Hayti. Alexandria Archaeology City of Alexandria, 1985.

[19]On Mason's involvement in the Canal Company see "Papers of the City of Alexandria," U. Va. Library, Mss. M2269P and M2270P and the 1834 Alexandria City Directory.

[20]These figures are based on 1820, 1830, and 1840 Federal Census schedules and title chains for various properties on the 500 Block.

[21]The "Writ of Petition of Retro Cession, Council of Alexandria, 1841" on display at the Barrett Library, Alexandria Va.

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[22]Much information on the Alexandria Jewish community was furnished by Ruth Singer Baker, whose research has assisted many aspects of this project.

[23]Deed Book 22, Biographical information furnished by Ruth Singer Baker.