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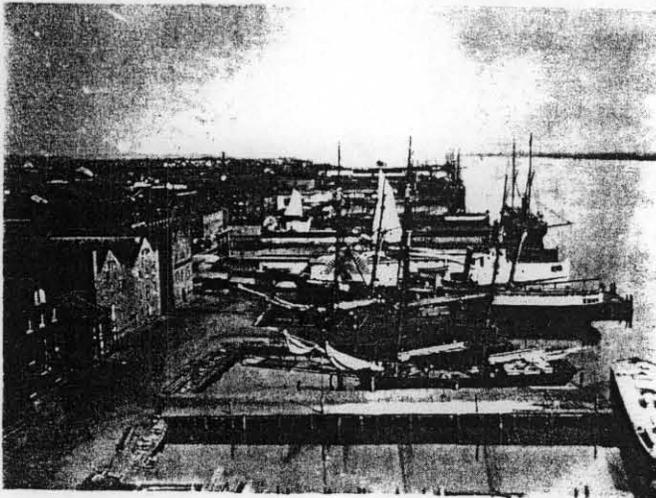
WANDERING ALONG THE WATERFRONT:

KING TO PRINCE STREET

by T. Michael Miller

With its bustling wharves and busy warehouses, the King to Prince Street corridor has played a seminal role in Alexandria's waterfront history. Before the mid-1780s the region from Water Street [Lee] to the foot of King Street was part and parcel of the Potomac River. Eventually the cliffs along the water's edge were cut down and lot owners constructed wharves out into the river. Even today it is still possible to see vestiges of this declivity just north of the N.E. intersection of Lee and Prince Streets.

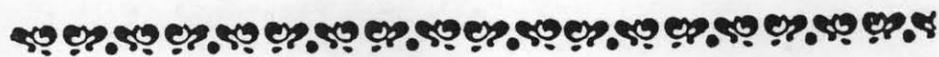
The agreeable broad-shouldered Irishman, John Fitzgerald, was one of the first Alexandrians to construct a wharf at the foot of Lee and King Street. As an aide-de-camp during the Revolution, Fitzgerald returned to Alexandria circa 1778 and purchased with Valentine Peers "the sunken ground" on the south side of King and east of Water from Mrs. Susannah Patterson. [Fairfax Deedbook: D4:196]



As much as 400 feet of this area had been banked out in front of old town lot 51. By 1797, the topography had been so metamorphosed from what it had been in the colonial era that George Washington informed David Humphreys of the changes:

Alexandria you would scarcely know; so much has it increased since you was [sic] there; two entire streets where shallops then laded and unladed are extended into the River, and some of the best buildings in the Town erected on them. What were the Commons,

Cover photo:
View from Pioneer Mill
(foot of Duke Street)
looking north along the
Strand. The Fitzgerald
warehouse and wharves on
the 100-block of S. Union
Street appear near the
center of the photograph.



are now all inclosed, and many good houses placed on them. [Writings of George Washington, ed. Fitzpatrick, Vol. 35, p. 482]

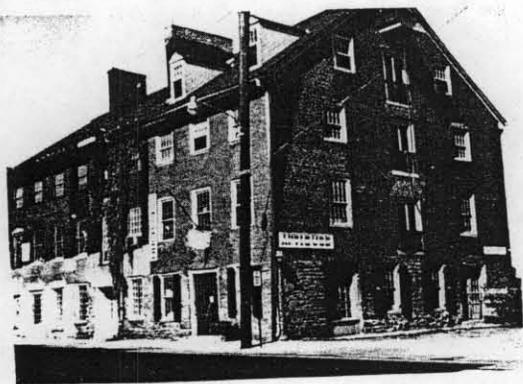
Fitzgerald and Peers built a large wharf which extended into the river. After Fitzgerald's death in 1799 this valuable property was exposed to sale and described as follows:

VALUABLE PROPERTY FOR SALE IN ALEXANDRIA

By virtue of a deed of Trust made by Col. John Fitzgerald, late of this town, to us the subscribers, will be exposed to sale on Monday, the 17th day of August next, if fair, if not the next fair day, on the premises.

The following very valuable property to wit:

A water Lot commonly called Fitzgerald's Wharf lying upon the south side of King street and east side of Union street, and bounded by an alley 30 feet in width, on the south from Union street to the water. On this piece of ground are erected three brick warehouses, 24 ft. 4 inches in front, 42 feet deep and three stories high each. Also above the upper story 73 feet in length and 42 feet wide upon the floor--all under one roof. Adjoining and on the east side of this house, is a piece of ground unimproved the whole length of the house, 55 ft. deep, terminating on a 25 ft. alley, laid out upon the front of the wharf. From the front of the wharf is a pier extended into the river 100 ft. by 60 ft. in breadth. Appertaining to the pier is a dock 33 ft. wide on the one side and 28 ft. on the other side.



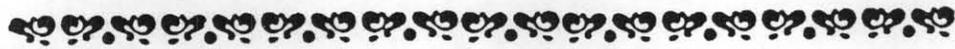
The Fitzgerald Warehouse,
104 S. Union Street
(Cox Collection, 6/1960)

This sale is made for the purpose of raising certain sums of money which have been demanded of Robert T. Hooe as security of Col. Fitzgerald, by the U.S. and Bank of Alexandria. -- William Herbert; John C. Herbert--trustees [Alexandria Advertiser: 8/3/1801]

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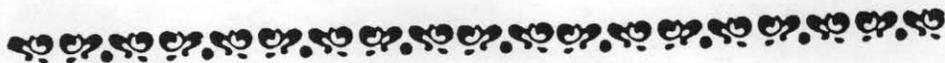
In addition to the sale of this property, Fitzgerald's executors sold one-half interest in Andrew Wales' brewery, 37 acres contiguous to Alexandria, and another wharf on Wilkes Street east of Union. This property was described as being on the "east side of Union to the north of Wilkes Street, being a wharf or made ground upon which there is a frame warehouse..."

In 1786 Olney Winsor, a Providence, Rhode Island merchant, travelled to Alexandria and leased a lot on Fitzgerald's wharf at the S.E. corner of King and Water [Lee] Streets. In October he wrote his wife Hope as follows: "We have hired a good lot, and I now spend my time adays in getting ready to raise our Store.." By December Winsor had constructed a large two-story frame dwelling house, the upper part of which was divided into four rooms and a store where he sold muscovado and loaf sugar, coffee, chocolate, New England potatoes and a small assortment of European goods. [VJAA: 4/19/1787] The store had been sufficiently finished by December, enabling Winsor and Mr. Jenckes to move into their new accommodations. "I have begun to lodge in the Store and Mr. Jenckes and myself this day began to breakfast and sup in the Store and have concluded to enlarge our Bed and lodge together during the cold Season. I will assure you it is more agreeable to lodge and board where our business is. We have a lad...who now cooks for us." [Olney Winsor to Hope Winsor, Dec. 9, 11, 1786 in "Olney Winsor, Merchant" by Elizabeth Hambleton, Alexandria History, Vol. 5]



Daniel McLean operated a bakery on the site in 1802.

Business was apparently so successful for Winsor and Jenckes that they leased another lot adjacent to their store in 1789, and by 1793 Winsor had built a three-story warehouse with a gambrel roof which corresponds to present-day 102 South Lee Street. Following Winsor's ownership of the property, Daniel McLean operated a bakery on the site in 1802. Subsequently, Robert Anderson and Andrew Jamieson continued the bakery business for a time until the building was converted into an armory circa 1818. [Ethelyn Cox, Street by Street, p. 77]

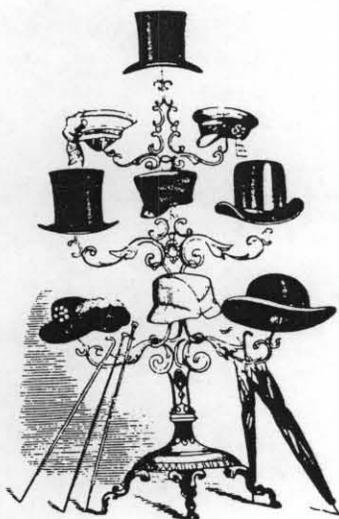


MERCHANT'S WHARF



Swift merchandised hats, nails, anvils, copper tea kettles... and excellent cognac and brandy.

During his 40-year residence in Alexandria, Jonathan Swift served as consul for several foreign countries. Born in Milton, Massachusetts he arrived in Alexandria prior to 1785 and became active commercially. The owner of numerous properties, Swift purchased "a lot east of Union and south of King...and north of Wales Alley 170 feet, 7 inches south of King Street from P. R. Fendall in 1796." [Alexandria Deedbook: H: 64, 107] By the terms of this agreement Swift had the prerogative to construct what would be called "Merchant's Wharf." [ADB: X (1813-14) p. 23] In December 1801 he offered to lease lots on the wharf and by 1802 Swift had erected several stores which fronted thereon. [AA: 12/11/1801; 10/21/1807] A hardware and retail merchant, William J. Hall, moved from his store on Prince Street to Merchant's Wharf in 1801. He merchandised hats, nails, anvils, copper tea kettles, woolens, linens, twine, window glass, grindstones, earthenware, saddlery, grates and excellent cognac and brandy. [AA:1/14/1801; 12/2/1801] By March 1808 Jonathan Swift advertised the lease of Merchant's Wharf with a convenient store occupied by S. Moore and the yard adjoining it. In addition, he offered a warehouse formerly occupied by Messrs. Henderson & Co. and the warehouse at the corner of King and Union Streets. [AA: 4/2/1808] Joseph Rowen, a cordage merchant, commenced business in 1810 on the wharf in the house lately occupied by the United States as an office of inspection where he kept a general assortment of cordage made by John Chalmers, rope maker for the United States. He also sold a variety of articles in the ship chandlery line. [AG: 5/14/1810] Once again the Merchant's Wharf, with the middle store and warehouse, was put up for lease in January 1810. Swift finally conveyed the wharf facility to Gird and Entwistle on March 19, 1813. Gird, the proprietor of a retail store at this locale, sold bacon, lard sugar, spinning cotton and ground alum in March 1814.



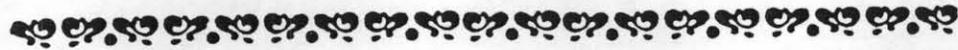
ANDREW WALES' WHARF

The chronicle of the wharves between King and Prince Street is intertwined with the history of lots 56, 57 and 58. The town trustee deeded lots 56 and 57 to George William Fairfax on March 1, 175. Since lot 57, situated at Prince and Water Streets, included only

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quarter-acre of land, the trustees decided to treat both lots 56 and 57 as one. They reconveyed the same to Fairfax in January 1767. Fairfax in turn sold all of lots 56, 57 and 58 to Robert Adam in 1772. It was Adam who transferred part of lots 56, 57 and 58 to Andrew Wales, a brewer, in 1771. Alexandria Deedbook G (August 23, 1796) cites that Wales had made "ground and a wharf" which extended into the river. A provision of Wales' lease permitted him to construct underground wooden tubing to the Potomac River which provided water to his brewery. Among the commodities Wales retailed at his brewery were yeast, beer, grain and spirits. Wales also managed a tavern on the south Union Street waterfront in the 1790s. In November 1786, Wilkes, a blind black man who worked for Wales, fell into a copper which had boiling water and so scalded himself that he died the next morning. [A.A.: 11/23/1786] This was not the only tragedy to befall Mr. Wales, for his brewhouse caught fire on January 28, 1788. Winsor wrote his wife that the fire "caught in a Brewery which it destroyed together with a House and Store adjoining all belonging to Mr. Wales --the nearest part of these buildings was not more than 150 feet from our Store, but fortunately the Wind which was small drove the flames from us--we made the necessary arrangements to secure ourselves if a shift of Wind had taken place, by having Water in the Store. ...Mr. Wales' buildings are Stone and brick, otherwise the fire undoubtedly would have extended much farther for many buildings were very near to leward." [Olney Winsor, Merchant, *op. cit.* p. 18] Wales recovered from the losses sustained by the fire but quit the brewing business by 1798. [AA: 1/10/1799] In March 1797 he advertised the sale of his business and property:

The subscriber having a desire to decline business, offers for sale all that valuable property, extending from Water to Union streets, consisting of

A Brewery and Distillery,

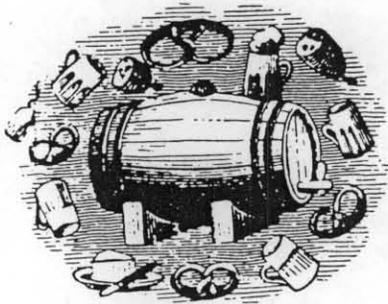
with every apparatus necessary for the business being eminently calculated that a considerable business in the brewery and distillery line may be done at a small expense. Under the same roof with the brewery and distillery is a commodious dwelling house with necessary out houses. Also, two houses on the west side of Union



Survey map showing lots 56, 57 and 58 (Fairfax County Record of Surveys, 6/18/1749)



"...fortunately the Wind which was small drove the flames from us ..."



William Lacey offered the public beer, grains, yeast and whiskey for ready cash.



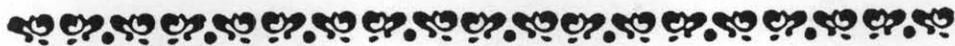
Harper and Fenner operated a store on the N.W. corner of Prince and Union Streets.

Street, one of which has for some time been occupied as a tavern, for which business, or a store, it is as good a situation as any in this town. The other is adjoining the tavern and is well calculated for a store and the accommodation of a family. A lot on the east side of Water Street, 38 feet front, running back 60 feet, all which properly has the advantage of a 12 feet alley. [AA: 3/18/1797]

William Lacey became the proprietor of the Wales enterprise by November 1798 and offered the public beer, grains, yeast and whiskey for ready cash. [AA: 11/26/1798] His association with the brewing business was short-lived, however. On November 5, 1799, William Billingham announced that he had commenced the brewing business at the facility formerly conducted by Wales. [CMAG: 11/5/1799] Apparently this venture was not totally successful since Billingham offered to lease Wales' dwelling house and brewery in May 1801. [Times: 5/26/1801] In November 1802 Billingham became partners with Thomas Cruse and established the Potomac Brewing Company. [AA: 11/6/1802] With the death of Mr. Billingham in 1803, Cruse purchased the interest of his former partner and advertised the sale of his own beer in 1805. The Potomac Brewing Company remained viable until Cruse offered to sell 500 barrels of beer, his brewery and malt house in May 1806. [AA: 5/8/1806]

HARPER & WATSON'S WHARF: N.E. and N.W. Corner of Union and Prince Streets to the River

In December 1771 Robert Adam conveyed to John Hough of Loudoun County portions of lots 56, 57 and 58. Hough in turn sold these to Captain John Harper of Philadelphia in June 1773. As early as July 1784, Harper and Fenner operated a store on the N.W. corner of Prince and Union Streets where they sold an assortment of hardware, cutlery, tea, coffee, chocolate, gin, dry goods and Gloucester cheese. The June 28, 1785 *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser* notes the sale of water lots on Prince Street near an "extensive wharf now building by Captain Harper and others." While this wharf was completed by Harper in December, other



advertisements note the disposition of houses and stores in the area. For instance, Edward and John Harper offered to lease a store on the N.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets in 1785:

A very convenient three-story brick store on the N.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets lately occupied by Jonathan Swift and Company, the lower story of which is now in the tenure of Edward Harper. The situation of the store for any kind of business is superior to any in this town. [AA: 12/15/1785]

John Harper, a prominent sea captain and Alexandria plutocrat, constructed 209-213 Prince Street in the 1780s and was extensively engaged in the West Indies and South American trade. He also built several houses along the north side of the 100-block of Prince Street, now called Captain's Row. Harper, who was the father of 23 children, was disabled by illness in 1797 and died on May 7, 1804. His son William continued mercantile activities at the foot of Prince Street.

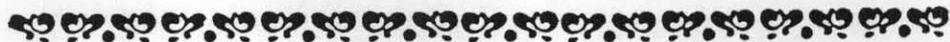


Capt. Harper's house (in the middle) at 209 Prince Street.

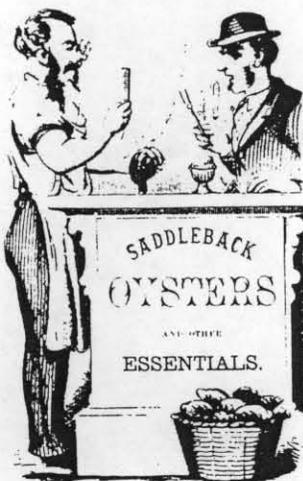
The Alexandria City Council in August 1798 ordered that the dock at the lower end of Prince Street be extended so as to prevent the ground at low water from being left bare. In 1813 they further commanded "the heirs of John Harper have the use of half of the dock on Prince Street, with the proviso that it be kept in repair." [AG: Feb. 9, 1813]

A number of Alexandria merchants leased warehouses or stores on Harper's Wharf during the latter part of the 18th century. Among these were Williams, Cary & Co. and Josiah Watson. On May 27, 1784, Williams advertised the sale of European and East India goods, English broadcloth, breeches, Dutch cords, shoes, iron mongery, drugs, shot, sail cloth, glass and earthenware. [AA: 5/27/1784] By 1790 Watson offered West India rum and molasses at the wharf. Furthermore, in 1796, he also owned a three-story brick warehouse on the east side of the 100-block of South Union Street which was occupied by James Porter, a tinner. Financial losses forced Watson to declare bankruptcy in 1799.





In 1802 Joshua and Thomas Gilpin informed the public they were willing to lease all of their property along Union Street, including their warehouse, lumberyard and wharf. [AA: 7/16/1802]



Thomas M. Davis sold pickled oysters, corn, flax and vinegar from Harper's Wharf.

Isaac Entwisle & Co., which sold ale, porter, beer and cider at its bottling cellar on King Street, also offered yeast and hops at its store on Harper's Wharf in 1807. [AA: 5/7/1807]

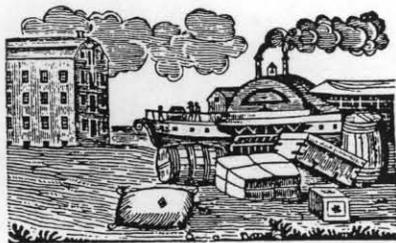
Thomas M. Davis and Thomas Davis were also associated with Harper's Wharf. The former sold pickled oysters, corn, flax and vinegar from the wharf from 1813 to 1820 while the latter was the occupant of a store on the N.E. corner store of Prince and Union where he sold Philadelphia-made shoes in 1815. [AG: 5/8/1809; 3/9/1813; 10/30/1815; 5/9/1817; 8/15/1820]

VOWELL'S WHARF:

Union Street between King and Prince Streets

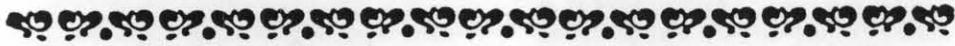
Thomas Vowell, a wholesale merchant who constructed 109-111 Prince Street and purchased 113 Prince in 1792, was the proprietor of a store at Harper's Wharf in 1790 in which he sold West India and New England rum, molasses, teas, coarse and fine salts. [AA: 6/3/1790; 11/11/1790] In 1806 the firm of Wadsworth and Butler offered to sell from Vowell's Wharf pork, beef, rum, gin, cognac, mould candles, and wines from the sloop *Marie Antoinette*. [AA: 10/7/1806, 11/8/1806; 1/1/1807]

In 1815, Jeremiah Neale operated the popular Union Hotel on the corridor [AG: 10/10/1815; 10/23/1815] while Henry Field and Joseph Milburne were the proprietors of another drinking saloon there in the 1830s. [AG: 5/13/1831; 4/11/1832]



Wholesale merchant Thomas Vowell was the proprietor of a store at Harper's Wharf.

During the 1840s and 1850s, the 100-block of S. Union Street and the Strand to the east were the principal commercial and mercantile centers of Alexandria. Leading merchants including John T. B. Perry, Wells A. Harper, D. F. Hooe and William McVeigh constructed large warehouses on extensive wharves which jutted into the Potomac River. These facilities groaned under the weight of grains, guano and groceries which were the life blood of Alexandria's commerce. On

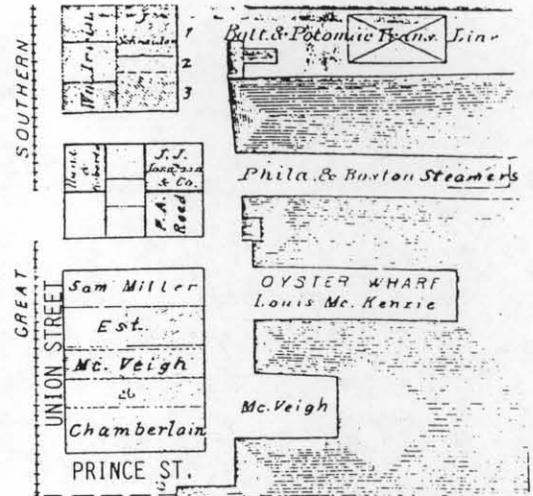


the night of June 4, 1854, a devastating fire erupted on S. Union Street's waterfront which had dire consequences for the town's economy:

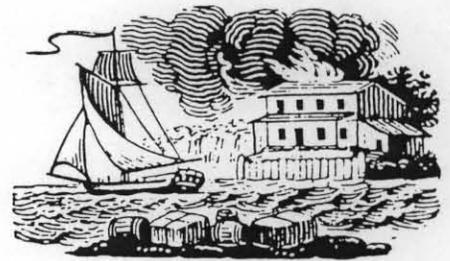
About midnight ... the watchmen on duty discovered flames bursting out from the roof of one of the brick warehouses on Union between King and Prince streets. The alarm was immediately given and upon repairing to the spot it was discovered that the warehouse occupied on the wharf by J. T. B. Perry & Son and on Union Street by D. F. Hooe as a store house for flour, was on fire through all the upper story. The firemen and citizens as usual, went to work with a zeal and determination worthy of all praise to extinguish the flames where they originated and to prevent them from spreading to the neighboring buildings. All their exertions could not save the adjoining warehouse occupied by S. S. Masters & Son. The whole block rented by the merchants we have named was destroyed with much of their valuable contents, flour, guano, and groceries. The fine new block of warehouses, south, lately erected by William N. McVeigh and occupied by Green, Suttle and Co., Robinson & Payne, McVeigh & Chamberlain and Wells A. Harper & Co. were in imminent danger, but were finally saved, with scarcely any damage. The warehouses north, occupied by James Dempsey and S. Shinn & Son, were also saved without any loss.

During the progress of the fire three distinct explosions occurred in the store of Messrs. Perry & Son. They arose from the bursting of a keg of gunpowder, a canister of gunpowder, and, the last, it is thought must have been from a keg of saltpetre. No damage was done by these explosions, the roofs of the warehouses having been previously burned off and there being a free circulation of air.

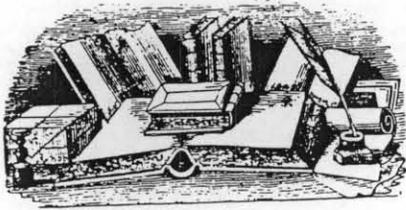
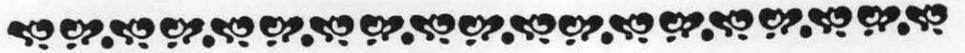
The buildings destroyed belonged to the estate of the late John C. Vowell and to John S. Miller, of Philadelphia. They were insured in the Potomac and Fire Insurance offices of this city, for about \$7,500.



(1877 Hopkins City Atlas)



"About midnight...the watchmen on duty discovered flames bursting out from the roof of one of the brick warehouses..."

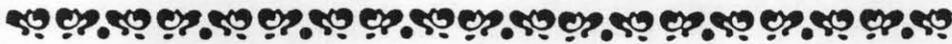


"In the warehouse...a quantity of groceries was destroyed. Books and papers saved."

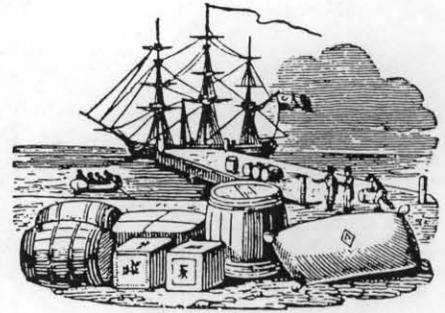
We grieve to say, that there is no doubt of this fire having been caused by an incendiary. No one connected with the occupants had been in the stores since Saturday evening. It is supposed that means must have been found to enter the warehouses either through the store of the Messrs. Perry or through a side door leading into Mr. Hooe's warehouse on Sunday night. The work was done effectually, for, when discovered, as we have said the upper stories were in a blaze.

About 8[00] or 900 bushels of corn in the warehouse of S. S. Masters & Son were burned, or otherwise destroyed. A quantity of guano in the lower story was injured by water. Books and papers saved. Insurance to the amount of \$6,000 in the Fire Insurance office. The insurance will probably cover the loss. In the warehouse of J. T. B. Perry & Son, a quantity of groceries were destroyed. Books and papers saved. Insured in the Potomac office to the amount of \$2,300. Insurance will probably cover the loss. In D. F. Hooe's warehouse about 932 pounds of flour were stored of which 762 pounds were destroyed and some few barrels of oil. Amount insured--\$6000. In the Fire office \$2,000 and \$6,000, in the Potomac office--Loss about \$1,200. In Green, Suttle & Co.'s warehouse some cotton and corn in the upper story were destroyed. Fully insured.

We repeat our expressions of praise and thanks to the Firemen for their gallant conduct. ...During the progress of the fire, the shipping at the wharves close to the fire made preparation for hauling out into the stream but fortunately their precautions were not made necessary. The night was bright and calm. Had the wind been high no one can calculate the extent of the mischief that might have ensued. [AG: 6/6/1854]



Among the businesses which reopened along Union Street after the 1854 conflagration was that of Mr. H. K. Bradshaw, who operated an extensive oyster packing establishment. [AG: 10/19/1857] The S. Union Street waterfront had barely revived when the dark clouds of the Civil War approached Alexandria in the spring of 1861. On May 24, 1861, the town was invaded by 3,500 Union soldiers and remained under military occupation for the next four years. Public buildings, private houses and warehouses were seized by Federal forces for use as hospitals, barracks, and quartermaster supply depots. As many as forty ships a day may have been unloaded at Alexandria as thousands of tons of munitions, hay and foodstuffs were stockpiled to fuel the federal army's juggernaut against Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy.

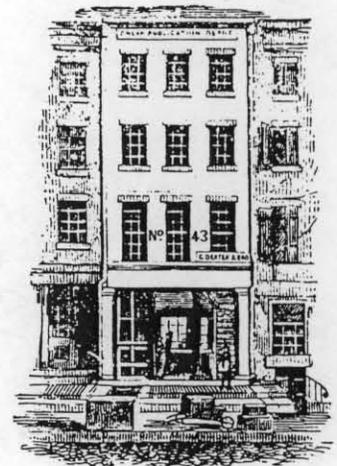


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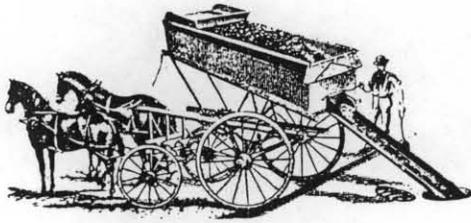
After the cessation of hostilities in 1865, the Alexandria waterfront was but a shadow of its former self. The Gazette reported:

The greatest change that has taken place in the appearance of Alexandria, since the war, is observable in and about the wharves. The 'river front' is far different from what it was when every warehouse was filled with goods and every store and counting room open for the transaction of business from the Fish Wharf to the Pioneer Mills. Now, what a contrast! But we mention this not to encourage despondency, but to state that here, in Alexandria, there is room, space, facilities, houses, depth of water, excellence of harbor, extent of wharves and docks for an increased and profitable commerce. [AG: 6/20/1866]

A sign of the malaise which hovered over Union Street was evidenced by the condition of William McVeigh's warehouse in 1868. Situated on the N.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets, this large four-story brick structure had been confiscated by the federal government during the Civil War and purchased by Oakes Ames & Co. of Boston. On the morning of February 29, 1868, nearly one-half of the south wall of the building "fell with a loud crash, which startled the inhabitants of that part of the city, for several squares around. In the building Messrs. M. Eldridge & Co. had stored about 10,000 bushels



McVeigh's warehouse was confiscated by the federal government during the Civil War.

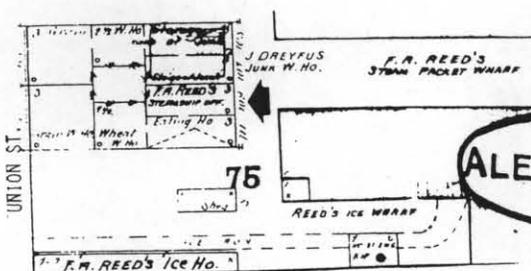


Alexandria enjoyed a commercial revival, in part fueled by the return of the lucrative coal trade.

of corn on three of the floors, about 4,000 bushels being on the portion that fell in. The west wall has sprung considerably and will doubtless have to be taken down." [AG: 2/29/1868; AG: 12/22/1883]

Before long, Alexandria enjoyed a commercial revival, in part fueled by the reopening of the Alexandria Canal and the return of the lucrative coal trade. By September 1868 "the whole stream in front of the wharves was filled with the largest size coasters and their tall masts present[ed] a forest of spars which remind[ed] one of the aspect of the largest shipping ports." [AG: 9/1/1868]

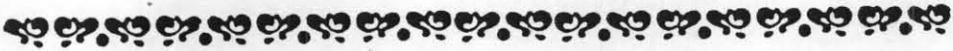
Along the 100-block of S. Union Street there were signs of improvements. As early as July 1865 Capt. James Beard commenced a ferry service from the foot of Prince Street to Rozier's ferry landing on the Maryland shore. M. Eldridge & Co. offered to supply hotels, restaurants and steamboats with imported Boston ice at the Prince Street Wharf. [AG: 7/28/1865] Eldridge & Co., ice dealers, had offices on the Strand, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. When the firm was dissolved in 1870, Mr. F. A. Reed, a former employee, took over the ice manufacturing business. F. A. Reed & Company's offices were situated on the Strand between King and Prince Streets, while the ice plant occupied an area east of Union Street near the front of Cameron. The company was one of the largest ice dealers in the state and carried on its trade as far south as Winston, North Carolina. Mr. Reed's partner was William M. Reardon who was admitted to the firm in 1882.



Map showing F.A. Reed's steamship office and wharves. (1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map)

For several years, between 1880 and 1890, this firm did a very large business with the West Indies in the shipment of large amounts of sugar cooperage. This enterprise was pursued successfully until the English bag was substituted for the wooden packages, previously used for the shipment of sugar. [AG: 9/16/1893]

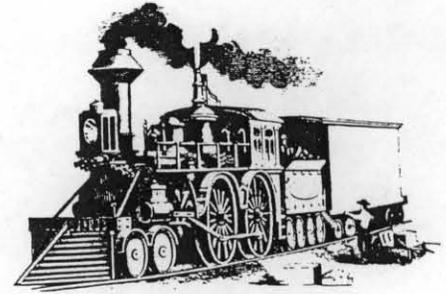
For 25 years Mr. Reed was the agent for William P. Clyde and Company, one of the largest coastal steamboat companies in the world. Furthermore, he also represented the Island and Seaboard Coasting Company, a New York line, and the Baltimore steamboat line, consisting of the Lady of the Lake, and Sue, making tri-weekly trips to



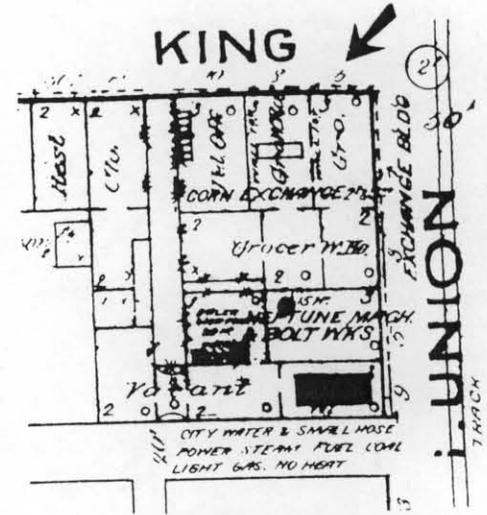
Baltimore, and the steamer Harry Randall, making tri-weekly trips down the Potomac River. Reed's office was situated on the strand directly west of the Reed Steam Packet Wharf. [See map] Besides these business interests, Reed was vice-president of the Virginia Board of Trade and was the first president of the Alexandria Board of Trade upon its organization. From 1870 to 1896, his enterprises dominated the east side of the 100-block of S. Union Street.

Further improvements along the 100-block of Union Street were visible by the latter half of the 19th century. In 1871 Benjamin Price was commissioned to construct the Alexandria Corn and Produce Exchange on the site of the old Custom House building at the S.W. corner of King and Union Streets. Completed in 1872, this magnificent Italian Renaissance building certainly embellished the streetscape. The first floor was occupied by Noble Lindsey's grocery business while the Corn Exchange utilized the second floor with its 25-foot-high beautifully arched ceilings. [Penny Morrill, Who Built Alexandria?, p. 11-12] Unfortunately, the Corn Exchange failed. Lindsey's business thrived, and by 1922 the Lindsey-Nicholson Corporation was one of the premier enterprises in Alexandria. The *Alexandria Gazette* wrote:

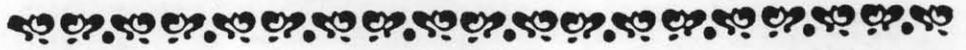
No firm has been more responsible for the development of Alexandria commercially, and with some 4,000 square ft. of floor space in its large brick building at 100-110 King Street, it is the center of the wholesale district. It handles a complete line of staple and fancy groceries, notions, flour, feedstuff, etc. as well as the celebrated Diamond tires and tubes. The corporation has six salesmen on the road covering its territory which embraces all of Northern Virginia and a part of Maryland. It has fifteen employees in the warehouse and keeps a truck and a team busy delivering its orders to retailers in the city as well as to railroad stations. C. T. Nicholson, president of the company, is a member of the Kiwanis Club, is active in the Chamber of Commerce, and is one of the Alexandria's best known citizens.



A truck and team were kept busy delivering its orders to retailers in the city as well as to railroad stations.



Map showing the Corn Exchange, on the N.W. corner of King and Union Streets. (1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map)



Mr. W. N. Lindsey, vice president and treasurer of the company, is a former director of the Chamber of Commerce and is an ardent advocate of improved transportation facilities and better roads. [AG: 3/31/1922]



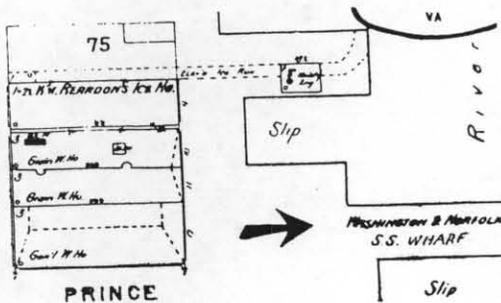
Benjamin T. Dutton operated a very successful barber's salon for 30 years on the west side of Union Street.

By the late 1870s Mr. William McVeigh, after extensive litigation against the federal government, recovered his confiscated warehouses at the N.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets. After having repaired and repainted these valuable buildings, McVeigh offered to sell them and his wharf for \$2,000 in 1884. [AG: 12/22/1883; 7/5/1884] By July 1908 the Semmes Board Cider and Vinegar Company took possession of the structures. Concrete floors were laid and the company employed about 50 persons in the manufacture of champagne cider and vinegar. The factory was capable of producing four hundred barrels of cider in 24 hours. [AG: 7/2/1908]

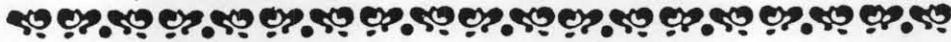
In March 1884, the enterprise of William H. Brooks and Frank Cathcart introduced a bolt works manufactory on the west side of Union Street near King. It was reported: "These gentlemen have renovated and placed ten thousand dollars' worth of new and improved machinery in their works on Union Street, and propose increasing their capital stock to \$300,000. The Eureka Bolt Works is the name of the new enterprise and the bolts to be manufactured by Brooks and Cathcart it is said will be cheaper and save more labor than any similar ones in the market." [AG: 3/22/1884]

After the Civil War Benjamin T. Dutton, a black man, also operated a very successful barber's salon for 30 years on the west side of Union Street. Upon his death in 1893, his obituary stated that "the deceased was fifty-nine years old and enjoyed the respect of all who knew him." [AG: 2/9/1893]

No doubt the most famous business enterprise to operate from the lower Prince Street Wharf in the 1890s was the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Co. Established in 1890, it was soon incorporated and chartered by the State Corporation Commission. This steamboat company advertised the availability of luxurious trips down the Potomac River aboard one of its three steamers, the Northland, Southland and Midland. The Northland contained 157 rooms, the Southland 157, and the Midland 120. The elegantly furnished boats



The Washington & Norfolk Steamship Wharf. (1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map)

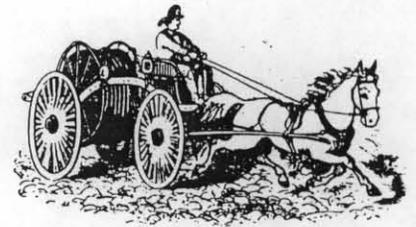


were designed to provide the passengers maximum pleasure. At one time the steamboat offices were situated in the old McVeigh warehouse on the N.E. corner of Prince and Union Streets. For many years the whistle of the old steamers was a familiar sound to Alexandrians. The Norfolk and Washington Co. remained a viable concern until the 1940s. Four drunken vandals nearly destroyed the operation in 1924, however, when the wharf was deliberately set ablaze, causing \$25,000 damage. Arthur King, Jr. confessed that on the night of December 24, 1924, he, Carl Mander, Babe Mills and Guy Wood had several drinks and later went over to Prince Street and out to the warehouse, broke in, and threw lighted matches on loose papers, causing a fire. [AG: 12/26/1924]

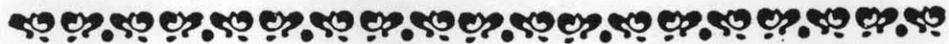
A history of S. Union Street would certainly be static if it did not address the myriad types of human behavior exhibited on the waterfront. Besides the day-to-day conduct of business, there were fights, brawls, murders, and other forms of criminal activity. On January 11, 1869, the N.W. corner of Union and Prince Streets was the scene of "a regular set-to, square up and down, claw and gouge fight, between two of the residents of the First Ward. The parties were allowed to keep up the sport until they were both satisfied." [AG: 1/11/1869]

On the morning of January 30, 1896, Officer Atkinson raided the Eagle Hotel on the west side of Union Street. Known in the olden days as John Price's restaurant, this facility had been leased by James Clift and some of his companions, male and female, who had assured the owner they intended to open an oyster house. The den, however, had become a rendezvous for "certain improvident people of both sexes, who it is alleged [held] orgies and endangered the property in the neighborhood of those conducting business nearby." Indeed Clift and one Maggie O'Brien were arrested by Officer Atkinson after it was ascertained the woman's dress had been seized by Clift and sold for whiskey. The liquor was recovered but it was reported the house was in a filthy condition. [AG: 1/30/1896]

Undoubtedly one the most serious episodes of criminal activity on the waterfront transpired on the night of August 2, 1900 when one man was killed, another fatally wounded and a police officer terribly disfigured. This sad affair commenced at Jacob Brill's restaurant at



Four drunken vandals nearly destroyed the operation when the wharf was deliberately set ablaze, causing \$25,000 damage.



the foot of King Street when three men, Walter Posey, Robert Posey and Bunk Beard became embroiled in a heated argument over "a woman of questionable character." Deep in their cups, the Posey brothers started to beat Beard unmercifully until John Donnelly, manager of the saloon, intervened to stop the assault.



A violent fight erupted which lasted almost ten minutes.

Donnelly subsequently requested police assistance but by the time Officer Atkinson had arrived from the station house on Market Square, the Posey brothers had fled on foot to lower Prince Street near the Norfolk steamers wharf. Upon Officer Atkinson's attempt to arrest the Poseys, a violent fight erupted which lasted almost ten minutes and nearly cost Atkinson his life. Robert and Walter began to viciously beat the officer whose strength was almost spent, "blood streaming down his cheeks, he was black in the face, while the kicks he was receiving in the abdomen were sickening."

Meanwhile, even though 100 men witnessed the affray, out of fear they failed to intervene and come to the rescue of the policeman. Officer Atkinson, in desperation, was able to grab his revolver and shoot Robert Posey in the abdomen. "Robert walked about fifteen feet in a dazed condition and finally fell with his hand still on his wound writhing and twisting in agony" until he died. The other brother, Walter Posey, then placed the officer in a death-like grip and choked, bit and clawed at Atkinson to prevent him from using his pistol again. Atkinson was able to free himself and placed his weapon upon his attacker's breast, whereupon he pulled the trigger and Posey rolled into the dust with a bullet in his back.

Pandemonium broke out as exclamations of horror proceeded from women who had witnessed the tragedy "and some grasped their little children and left the scene with blanched faces while others hurriedly rolled baby carriages away, lest some stray bullet would kill or wound their little charges." Robert Posey died from his wounds while Officer Atkinson and Walter Posey were transported to houses to convalesce. After a thorough investigation by the mayor and grand jury it was decreed: "We the jury find from the evidence that Robert Posey came to his death from a pistol shot wound, said shot having been fired by Officer Weston H. Atkinson in the fearless and faithful performance of his duty." [AG: 8/3/1900] Calm had once again been restored to the waterfront.

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