

Alexandria Afternoon

Alexandria Walking & Hiking Group

18 January 2014

1. Meetup point, across Diagonal Road from King Street Metro Station parking lot.

Walking route, 4.01 miles, counter-clockwise.

2. Alfred Street Baptist Church, 301 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Alfred Street Baptist Church is home to the oldest African American congregation in Alexandria, dating to the early 19th century. In 1818, the congregation, then known as the Colored Baptist Society, began worship services here in the midst of the Bottoms, a free black neighborhood. By 1820 the church created its educational branch, providing religious and secular opportunities for both black children and adults. Free black craftsmen probably designed and built the brick church in 1855.

3. Daingerfield House, 712 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built in 1803, the original Federal town house was remodeled by Henry Daingerfield in the Second Empire Victorian style, which was popular just after the Civil War. Notice the curved French Mansard roof, elaborate dormers, and deep scroll brackets below the cornice.

4. Fowle House, 711 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. James Patton purchased this quarter block in 1797 and built his home here. In 1811, William Fowle acquired the property and enlarged and restyled the house. Family tradition credits the facade to Charles Bulfinch, architect of the U.S. Capitol. The features of this beautiful Federal style house include the fanlight surrounding the front door and the Palladian window.

5. The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Lyceum was built in 1839 as a lecture hall, and served as a hospital during the American Civil War; post-war, it became a house, and later served as an office building. Today it is the official city history museum of Alexandria.

6. Virginia Public Service Building, 117 S Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built in 1930, this building is Alexandria's best example of the Art Deco style.

7. Appomattox. "Appomattox," the statue of an unarmed Confederate soldier in the intersection of Washington and Prince Streets, marks the location where units from Alexandria left to join the Confederate Army on May 24, 1861. The names of those Alexandrians who died in service for the Confederacy are inscribed on the base of the statue. The statue was designed by John Adams Elder, modeled after the Confederate soldier in his painting "Appomattox," shown viewing the battlefields after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. The statue was erected in 1889.

8. Murray-Brown House, 517 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built around 1775 by Patrick Murray, who acquired the quarter block on which it stands on December 20, 1774. The house is typical of most of the better homes built in Alexandria during George Washington's day. Purchased by John Douglas Brown in 1816 and owned by only one family since then, it is perhaps the least altered of the surviving early buildings. The wide clapboards originally were painted oxide red, which was inexpensive and gave the facades the appearance of brick.

9. Bank of Potomac, 415 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. This Federal-style building was built in 1804-1807 as the Bank of Potomac. The door surrounds and window lintels are made of beautifully carved sandstone from the Acquia Creek, south of Alexandria. During 1863-1865, the building served as the headquarters of the restored government of Virginia.

10. Alley House, 403 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. This structure, dating from before 1883, is a wonderful example of the alley houses that can be found around Alexandria. Their side walls were nothing more than the outer walls of the existing houses on each side; all that needed to be added were a roof and facade. Such alley houses typically were built to house servants or children of the family in the adjoining house.

11. Lafayette House, 301 S St Asaph St, Alexandria, VA 22314. In 1824, President James Monroe invited the Marquis de Lafayette to visit the United States to thank him for helping secure America's freedom from England nearly 50 years earlier. At the time of the official visit, Alexandria was part of the District of Columbia. This three-story, Federal-style residence, built by Thomas Lawrason in 1815, was one of the city's newest and nicest homes.

12. "Flounder" houses, 317 and 321 S St Asaph St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built in the early 1800s, these residences are called "flounder" house because, like the fish, they usually have eyes (windows) on only one

side. One theory is that this unusual architectural style reflects the owner's attempt to evade taxation by claiming that construction of the house was unfinished.

13. Saint Mary Catholic Church, 310 South Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. This church is the oldest Catholic parish in Virginia. According to local lore, George Washington made the first donation to fund the church. The church originally was built at the south end of the city, on land that houses St. Mary's Cemetery. In 1810, the church moved to its current location.

14. Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Scottish Presbyterians were among the early European settlers of Northern Virginia and were involved in establishing Alexandria as a port in 1749. The Society of Presbyterians worshiped in the city from the 1760s, and the congregation's first minister arrived in 1772. The Meeting House was built in 1775, burned down in 1835, and rebuilt, maintaining a Reformed Protestant appearance. Except for a bell tower added in 1843 and granite entrance stairs installed in 1853, it remains little altered to the present day.

15. Gentry Row. Walking along Prince Street's 200 block, known as Gentry Row, you will see house after house marked with Historic Alexandria Foundation plaques, indicating authenticated historical or architectural significance. Houses along this block were owned by such prominent figures as William Fairfax, one of Alexandria's founding trustees, and Dr. James Craik, surgeon-general during the American Revolution.

16. Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The lot belonged to William Fairfax and was surveyed by George Washington. The building was constructed between 1851 and 1852 as the Old Dominion Bank. During the Civil War, Union forces used the building as the Commissary Quartermaster headquarters. The First Virginia Bank operated here from 1870 to 1907, when the building was taken over by the pharmacists Leadbeater and Sons. From 1925 to 1964 the building was used by the Free Methodist Church of North America. Today the Athenaeum is a museum of fine arts. Note how the four bold Doric columns support a triglyph cornice, and how the plaster walls have been scored and painted to resemble stone blocks.

17. Hooe House, 200 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built around 1780, this was the home of Colonel Robert Townshend Hooe, the first mayor of Alexandria (1780-1781). Hooe came from Charles County, Maryland, where, during the Revolutionary War, he served on the Committee of Safety and as a lieutenant colonel in the 12th Maryland battalion. George Washington dined here on several occasions.

18. Captain's Row. Along Prince Street, between Lee and Union Streets is the block known as Captain's Row, where many sea captains built Federal style houses. Complete with cobblestones and charming architectural details, this is probably one of the most picturesque colonial village blocks anywhere.

19. Wales Alley. Wales Alley dates back to 1789, a few years before Alexandria became part of the original District of Columbia. It was originally called Fitzgerald Alley in honor of Alexandria Mayor John Fitzgerald, one of the major landowners in the city. By 1786, people started calling it Wales Alley when Andrew Wales started selling beer there. Three years later, Fitzgerald and Maryland businessman Valentine Peers divided their holdings, securing a deed that allowed for "free use and passage of the several streets and alleys."

20. Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 107 South Fairfax St, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum was a family business founded in 1792 and operated in this location from 1796 until 1933. It represents one of Alexandria's oldest continuously run businesses that combined retailing, wholesaling, and manufacturing.

21. Ramsay House, 221 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Ramsey House was built by William Ramsay, a Scottish merchant, and close friend of George Washington's. Architectural studies of the house indicate that the earlier portions were built elsewhere in about 1724 and later moved to the current location. It was placed facing the river to give Mr. Ramsay a good view of his ships in the harbor. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the house became a tavern, grocery store, rooming house and cigar factory. After a 1942 fire destroyed much of the original building, the City of Alexandria purchased and restored the house. Today, in addition to housing the Visitors Center, it is a historic site marking Alexandria's oldest house.

22. Historic Alexandria, 221 King St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Alexandria was named for the family of John Alexander, a Virginia planter who in 1669 acquired the tract on which the town began. By 1732, the site was known as Hunting Creek Warehouse and in 1749 became Alexandria, thereafter a major 18th-century port. George Washington frequented the town; Robert E. Lee claimed it as his boyhood home. From 1801 to 1847 Alexandria was part of the District of Columbia, and was later occupied by Federal troops during the Civil War. By the 20th century it had become a major railroad center. In 1946, Alexandria created the third historic district in the United States to protect its 18th - and - 19th century buildings.

- 23. Alexandria Farmers' Market**, 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Saturdays, 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. year round. Free parking in the Market Square garage during Saturday hours of the Farmers' Market. Local farmers and artists have been selling their products in Old Town Alexandria's Market Square since 1753. The market is thought to be one of the nation's oldest continually operating farmer's markets, serving as a primary way Alexandria residents have typically obtained their meat, dairy, fish, fruits and vegetables. George Washington sent his produce from Mount Vernon to be sold at the Farmer's Market.
- 24. Alexandria City Hall**, 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Alexandria City Hall was built in 1871 and designed by Adolph Cluss. The site was originally a market from 1749 and courthouse from 1752. A new building was constructed in 1817 but after a fire in 1871 it was rebuilt as a replica of the former building.
- 25. Carlyle House**, 121 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Built 1751-1753 by one of Alexandria's founders and first landowners, John Carlyle, this is the only Georgian Palladian-style mansion in Alexandria. The regulation that dwelling houses must be built in line with the street was not drafted when construction of the house began. In 1755, it was site of an important conference with British General Edward Braddock to discuss French-Indian War strategy.
- 26. Bank of Alexandria**, 133 N Fairfax St, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Bank of Alexandria was the first chartered bank in Virginia, established by Act of Virginia Assembly in 1792. The Federal style building, constructed in 1807, provided quarters for the cashier and his family on the second floor. The eagle above the doorway is a common Federal decoration.
- 27. Gadsby's Tavern Museum**, 134 North Royal St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of a tavern and hotel, built in 1785 and 1792, respectively, named for John Gadsby, who operated them from 1796 to 1808. Gadsby's Tavern was a center of political, business, and social life in early Alexandria. Prominent patrons included George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and the Marquis de Lafayette.
- 28. George Washington's Townhouse**, 508 Cameron St, Alexandria, VA 22314. This house is a recreation of the in-town dwelling, originally built by George Washington in 1769. Washington built the modest house in Alexandria to have a place to stay when he was not able to go home to his Mount Vernon estate because of inclement weather or pressing business.
- 29. Robert E. Lee's Boyhood Home**, 607 Oronoco St, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Federal-style house was originally built in 1795 for John Potts, Jr., the first secretary of the Potomac Navigation Company, a scheme of George Washington's to link the ports of the Potomac River to the western territories. *Light Horse Harry* Lee's family occupied the house for nine years in the early 19th century. Lee's son, Robert E. Lee, prepared for his entrance to West Point while living in this house.
- 30. Lee-Fendall House**, 614 Oronoco Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Lee-Fendall House, built by Henry Light Horse Harry Lee's cousin Philip Richard Fendall, in 1785. From the time it was built until 1903, thirty-seven different members of the Lee family lived in the house, except during the Civil War, when the Union Army seized the house to use as a hospital.
- 31. Christ Church**, 118 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia, is an Episcopal church built from 1767 to 1773 by John Carlyle. The church was designed by James Wren in the colonial style, and frequented by George Washington, Robert E. Lee, Philip Richard Fendall, and other notables.
- 32. Friendship Firehouse**, 107 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The Friendship Fire Company was established in 1774, as the first volunteer fire company in Alexandria. The firehouse was built in 1855, remodeled in 1871, and restored by the City of Alexandria in 1992. The Friendship, Sun, Relief, Hydraulion and other local volunteer fire companies served the community faithfully, particularly during enormous blazes in 1827, 1855, 1871, and 1922.

- Sources: About.com, Historical Marker Database (HMdb.org), VisitAlexandria.com, Wikipedia
- Map: <http://tinyurl.com/noknjvx>

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