

**A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE CITY
OF ALEXANDRIA, VA., FROM
1669 TO 1883, WITH A
DIRECTORY OF RELIABLE
BUSINESS HOUSES IN THE CITY**

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A Concise History of the City of Alexandria, Va., from 1669 to 1883, with a Directory of Reliable Business Houses in the City by Geo. W. Rock & F. L. Brockett

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BY

*From the
original*
F. L. BROCKETT AND GEO. W. ROCK.

ALEXANDRIA, VA.:

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1883.



PREFACE.

This publication is intended to show the Commercial and Manufacturing advantages of Alexandria ; its present and future prospects, and its importance to the immigrant and capitalist who desire to secure a home in a refined city having great capacities for profitable investments.

In addition to an authentic history of the City, it contains the advertisements of most of the *reliable* business houses, and much other information of value to the public. Trusting that this little volume may be of advantage to our subscribers, and wishing them and all our good people a Happy New Year, we modestly "launch our little craft."

F. L. BROCKETT,
G. W. ROCK.

Alexandria, Virginia, January 1, 1885.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA.

The records of the Virginia Land Office at Richmond show, that on the 21st day of October, 1669, a patent for six thousand acres of land was granted to Robert Howsing, for and in consideration of the transportation of one hundred and twenty persons into the Colony of Virginia. On this tract the City of Alexandria was located. The land is described as lying upon the freshes of the Potomac river, and on the West side thereof, the survey beginning at a red oak standing by a small branch or run nearly opposite a small Island, commonly called and known by the name of "My Lord's Island," and running down the Potomac river 3,152 poles to a tree on the Northerly point of a creek named by the English "Indian Cabin Creek." This grant was issued by Sir William Berkley, Knt., Governor, &c., and is recorded in the ancient letters and style of that day. At the foot of the grant appears the names of the persons whose transportation was the consideration in the grant. From the great age of the paper, and its frequent handling, it is impossible to make out all the names, but the following can readily be identified: Jno. Allen, Eliz. Burtin, Jno. Beaty, B. Bowyer, Ed. Babcock, Alex. Buckner, Giles Cable, Theo. Coake, Wm. Cox, Ro. Carter, — Cowland, Fra. Cogan, Tho. Davis, Tho. Dray, Ro. Dooley, Ruth Day, Morris Dixon, — Demfard, Jo. Dove, Ma. Edwards, Josias Franklin, — Freeman, Alex. Fisher, Sam. Farmer, L. Gardner, — Glassly, Theo. Griffin, Miles Gray, Sam. Gressen, Geo. Gorn, Mr. Howsing, Jno. Hudson, Wm. Holson, Geo. Harris, Sym. Harper, Jno. Holmes, Ra. Hopkins, Theo. Hopkins, Ly. Haynes, Ja. Hunter, Jo. Hoxten, Da. Hobson, Ma. Herbert, Chas. Hudson, Ro. Harsen, Tho. Killip, Sara Knowles, Robt. King, Ed. Kent, Tho. Lawrassen, Jno. Lane, Row. Lawson, Jno. Leake, Hen. Luxten, Lan. Moseley, Jo. Mott, Susan Moxxim, — Morrell, Jno. Maxey. Jo. Newberry, — Norton, Jno. Norris, Ed. Norris, Mary Phun, Wm. Prise, Tommy Tibold, Hen. Pratt, Jno. Parkey, Evan Parkey,

Mar. Pressin, Sam. Pyke, Tho. Palmer, Jno. Porter, Mary Porter, Susan Phelps, — Prescott, Ro. Porter, Jno. Sprast, Mary Standly, Ed. Seaman, — Skinner, Jno. Suttle, Tho. Suokett, Wm. Salmen, Tim. Shelley, Pis. Sorby, Ruth Smily, Tho. Snowden, Ro. Stanten, Jo. Truemen, Tho. Tenssen, Jno. Thughill, Ja. Towme, Fran. Trotter, Latt Thughill, D. Taylor, E. Wilkins, Ruth Whitehead, Mary Wilkinson, Jeff. Wormley, Phil. Watson, Jno. Wells, Pat West, Fran. Walker, Hum. Wilson, Robert Young, Ro. Young and 10 negroes.

Mr. Howsing was not required to settle these persons on his grant; and, indeed, at that time, occupied, as it was, by hostile Indians, the atmosphere would have been a very unhealthy one for immigrants, and it required nearly a century to clear them out. By the terms of his contract he was simply required to transport one hundred and twenty persons to the Colony of Virginia; it is not unlikely, however, that a few of them accompanied Mr. Howsing to his new possession; and, among them, one Fra. Cogan, but, whether the ancestor of Alexandria's popular citizen of that name, we are not prepared to say.

FIRST SETTLEMENT.

It is believed that the first settlement on this patent was made in 1695 by Thomas Pearson, the ancestor of Alexander Hunter, on what is known as "Pearson's Island." The early pioneers found the Indians very troublesome, and in order to the protection of their families from the raids of these unwelcome visitors, they were compelled to be almost constantly under arms, as these visits were generally made when civilized people were supposed to be asleep. The region around about being tobacco growing, most of the cleared land was used in the production of this staple. The authorities of Prince William county, in which the grant was located, erected a commodious warehouse on the bluff that then overlooked the river, where Daniel Stryer's sumac factory stood forty years ago, and now the site of the Washington and Western R. R. depot. At this time the transportation of tobacco in hogsheads from the plantation to the warehouse was effected in a manner which, if performed at this day, would be calculated to excite the mirth of all the boys, both old and young, in town. As wagons and other wheeled vehicles were rarely to be seen, the transportation was caused by running an iron bar through the centre of the hogshead which, being attached to a pair of shafts

in which was harnessed a horse, ox, or mule, and the removal was made over roads by no means good. The settlement which grew around this warehouse was named Belhaven, in honor of a planter of that name. Here, in 1749, what is now the City of Alexandria, was formed. In 1748 the House of Burgesses of the Colony of Virginia passed an act which authorized the formation of a town at this point with jurisdiction over sixty-six half acre lots, (two of which were set apart for a Public Square,) nine streets and two public landings. Point West, now the fish wharf, and Point Lumley, now the Pioneer mills. These streets, landings and square had been laid off, and were contained within limits, marked by a line starting from the river and running west midway between what is now Duke and Wolfe streets, to a point midway between what is now Royal and Pitt streets, thence north by that line to a point just northeast of the present city jail, and thence by a line N 64° E. to the river. On the eastern front the river had a bend from Point Lumley to West Point, and covered most of the intermediate space now occupied by Lee and Union streets, and on the north, Oronoco Creek made its way from a point near the American coal wharf through the gap north of the Washington & Western R. R. depot, across north Fairfax and Royal streets, as is shown by an original survey, dated July 18, 1749, by John West, Jr., deputy surveyor of Fairfax County, in which the town of Alexandria was then located. Fairfax county having been formed from Prince William in 1742.

ORGANIZATION.

The town was organized on the 18th day of July, 1749, with John West, Jr., as clerk. Its first Board of Trustees was composed of the following gentlemen: Thomas Lord Fairfax, William Fairfax, George Fairfax, Richard Osborne, Lawrence Washington, William Ramsay, John Carlyle, John Pagan, Gerrard Alexander, Hugh West and Philip Alexander. In 1763 George Washington was chosen one of the Trustees. In 1779 it was incorporated by the General Assembly of Virginia as a town, with the authority to elect a Mayor, Aldermen, and Councilmen, and to hold a Hustings Court; and in March, 1780, Robert T. Hooe was chosen its first Mayor.

THE BUILDING OF THE TOWN

was commenced in the northeastern section, along the river front, and on the high ground in this neighborhood along Union and

Water (now Lee) streets to Gronoco street. The character of many of the buildings was first-class, built of brick, and several still standing are used for milling and other commercial purposes. Here the first town paper was published. Among the buildings erected were The Colonial Bank and two Hotels, one the "Crown Prince," the other, the "King's Inn." At a later period the "Royal George Tavern" was erected on the N. W. corner of Cameron and Royal streets, now the site of the store house of Messrs. Harlow Brothers. The Braddock House was built in 1752, Christ Church in 1773, and the 1st Presbyterian Church in 1774. The latter building was destroyed by lightning July 26, 1835, and was rebuilt in 1836.

SALE OF TOWN LOTS.

The first sale of town lots took place immediately on the organization of the Board of Trustees, and among the purchasers were a few of the ancestors of well-known citizens of to-day, viz: John Carlyle, William Ramsay, Lawrence Washington, William Fairfax, George Fairfax, Nathaniel Chapman, Gerard Alexander, William Fitzhugh, and John Dalton; and, at a later sale, George Mason, John West, Augustine Washington, William Henry Terrett, Pearson Terrett, Hugh West, John Muir, Robert Adam, and John Orr became purchasers. The last record of the proceedings of the Trustees was dated April 4, 1767, and the record of the transactions of the town authorities seems to have disappeared until 1794, and since then, the Council Records, for several years, have been lost or destroyed, probably at the burning of the Market Building in 1871; among a great mass of old books and papers, the first record was found in 1876, and rebound, and is now well preserved.

IMMIGRATION.

Alexandria at once attracted attention. Before its organization a few immigrants had already come; but, shortly thereafter, many influential families from the British Isles sought homes here. Most of them came supplied with liberal means, and prior to 1800 scarcely an immigrant arrived without the ability to provide a home for himself and family. Many had been educated in the best schools, and it is a remarkable fact that very few of them were unable to read and write. This is one of the reasons why the Alexandria of to-day is the equal of any city in the land in educational advantages. Between the years 1749 and 1800 the largest immi-

gration was from Scotland, that from old Ireland was next in point of numbers. The revolution of '98 was, in a great degree, the cause. England, also, made a good showing in sending those whose families are among our representative people of to-day. The immigration from Germany, although very limited, is now represented by many of our leading citizens. As Alexandria gave promise of becoming one of the most important cities in the Union our neighboring States contributed of their best citizens. All this was before Washington City was born, and before Baltimore had grown to the proportions of a respectable village; but the times change. The Federal capital—Seat of the General Government—has become the most beautiful city in the Union, and the city of Baltimore, thanks to the beneficence of Virginia in granting the Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road the right of way through her borders, is not only the chief city of Maryland, but one of the most important cities in the Union. It is impossible to give the names of all of those who came among us before 1800, but the descendants of many of them will be readily recognized as among our leading citizens of to-day. There came from—

SCOTLAND: Robert Adam, William Bartleman, Robert Brocket, Sr., Dr. James Craik, Col. Fitzgerald, James Fleming, Dr. James Gillis, William Hunter, Jr., Dr. John Hunter, Collin Hunter, John Hunter, Col. Charles Little, Colin McIver, John McIver, Rev. James Muir, Ebenezer Muir, James MacKenzie, Alexander MacKenzie, Dr. John Dalrymple Orr, Major Valentine Peers, William Ramsay, David Wilson Scott, James Wilson, William Wilson, Capt. William Wilson, and Andrew Jamieson.

FROM IRELAND: Guy Atkinson, Dr. James Carson, John Carlyle, Nehemiah Clifford, William Dualap, James Douglas, William Herbert, Robert Brown Jamesson, John Kincaid, Michael Madden, Jesse Taylor, Jesse Taylor, Jr., Robert I. Taylor, and William Taylor.

FROM ENGLAND: Capt. Mark Butts, Rev. Thomas Davis, John Duffey, William Hodgson, Thomas Longden, Thomas Rogerson, John Rumney, Hugh Smith, Thomas Towers, John C. Vowell, and Thomas Vowell.

FROM SWITZERLAND: Anthony Charles Cazenove.

FROM GERMANY: Capt. Henry Piercy, a Revolutionary officer on Washington's Staff and afterwards commanding officer of the Alexandria Blues.