

ALEXANDRIA — THE FOUNDING OF A COLONIAL CITY

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(Based on ten maps shown and described by Mr. Stephenson at the November 12, 1971, meeting of the Society held in the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, 845 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.)

1. A plan of the county of Fairfax on Potomock River the middle of which is in $39^{\circ} 12' N^{\circ}$ latitude. [Drawn by Daniel Jenings, ca. 1745-48] Col. manuscript map. Scale ca. 1:460,000. 33 x 42 cm. Earliest manuscript map of the environs of Alexandria, Virginia, in the collections of the Geography and Map Division. It is believed to have been drawn by Daniel Jenings, Surveyor of Fairfax County, to illustrate a proposal to divide the county into two Parishes. Apparently drawn between 1745, when Rocky Run Church was established (named on the map), and before 1749, when Alexandria was laid out (not identified), the map shows the suggested dividing line between parishes, identifies four churches, locates Fairfax County Courthouse at its original site near Tyson's Corner, and indicates rivers as well as important gaps in "The Blew Ridge of Mountains" to the West. Of particular significance is the depiction of the existing road system on the eve of the establishment of Alexandria.
2. A survey of the Northern Neck of Virginia, being the lands belonging to the Rt. Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax Baron Cameron, bounded by & within the bay of Chesapoyocke and between the rivers Rappahannock and Potowmack: with the courses of the rivers Rappahannock and Potowmack, in Virginia, as surveyed according to order in the years 1736 & 1737. [Compiled by John Warner. 4th edition, 1747 or later] Scale ca. 1:900,000. 30 x 35 cm. Printed map with manuscript annotations.

Between 1736 and 1747, surveys were made to establish the boundaries of the lands belonging to Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax. The Fairfax tract, known as the Northern Neck, embraced the area between the Potomac and Rappahannock up to the headwaters of the two rivers. One of the surveyors employed by the Fairfax Commissioners was John Warner who made the manuscript map on which the printed version was based. This map of the Northern Neck was published sometime after 1747 and has been annotated by an unknown hand to show Alexandria, the homes of Washington and Mason, as well as numerous other features.



3. A map of the most inhabited part of Virginia containing the whole province of Maryland with part of Pensilvania, New Jersey and North Carolina. Drawn by Joshua Fry & Peter Jefferson in 1751. London, Thos. Jefferys, [1755] Col. map. Scale ca. 1:650,000. 78 x 125 cm.

Copy one.

Eastern half of map on display.

In 1751, Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas, completed for publication from new surveys the first map of the Colony of Virginia prepared in more than three quarters of a century. Initially published in London between 1752 and 1754, the map was reissued in 1755 with substantial revisions and with the addition of roads and a table of distances, supplied by John Dalrymple. On the 1755 version, the eastern half of which is displayed, the newly established town of "Belhaven or Alexandria" is identified. Roads linking the new seaport on the Potomac with Falmouth and Fredericksburg to the South and the rich agriculture lands in the Shenandoah Valley to the Northwest are clearly shown.

4. Plat of the land where on stands the town of Alexandria. [Drawn by George Washington, 1748] Pen and ink manuscript map. Scale 1:2,970. 31 x 40 cm.

Title from verso.

Near the mouth of Great Hunting Creek, a public tobacco warehouse was established in 1730 on a tract of land belonging to John Alexander. Other warehouses soon followed and as these facilities prospered, a small settlement named Belhaven grew up. The Virginia General Assembly, recognizing the potential of this site for shipping, authorized in 1748 the survey and laying out of a town at "Hunting Creek Warehouse on Potomac River," the town to cover 60 acres of land, "parcel of the lands of Philip Alexander, John Alexander, and Hugh West," and "that the said town shall be called by the name of Alexandria." An early representation of the site of the new town is this survey drawn by George Washington, probably in 1748 when he was 17 years old and in the employ of John West, Surveyor of Fairfax County. Washington probably made this map subsequent to the act of the General Assembly. It shows the location of "Mr. Hugh West Ho. & Ware Hoss." on the "Road round Hd. of the Crk." To the north of the Warehouses is "A fine Improvable Marsh" and along the shoreline, the river is marked "The Shoals or Flats about 7 feet at High Water" and a line further out in the river at 8 fathoms is identified as "The Edge of the Channell of the River."

5. Camp à Alexandria le 17 Juillet 19 milles de Clochester [sic]. Handcolored xerox copy of manuscript map. 33 x 20 cm. *From Amerique Campagne 1782. Plans des differents camps occupés par l'Armee aux ordres de Mr. le Comte de Rochambeau. [1782] Map 15.*

After assisting in the capture of General Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781, the French Army, under command of the Comte de Rochambeau, marched northward. This map, dated July 17, 1782, shows the French Army's campsite on Four Mile Run to the north of the city, the extent of Alexandria's built-up area, and the roads connecting the city with Colchester and Georgetown. The original manuscript atlas from which this xerox copy was made is in the collections of the Geography and Map Division. It consists of 54 maps which show the campsites occupied from July 1 to December 2, 1782. The atlas was acquired by the United States Government in 1883 with the purchase of the papers and maps of the Comte de Rochambeau.

II. THE PLAN OF THE CITY

6. A plan of Alexandria now Belhaven. [Drawn by George Washington, 1749] Pen and ink manuscript map. Scale ca. 1:2,970. 32 x 40 cm.

George Washington apparently drew this plan of the lots and streets of Alexandria prior to the organization of the municipal government on July 13, 1749, while the town was still called Belhaven. The map may have been used in the sale of lots which took place on July 14-15, 1749, for the "Proprietors Names," lot numbers, and prices paid (expressed in pistoles) are listed to the right of the plan. The town is laid out in 84 lots with 10 streets. Shoals in the harbor are indicated by a stipple pattern designated as having "4 & 5 Feet Water." On the Maryland side of the Potomac two houses are shown, one labeled "Mrs. Addison's" and the other unidentified.

7. [Map of Alexandria, Virginia] Laid off the within| lots at the request of the proprietors [signed] James Dermott, Oct. 12th 1791. Col. manuscript map. Scale 1:2,970. 40 x 32 cm.

Title, signature, date, and scale from verso.

James Dermott, a teacher in an academy in Alexandria and one of the surveyors of the City of Washington, drew this map for the proprietors on October 12, 1791. It shows lots 1 to 88 situated between Water Street and Washington Street, plus the names and boundaries of property owners.

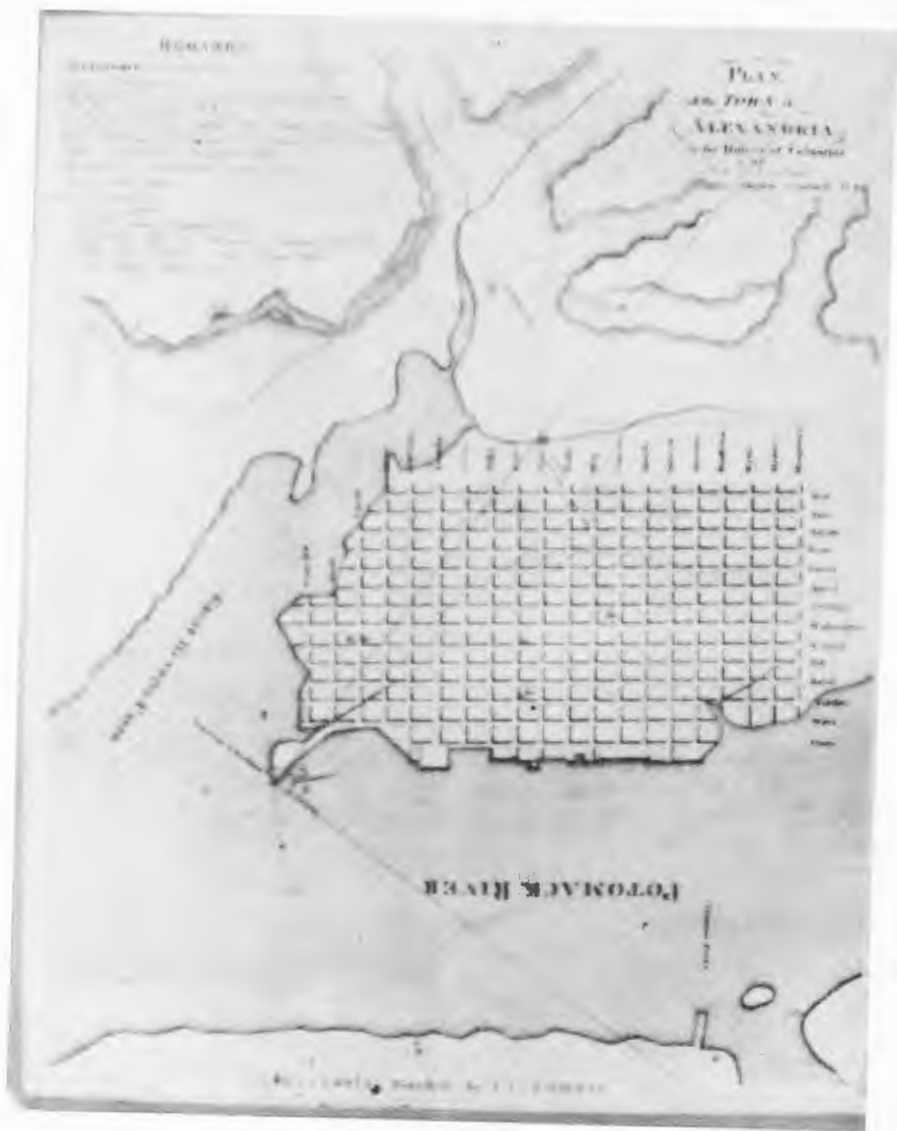
8. [Map of] Alexandria [drawn before 1796] Manuscript map. 33 x 60 cm.

An anonymous pen and ink map drawn before 1796 showing old and new lots, as well as the extent of the swamp on the North side of town. "The lotts with dotted lines are the new lotts."

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9. Territory of Columbia. Drawn by And^w. Ellicott. [1793-94] Col. map. Scale ca. 1:32,700. 55 x 55 cm.

In 1791, Major Andrew Ellicott of Maryland was hired to survey the boundaries of the newly created Federal District on the banks of the Potomac River. Ellicott began his survey at Jones' Point at the mouth of Hunting Creek, to the South of Alexandria. On January 1, 1793, he reported to the Commissioners that "It is with singular satisfaction that I announce to you the completion of the survey of the four lines comprehending the Territory of Columbia." With this report he transmitted a finished manuscript map based on his survey. The map was engraved, probably by Thackara and Vallance in 1793-94, and published by Joseph T. Scott in 1794. On display is the engraved version, the title of which is curved around the North corner in accordance with Jefferson's "idea of doing it on a square sheet to hang corner upwards." This, the first printed map to show the incorporation of Alexandria into the Federal Territory, shows the boundary and boundary stones of the District, its topography, and the roads then in use. In the environs of Alexandria are indicated the "Road from Leesburg," the "Road from the Falls," the "Road to Alexandria" from the shore of the Potomac near Mason's Island, the intrenched valley of Four Mile Run, and high ground known as "Shuter's Hill" where now stands the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

10. Plan of the town of Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, 1798. [Drawn by George Gilpin] Engrav'd by T. Clarke, New York. Alexandria, Va., I.V. Thomas, 1798. Scale 1:9,600. 60 x 47 cm.

This map, drawn by Colonel George Gilpin in 1797, was published in Alexandria in 1798 by I.V. Thomas. The publisher apparently had difficulties in holding on to the original manuscript for he ran the following advertisement in the *Alexandria Advertiser* on September 21, 1797: "The subscriber some time since lent to one of his acquaintances a plan of the town of Alexandria, neatly drawn by Col. Gilpin—He cannot at present recollect who it was that borrowed it, but he begs that whoever has it in possession will be kind enough to return it. John V. Thomas." The Gilpin/Thomas map is the earliest engraved plan of the city on file in the Geography and Map Division. It shows 14 East-West and 20 North-South streets, the "Main Post Road" entering the city via Duke Street, and the following ten important sites: "1. Mr. Fairfax's House, 2. Camerons Mills, 3. Mr. Lees House, 4. Episcopal Church, 5. the Market Square, 6.7. Prisyterian [sic] & Methodist Meeting Houses, 8.9. Socites [sic] for a Catholic & a Dutch Lutharian [sic] Church, [and] 10. the Quakers Meeting House."

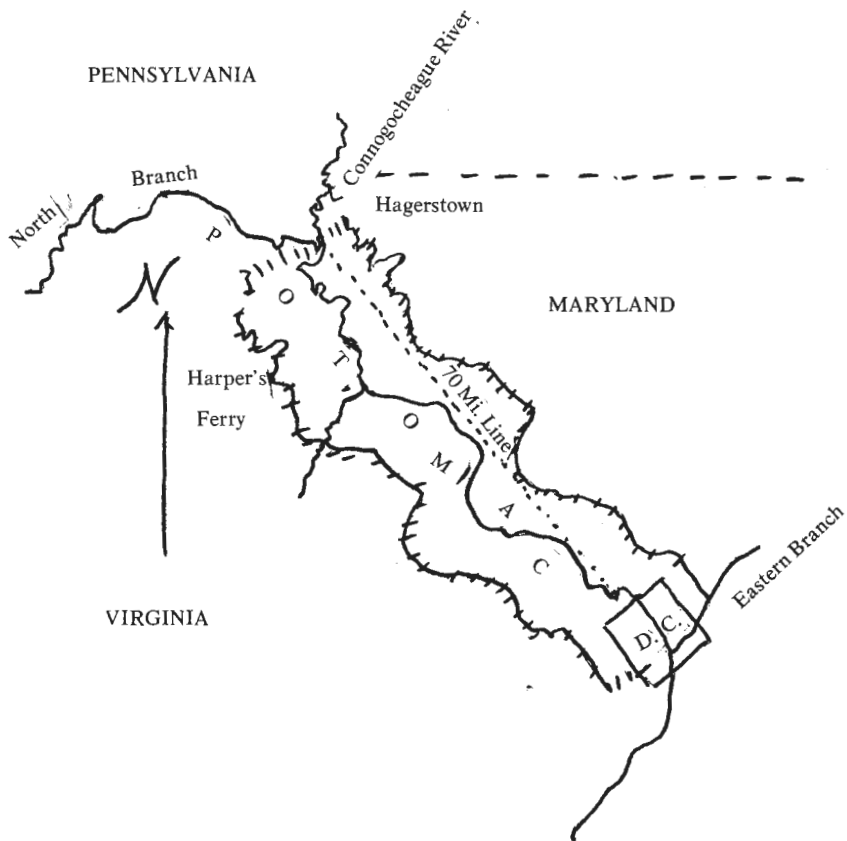


Figure 1

General Territory for Location of the Ten Mile Square Under the Federal Residence Act of 1790.

