

ALEXANDRIA

Exploring

Uncover the city's colorful past by treading the same cobblestoned paths as did citizens centuries ago.



The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum

BEGIN YOUR TOUR at the **Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House**, 221 King Street at the corner of Fairfax Street, a recreation of the circa 1724 home of Scottish merchant and Alexandria co-founder William Ramsay.

■ **Walk two blocks east on King Street toward the Potomac River to Union Street.** Turn right onto Union and right onto Prince. Welcome to **Captain's Row**, one of Alexandria's oldest and most picturesque blocks with authentic cobblestones. Sea captains or ship masters built many of these Federal houses at a time when Alexandria rivaled New York and Boston as a port of entry.

■ **Continue up Prince Street to the 200 block, known as Gentry Row.** On the corner of Prince and Lee lies the **Athenaeum**. Built in 1851, this antebellum Greek Revival building originally housed the Bank of the Old Dominion. Today, the Athenaeum is an art gallery and the home of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association.

■ **Turn right on S. Fairfax Street.** Find the **Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum**, 105-107 S. Fairfax Street, where Edward Stabler began his pharmacy business in 1792, serving customers like Martha Washington and Robert E. Lee. The family business operated continuously until

1933 when the Depression forced its closure. Today, the museum exhibits herbal botanicals and medical equipment, much preserved in its original form.

■ **Turn left onto King Street and right into Market Square.** **City Hall**, 301 King Street, is home to Alexandria's city government. Its structure was built in 1871 as a courthouse, atop a site first used as a market space frequented by George Washington. Today, its steeple tower is a landmark on the Alexandria horizon, and the Farmers Market tradition continues each Saturday throughout the year.

■ **Return to Fairfax Street, and turn left.** **Carlyle House**, 121 N. Fairfax Street, was built in 1752 by wealthy Scottish merchant and city co-founder John Carlyle. This handsome stone mansion is an outstanding example of Colonial Georgian architecture.

■ **Turn left onto Cameron Street, and walk one block to Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal Street.** Businessman John Wise built this two-building complex: the 1785 Georgian-style City Tavern and the 1792 Federal-style City Hotel famous for its great ballroom. Ideally situated on the main stage coach route between

Boston and Williamsburg, the tavern became an important political and social center, whose notable patrons included George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Robert E. Lee.

■ **Walk up Cameron Street to George Washington's Townhouse, 508 Cameron Street.** This structure recreates a modest 18th-century dwelling originally built in 1769 by Washington to provide convenient quarters when business or inclement weather prevented his return to Mount Vernon.

■ **Continue on Cameron, and cross over N. Washington Street.** **Christ Church**, 118 N. Washington Street, was built in 1773 and is an excellent example of a small rectangular Georgian church. The three-story tower with belfry topped by a cupola was completed in 1818. George Washington played a part in building the church and was an original pew-holder (number 60). Robert E. Lee was also a member of the congregation.

■ **Turn left on N. Washington Street toward King Street, which turns into S. Washington.** **The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum** sits at 201 S. Washington Street. Since its beginnings in 1839, the building has been used as a Civil War hospital, a private home, an office building and the nation's first Bicentennial Center. Today, the Lyceum displays exhibits on Alexandria's story through more than 1,500 historical objects.

■ **Turn left on Prince Street, then right on S. Alfred Street.** **Friendship Firehouse**, 107 S. Alfred Street, built in 1855, is the headquarters of the Friendship Fire Company, Alexandria's first volunteer firefighting squad. The stories of those who protected Alexandria's citizens from fire—an overwhelming concern in the days of mostly wooden buildings—are preserved in the Friendship Firehouse Museum.

