



Alexandria (Images of America)

George K. Combs, Leslie Anderson, Julia M. Downie

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Alexandria has a long and storied past. Founded as a colonial tobacco port by English and Scottish merchants in 1749, the city prospered. It became the social and economic center of Northern Virginia and the upper Potomac region. When the nation's capital was established in 1791, Alexandria became a part of the District of Columbia. In 1833, a canal intended to increase trade and revenue nearly bankrupted the city. By the time Alexandria retroceded to Virginia in 1847, it had lost its standing among maritime cities on the Eastern Seaboard. Notable residents have included politicians and military heroes, such as George Washington, Robert E. Lee, and Gerald R. Ford, as well as cultural icons Willard Scott and Jim Morrison. Today's Alexandria includes descendants of free and enslaved African Americans and the progeny of 18th- and 19th-century European immigrants who have joined with "new" Americans to create vibrant 21st-century communities.

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