



1315 DUKE STREET

ALEXANDRIA, VA

1315 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia:

Site History

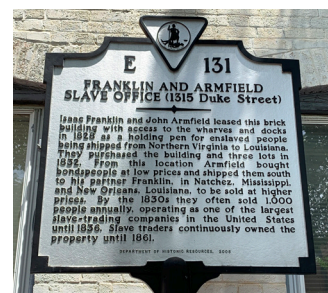
Originally built in the period from 1812 to 1820 for General Robert Young, commander of Alexandria's militia, as a three-story private residence with basement, the nationally registered brick and wood framed building would later become the business office and holding pen for one of the largest domestic slave trading firms in the United States, Franklin & Armfield, from 1828-1836.

Whereas most slave traders during this time, operated on a relatively small scale, Franklin and Armfield were one of the few who became millionaires because of their dealing of enslaved people. Before John Armfield and Isaac Franklin sold the business in 1836, they had control of half of the coastal slave trade from Virginia to New Orleans. Armfield lived above the business, collecting enslaved people brought in by brokers and headhunters, and managing the trade in Alexandria.

While the location of the 1828 Franklin and Armfield slave pen has great significance to Virginia's slave history, its reach is wider stretching to the Deep South. As the need for slave labor in northern tobacco regions decreased in the 1820's, demand grew in the Cotton Belt – where slaves were needed to harvest cotton, and labor on sugar and rice plantations. Traders took advantage of this trend, acquiring slaves who were then shipped south where they could demand a much higher price. Thousands of enslaved men, women, and children were purchased in the Chesapeake Bay region and forced on a 1,000-mile march to the slave markets in Natchez, Mississippi or New Orleans, Louisiana or by sea via his company's ships. Franklin lived mostly in Gallatin, Tenn., overseeing those marches and the sales to new masters based in Louisiana.

During the boom days for the slave trade, the building at 1315 Duke Street could be compared to a small city. The complex included a hospital, kitchen, laundry, tailor, pens for male and female slaves, outdoor courtyards, and a residence. Other slave traders operating out of 1315 Duke Street included: Kephart & Co. (1836-1845), Bruin & Hill (1845-1852), Millan & Grigsby (1852-1858), and Price, Birch & Co. (1858-1861). Franklin and Armfield's new business model for human trafficking influenced just about every slave dealer from that period, leaving an indelible mark on domestic slave trading in the nation. Between 1828 and 1861, it is estimated that more than 100,000 enslaved African Americans passed through this landmark, victims of human trafficking, in America's desire for slave labor. Slave trading ended when Union troops occupied Alexandria in mid-1861.

During the Civil War, the building and surrounding site were used as a military prison. Toward the end of the Civil War, the building complex served as both the L'Ouverture Hospital and barracks for black soldiers and contrabands -- enslaved persons who fled the Confederate states seeking refuge from Union troops.



Freedom House Museum

The 1315 Duke Street building, was purchased in 1996 by the Northern Virginia Urban League (NVUL) and the small, two-room basement museum, known as the Freedom House Museum, was opened on February 12, 2008 (Lincoln's Birthday). The building is dedicated to Rev. Lewis Henry Bailey—a former slave who was sold through the slave pen to a family in Texas. Freed in 1863, he walked back to Alexandria and founded several churches and schools in Virginia, still in existence today.

The City of Alexandria established a partnership with NVUL to ensure the long-term success of the museum and the preservation of the historic site. Starting in February 2018, the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) began opening the museum on weekends and providing regularly scheduled tours and site interpretation that included the compelling history of Freedom House as well the nearby OHA sites with related African-African landmarks.



Planned Sale to the City, Building Restoration and Museum Expansion, City Ownership and Operations

In part for those reasons, and so the museum can be held in public trust, the NVUL has agreed to sell the property to the City of Alexandria, with the City funding 100% of the \$1.8 million purchase price so that it may continue to be preserved and interpreted as an African American heritage site and ensure its museum hours and museum space are expanded beyond the basement into the first and upper floors.

Based on an independent property assessment report conducted for the City in April 2018, 1315 Duke Street is in poor condition. General repairs needed for the property include roofing work, windows, exterior wood and masonry wall repair, and mechanical and electrical upgrades. Improving and protecting the building over the next 10 years is anticipated to cost approximately \$3 million dollars with \$1.6 million needed within the first two years after acquisition.

While the existing easement offers protections on portions of the building and site, unless publicly owned, the public's access to the basement museum and history will be significantly limited to as little as the "one day per year" minimum required by the existing easement. Possible loss of this site will also deprive historians and those interested in slave history, the understanding of an important aspect of our national, state, and local African American heritage. To ensure the site's preservation, the City of Alexandria is pursuing purchase of the property and will need additional funding sources or partnerships for restoration and preservation efforts. While there are some private funds that may be able to be raised to assist with building renovation, restoration and museum exhibit planning and installation it is likely that substantial guaranteed funding (including from the City and the Commonwealth of Virginia) will be needed to achieve the vision of a restored 1315 Duke Street with full and informative exhibits. Acquisition of the property by the City ensures the long-term ownership of the building as a public museum house, held for the public trust, accessible to the public (including school students), and preserved to recall a painful but important era of national, Virginia, and City history. There is also the immense opportunity to tell a fuller and more complete story of the site, restoring and curating museum exhibits to the upper floors of the building.

2020 - 2021 Funding Needs

FUNDING NEEDS	Estimated Cost
Buiding Renovation/Restoration (24 months)	\$1,603,000
Museum Intrepretation, Education, and Exhibition (MIEE)*	\$840,000
Total	\$2,443,000

* MIEE FUNDING NEEDS	
Research & Scholarship	\$125,000
Exhibit Design	
Phase 1: Interpretive Planning Phase (4-6 months)	\$40,000
Phase 2: Design Phases (10-12 months)	\$100,000
Phase 3: Fabrication & Installation (6 months)	\$375,000
Exhibit Design Total	\$515,000
Educational/Outreach	\$50,000
Visitor Services	\$75,000
Additional Museum Operations	\$75,000
TOTAL MIEE	\$840,000