

**“PHOTOGRAPHIC PRESENTMENTS OF THEM WILL BE
ACCEPTED BY POSTERITY WITH AN UNDOUBTING FAITH”
CORRECTING TWO CIVIL WAR-ERA PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM R. PYWELL AND PUBLISHED IN
*GARDNER’S PHOTOGRAPHIC SKETCH BOOK OF THE WAR (1866)***

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PART I: THE SLAVE PEN

Introduction

While this author has not sat down to make an official tally, the period between May 24, 1861 (the day after Virginia voted to secede from the Union and the United States Army crossed over the Potomac River and into Alexandria) and the end of the Civil War is likely one of the best-documented periods in Alexandria history. These years are illuminated by the kinds of historical documentation that make up the stock and trade of historians: diaries, journals, letters, newspaper articles, account books, government ledgers, military reports, tax lists, historic maps, and the subject of this two-part article on Alexandria during the Civil War, historic photographs.

The following research builds on ongoing work by the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) to document the building at 1315 Duke Street, the last standing component of the former slave pen or jail that was located here between 1828 and 1861.¹ The most important sources for documenting the thousands of enslaved people trafficked through this site and others like it across the City and the rest of the American South are the ship manifests, bills of sale, account books and ledgers, court and notarial archives, and slave trader papers that were created and archived as a result of generations of legalized human trafficking. These provide us with the



Figure 0. 1315 Duke St. Alexandria, VA
Today, the Freedom House Museum

¹ The Office of Historic Alexandria maintains a website for our ongoing project at 1315 Duke Street, which can be found at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/FreedomHouse>. Resources related to the history of the slave jail can be found online at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/museums/history-of-1315-duke-street>. For more specifically on the history of the building and site, see the Building and Property History report (Skolnik, Benjamin A., Building and Property History: 1315 Duke Street Alexandria, Virginia, Alexandria Archaeology, Office of Historic Alexandria, 2021, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/1315DukeStBuildingHistorySkolnik2021.pdf>). For more on the structure itself, see the Historic Structures Report (SmithGroup, 1315 Duke Street: Historic Structures Report, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Prepared for the City of Alexandria, Virginia - Department of Project Implementation and the Office of Historic Alexandria, <https://media.alexandriava.gov/content/oha/HSR1315DukeReport2021.pdf>).

names, ages, sexes, heights, and racial descriptions of these people, and they frequently provide the names of their enslavers and where they resided.

We have identified roughly 100 manifests listing the names of forced migrants on ships leaving the Port of Alexandria with enslaved people onboard, some of the business records for some of the firm of slave traders based at 1315 Duke Street, and records of individual sales of enslaved people in county and parish court records.² These sources provide a way for us to document and follow individual people through the Domestic Slave Trade as they were trafficked from Alexandria and the Chesapeake to the Lower South. As far as documenting and understanding the physical slave jail complex and the structure currently still standing at 1315 Duke Street, one of the best historical sources available to us are the numerous photographs and illustrations that were created during the Civil War.

We have identified roughly 100 manifests listing the names of forced migrants on ships leaving the Port of Alexandria with enslaved people onboard...

While we have a handful of written accounts of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street written by anti-slavery activists and foreign visitors to Alexandria in the 1830s and 1840s that describe the use and operation of the site when it was in use as a slave jail, these Civil War-era visual depictions of the building and site provide a unique (and literal) glimpse at a building that was then being used as a military prison, but had until the morning of May 24, 1861 been used as a slave jail.³ Of the approximately 30 historic photographs and illustrations created prior to 1930 that depict the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street, only two of them date to before 1861 (only one shows the building with any amount of detail) and only two date to after 1865 or 1866. The remainder were all drawn, engraved, or taken during the Civil War-era and they show several significant architectural changes to the building during this period.⁴ Because a significant portion of our understanding of the slave jail as a physical structure comes to us through the Civil War, and because the building was used as a slave pen right up until the moment it was liberated by the United

² For two of the largest collections of manifests, see Slave Manifests of Coastwise Vessels Filed at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1807-1860 at the National Archives and the Slavery Collection, 1709-1864 at the New York Historical Society. While the slave trading papers of Isaac Franklin and John Armfield are not known to have survived, those of their Richmond-based partner, Rice C. Ballard are held by the Wilson Library University at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, some papers of their Warrenton-based agent, Jourdan. M. Saunders are at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, and some of those of their successor, George Kephart, are held by the New Jersey Historical Society. The largest collection of local court records can be found in the New Orleans Notarial Archives.

³ These accounts of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street include Leavitt, Joshua, "Editor's Correspondence," *New York Evangelist*, February 1, 1834, pp. 2-3; Abdy, Edward Strutt, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America: From April 1833 to October 1834*, 1835, pp. 179-180; Andrews, Ethan Allen, *Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States*, 1836, pp. 135-143; and Sturge, Joseph. *A Visit to the United States in 1841*, 1842, pp. 100-101.

⁴ For more on a general overview of the photographs and images that document the history of 1315 Duke Street Skolnik, see: Benjamin A. "Exposing the Alexandria Slave Pen: Historical Photographs, Engravings, and Illustrations of 1315 Duke Street," public lecture, Lyceum, Alexandria, Virginia, February 13, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hMETfp-Z_s.

States military, understanding the layout and chronology of the building during this period can set us up to understand the built structure prior to this period, for which much less visual documentation exists.

Unfortunately, unlike modern digital files like photographs, Civil War-era photographs do not come to us in the present with embedded metadata. Metadata is just data *about* the data (in the case of digital photography, information like the kind of camera or lens used, the camera settings, the photographer, GPS coordinates that locate where the photograph was taken, or the time and date the photograph was taken). These pieces of data are very helpful to us in the 21st century as we work with digital information like modern photographs, but generally, are absent when working with historic photographs, unless somebody took the time to make sure this information was recorded and then preserved along with the image.

Originally shot on large-format glass plates treated with a light-sensitive coating, these Civil War-era photographs sometimes include this kind of information scratched directly into the image like the words “Slave Pen” or a catalog number, or sometimes even accidental impressions that look suspiciously like the



Figure 1. Compilation of markings on Civil War era photographs.

fingerprint of a careless photographer (**Figure 1**). Published prints or those bound in albums would sometimes include a title or the name of the photographer on the back, or a general idea of when the photograph was taken in an accompanying caption or copyright date provided by the photographer or the image’s publisher (**Figure 2**). But generally, archival repositories like the Library of Congress or the National Archives provide fairly broad brackets of dates such as, “1861-1865,” “between 1860 and 1870,” or even in the case of the William R. Pywell photograph of 1315 Duke Street discussed below, the ever-helpful descriptor “Civil War time.”⁵

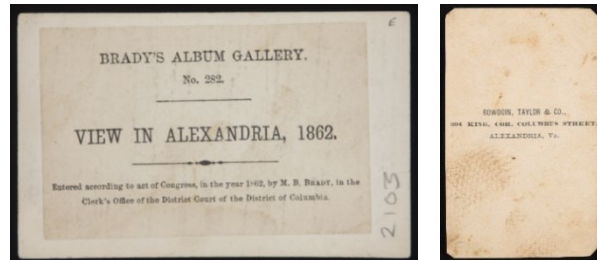


Figure 2

Sometimes, these descriptors may be sufficient for whatever use the viewer has in mind. Other times, these descriptors may be thoroughly unhelpful and leave the researcher grasping for additional context. In these cases where a broad bracket of dates is not sufficient, the viewer is left to their own devices in sorting out when each photograph was taken and to make sense of

⁵ For example, see *Slave pen of Price, Birch & C., Alexandria, Va*, Andrew J. Russell, NAID: 528808, National Archives, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/528808>; or *Slave pen, Alexandria, VA. (Civil War time)*, William R. Pywell, LC-BH84- 2, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018667391/>.

any differences or changes seen between the views. In the case of OHA's ongoing project at 1315 Duke Street, a number of significant architectural changes appear across these approximately 30 images, and it is of fundamental importance to be able to arrange these photographs chronologically to determine the sequence of these changes and what the building looked like when it was being used as a slave jail.

And so, the research presented in this article and in the next *Alexandria Chronicle* are an attempt to develop a kind of rich historical context behind two specific Civil War-era photographs that were taken here in Alexandria with the objective to determine as best as possible when they were originally taken. One of these photographs depicts the Marshall House, which was on the 400 block of King Street, and the other depicts the slave-jail-turned-military-prison at 1315 Duke Street (**Figures 3 and 4**).⁶ Both photographs were originally published in Alexander Gardner's 1866 *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War*, both are attributed to photographer William Redish Pywell, and both are accompanied by captions that claim the photographs were taken in August 1862. Upon closer examination (the details of which will be discussed at length below), it would appear that neither of these photographs could have been taken in August 1862, and so the obvious research question to be answered is: "If these photographs were not taken in August 1862, when were they actually taken?"

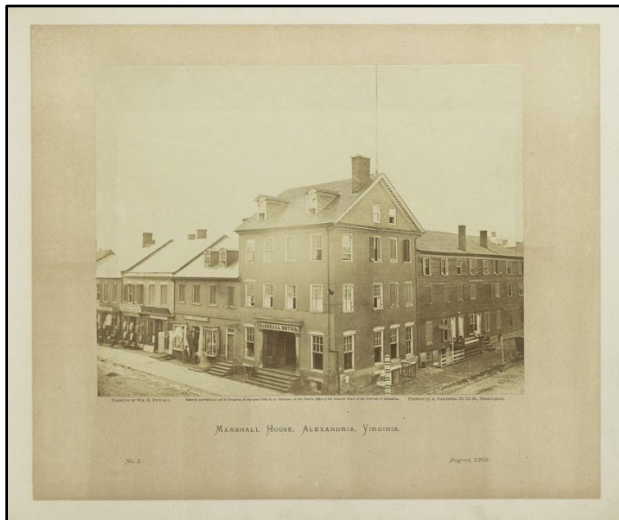


Figure 3 / Plate 1. The Marshall House, Alexandria, VA



Figure 4 / Plate 2. 1315 Duke St. Slave Jail / Military Prison

First, in order to show that these two photographs of Alexandria landmarks could not have been taken when their publisher claims they were taken, it will be necessary to interrogate several other well-known Civil War-era photographs of the same sites (or perhaps in this case, they might also be "sights" given our emphasis on the visual component of these places), as well

⁶ "Plate 1. Marshal House, Alexandria," *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the War*, Alexander Gardner, 1866, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_1293152; "Plate 2. Slave Pen, Alexandria," *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the War*, Alexander Gardner, 1866, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_1294159.

as a range of other historical sources.⁷ In the case of Pywell's photograph of the slave pen at 1315 Duke Street, it was this author's development of a detailed, working knowledge of the architecture and chronology of the site that identified the problem with the claimed August 1862 date in the first place.⁸ I am certainly not the first to look at Civil War photographs or question their contexts, nor am I the first to attempt to reconstruct where and when a group of photographs was taken, but I hope the following study provides a model for using supporting documentation to establish the historical context of historic photographs in order to better document the history of these sites.⁹

NOTE: Due to the highly visual nature of this article's topic and the limitations of some reading devices, most of the images that appear in the text are linked to enlarged versions of the same images. These online images provide opportunities for closer scrutiny of the source material and, in some cases, to aid with discussed comparisons. If the reader is online, the enlarged versions of the pictures can be reached by clicking on the images in the text.

⁷ My understanding of the potential for archaeological sites to function as visual sights comes from: Castañeda Quetzil E. *In the Museum of Maya Culture: Touring Chichén Itzá*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

⁸ Skolnik, 2021, pp. 125-130.

⁹ For examples of these kinds of studies, see Frassanito, William A., *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time*, 1975; Williams, Susan E., "Richmond Again Taken': Reappraising the Brady Legend through Photographs by Andrew J. Russell," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol 110 (4), 2002, pp. 437-460; Best, Makeda, *Elevate the Masses, Alexander Gardner, Photography, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2020.

The Slave Pen at 1315 Duke Street

Built in 1812 or 1813 by Alexandria merchant Robert Young, 1315 Duke Street was a three-story federal style brick townhome when it was built at the far west edge of the town. In May 1828, slave traders Isaac Franklin and John Armfield moved into the building and for the next 33 years, 1315 Duke Street was at the epicenter of the Domestic Slave Trade in Alexandria. For a time, the building served as the headquarters for one of the largest and most notorious slave trading firms in the country. The slave pen was liberated by the Union Army when it crossed over the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. on May 24, 1861, and for the rest of the war, it was used as a military prison (largely used to confine Union soldiers arrested for disciplinary infractions such as being drunk, disorderly, out without a pass, fighting, etc.). After the war, it was turned first into a boarding house and then apartments before it was renovated again in the mid-1980s and turned into offices. In 2008, the Northern Virginia Urban League opened a museum exhibit in the basement dedicated to the history of the site and its involvement in the slave trade. The City of Alexandria purchased the former slave jail at 1315 Duke Street from the Northern Virginia Urban League in March 2020 and opened an expanded museum exhibit to the public in May 2022.¹⁰

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Trade in Alexandria.*

It should be acknowledged that prior to the City buying the property in 2020, the general history of the site was already known. There already existed a National Register of Historic Places nomination form that contained five pages on the history and significance of the site, a 1976 master's thesis that discussed the slave trade in Alexandria and especially at 1315 Duke Street, and an archaeological site report that detailed the findings of excavations that had taken place in the mid-1980s in the side yard, to the west, and in the basement of what was left of the slave trading headquarters.¹¹

In 2021, three major works were published that form the core of our modern understanding of the site. In January, this author finished the *Building and Property History* report that documents the history of the building through historical sources like deeds, newspaper advertisements, censuses, and historic photographs. This analysis of historic photographs is the predecessor of this article. In April, University of Alabama Professor Joshua Rothman published his book *The Ledger and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America* that details the operations of the slave trading firm of Franklin & Armfield that operated at 1315 Duke Street from 1828 to 1837. Then in October, SmithGroup presented the *1315 Duke Street Historic Structures*

¹⁰ See Skolnik, 2021 for a more complete discussion of the history of the site.

¹¹ National Register of Historic Places, Franklin and Armfield Office, 1315 Duke Street Apartments, Alexandria, Virginia, National Register #78003146, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41678975>; Ridgeway, Michael A., *A Peculiar Business: Slave Trading in Alexandria, Virginia, 1825-1861*. M.A. thesis, History Department, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1976; Artemel, Janice G., Elizabeth A. Crowell and Jeff Parker, *The Alexandria Slave Pen: The Archaeology of Urban Captivity*. Engineering-Science, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1987, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/SiteReportArtemel1987SlavePenAX75.pdf>.

Report, which takes our historical understanding of the building and makes recommendations regarding its ongoing preservation and use.¹²

Two years prior, in 2019, Professor Joshua Rothman, while working on his book *The Ledger and the Chain*, came to Alexandria to give a talk at Alexandria's Lyceum on his work. He gave a follow-up presentation to the Office of Historic Alexandria staff about his research into the slave trading business of Franklin & Armfield.¹³ In his research, Rothman pulls heavily from the papers of Rice Ballard, Franklin and Armfield's Richmond-based business partner. Unfortunately, the papers of John Armfield, the business' Alexandria-based partner and the slave trader who operated out of 1315 Duke Street between 1828 and 1837, are not known to have survived, which means that as a result we know less about their Northern Virginia operations or how they used the site at 1315 Duke Street.

What stuck with me from Rothman's presentation to OHA staff was that while there were quite a few Civil War-era photographs of the site that depicted the slave jail complex prior it being dismantled after the Civil War, they existed as a disparate assemblage of disarticulated views that were not in conversation with each other. There were no time stamps on these photographs and so it was not readily apparent which ones were taken first and which later. The ones taken from Duke Street looking at the front of the building were easy enough to pin down where they had been taken, but the ones showing the interior of the prison were just assumed to have been taken from somewhere inside the jail. The building has changed significantly since the Civil War, first being converted into a boarding house, then apartments, and then offices (and now a museum), making it hard to find the modern location of these photographs. The result was that

...quite a few Civil War-era photographs of the site ... existed as a disparate assemblage of disarticulated views....

the architectural changes observed in these photographs could not be easily dated. It was not that the task was impossible, just that the work to bring order to this body of photographs had not yet been done.

When I left Rothman's talk, I found copies of each of these photographs of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street, and over the next week or so got to work figuring out where and roughly when each had been taken. That writeup became the core around which the *Building and Property History* report was written, which in turn informed the *Historic Structures Report*.¹⁴ Our understanding of the building at 1315 Duke Street and the slave jail complex that once stood on this block evolves as we discover new information. Since writing the *Building and Property History* report, several previously unknown images of the slave jail have been uncovered and a large

¹² Skolnik, 2021; Rothman, Joshua D. *The Ledger and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America*. First ed., Basic Books, Hachette Book Group, 2021; SmithGroup, 2021.

¹³ Rothman, Joshua, "What Happened in that House on Duke Street: The Story of the Men Who Transformed the Domestic Slave Trade," Recorded Lecture, May 16, 2019, Lyceum, Alexandria, Virginia, <https://vimeo.com/338363670>.

¹⁴ Skolnik, 2021 (see pages 91-161 for an initial discussion of the Civil War at 1315 Duke Street); and SmithGroup, 2021 (see Appendix C: Historic Image Analysis, pp. 547-566 for annotated versions of many of these photographs).

number of Civil War-era written descriptions of the site have been collected. The two documents represent a solid foundation for the history here, and these Civil War-era images represent one of the best sources we have for establishing an historical baseline of the site.

It is one of these photographs of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street that appears as the second image in Alexander Gardner's 1866 *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (**Figure 5**) and was my introduction to trying to make sense out of his bound collection of photographs. Consisting of 100 photographs across two volumes and costing the princely sum of \$150

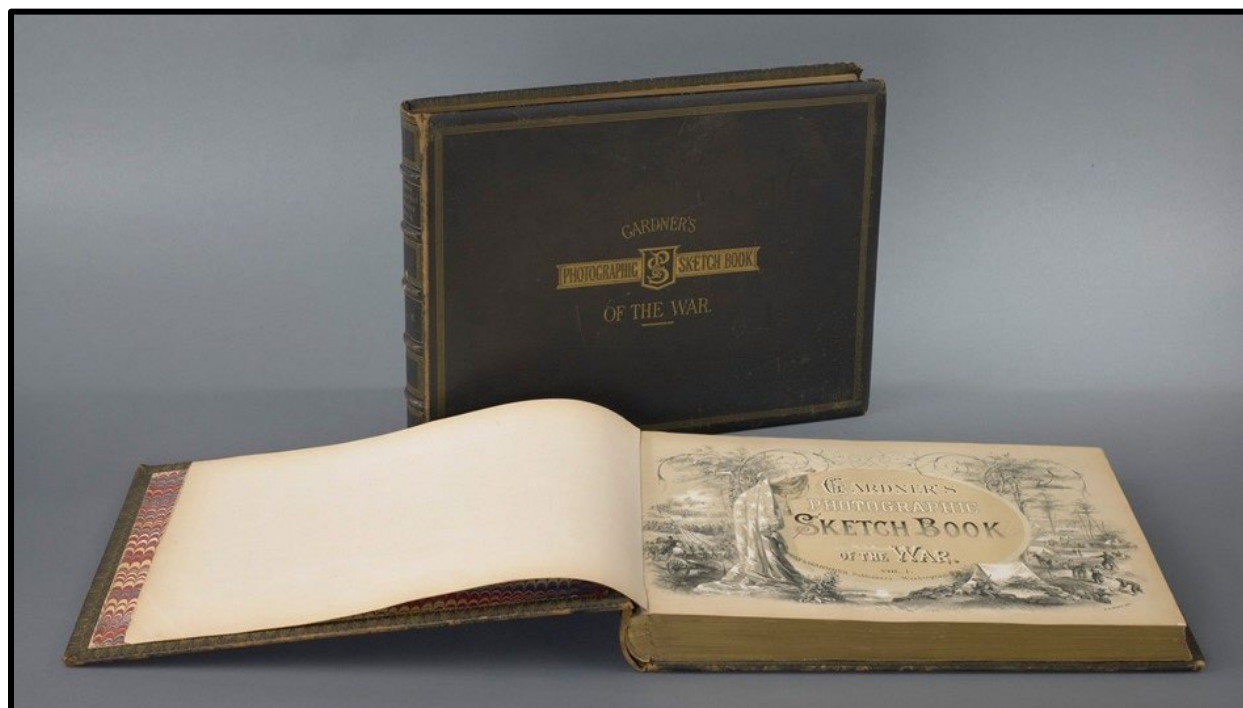


Figure 5.

(more than nine months' pay for a private in the Union army in 1865), Alexander Gardner's work was hailed as "superb and unique," "magnificent" and "a work of great value."¹⁵ Gardner's *Sketch Book* was a kind of photographic retrospective of the recently-concluded war and began to appear in bookstores across the nation sometime around the first week of February 1866.¹⁶ Some historians have already tackled Gardner and his *Sketch Book* project. From a technological standpoint, it was a relatively early attempt to publish and share photographic works, a technology that was still in its infancy. Photography brought the Civil War to many Americans in ways they not seen with previous wars, and from a cultural or historical standpoint, Gardner's *Sketch Book* represents an attempt to grapple with the destructive war that had just ended.¹⁷

¹⁵ See *The Civil War Dictionary*, Mark Mayo Boatner III, David McKay Co. New York, 1959, p. 624 for Civil War soldier pay; "Photographic History of the War," *Philadelphia Press*, February 27, 1866, 4; "Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War," *Baltimore American*, March 10, 1866, 1.

¹⁶ "Photographic Sketch-book of the War," *New York Daily-Tribune*, February 6, 1866, 2.

¹⁷ See Trachtenberg, Alan. "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs." *Representations*, no. 9, 1985, pp. 1–32; and Julie L. Mellby. "GARDNER'S PHOTOGRAPHIC SKETCH BOOK OF THE WAR." The Princeton University

Alexander Gardner was born in Scotland in 1821 and was working as a photographer for Mathew Brady when the Civil War broke out in the spring of 1861 (**Figure 6**).¹⁸ By the fall of 1862 or the spring of 1863, Gardner left the employ of Brady, opened his own gallery in



Figure 6.

Mathew B. Brady, c.1861

Alexander Gardner, 1863

William Redish Pywell, ca. 1860-1865

For a group portrait of Andrew J. Russell, his photographic instructor Egbert G. Fowx, and two of his assistants, see Williams, 2002, p. 440

Washington D.C., and continued to capture scenes from the war.¹⁹ In the introduction to *Sketch Book*, Gardner states his purpose in compiling these two volumes:

In presenting the Photographic Sketch Book of the War to the attention of the public, it is designed that it shall speak for itself. The omission, therefore, of any remarks by way of preface might well be justified; and yet, perhaps, a few introductory words may not be amiss.

As mementoes of the fearful struggle through which the country has just passed, it is confidently hoped that the following pages will possess an enduring interest. Localities that would scarcely have been known, and probably never remembered, save in their immediate vicinity, have become celebrated, and will ever be held sacred as memorable fields, where thousands of brave men yielded up their lives a willing sacrifice for the cause they had espoused.

Verbal representations of such places, or scenes, may or may not have the merit of accuracy; but photographic presentments of them will be accepted by posterity with an undoubting faith.

During the four years of the war, almost every point of importance has been photographed, and the collection from which these views have been selected amounts to nearly three thousand.

Library Chronicle, vol. 67, no. 2, 2006, pp. 435–40; Cobb, Cobb, Josephine. "Mathew B. Brady's Photographic Gallery in Washington." Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C., vol. 53/56, 1953, pp. 28–69; Cobb, Josephine, "Photographers of the Civil War," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Autumn 1962), pp. 127-135.

¹⁸ Melby, Julie L., "Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War," *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Winter 2006), p. 437.

¹⁹ Cobb, 1953, 52; "Beautiful Pictures," *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 20, 1863, 3; "Gardner's Photographic Gallery," *Daily National Intelligencer*, June 5, 1863, p. 3.

Gardner's photographs are familiar to many who have studied the Civil War, or even to those who have ever been to one of the places documented by Gardner. The 100 scenes in *Sketch Book* are arranged chronologically (or at least the narrative in *Sketch Book* is arranged chronologically if the images themselves were not captured in sequence as this research will show). It opens with two scenes from Alexandria, and then goes on to capture the aftermath of the first battle of Bull Run/Manassas, the logistics of the Peninsula campaign, the battlefields of Antietam and Fredericksburg, scenes of death at Gettysburg, the siege, capture, and ruins of Richmond, the surrender at Appomattox. Gardner concludes with a photograph of the dedication of a monument on the Bull Run battlefield as the country began to look back at the preceding four years of war. Opposite each image, Gardner includes one or several paragraphs of text describing and contextualizing the scene for the viewer. While I had come across some of the images in Gardner's *Sketch Book* before, working on the *Building and Property History* report for 1315 Duke Street was the first time I was introduced to this work in a scholarly capacity.

Gardner's photograph of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street appears as the second scene in *Sketch Book* and is simply titled "Slave Pen, Alexandria, Virginia." The image was not actually taken



Figure 7

by Gardner; rather, the text under the photograph credits the original photographic negative to William Redish Pywell, one of Gardner's photographers (**Figure 6**), with only the positive print produced from Pywell's negative being attributed to Gardner. This glass plate image is held by the Library of Congress (**Figure 7**), along with two very slightly different stereopair plates of the same scene (**Figure 8**).²⁰ The

resolution and detail of these glass plates is much higher than Gardner's printed version and is more inclusive (in that it includes areas of the scene cropped out in Gardner's print) and because

²⁰ Glass plate negative: Slave pen, Alexandria, VA. (Civil War time), William R. Pywell, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018667391/>; glass plate stereoviews: [Alexandria, Va. Price, Birch & Co., dealers in slaves, 283 Duke St.], William R. Pywell, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018667034/>; Alexandria, Virginia. Slave pen. (Price, Birch & Company dealers in slaves), William R. Pywell, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018672038/>.

of these factors, the original negatives are extremely helpful for doing these kinds of photographic analyses. I highly recommend my readers follow the citations below to the online repositories of these images and to download them as I describe them here so that they can examine the photographs for themselves in the highest available resolution.



The text on the opposite page of Gardner's book describes the scene (**Figure 9**):

Slave Pen, Alexandria, Virginia

In many of the Southern cities the people had erected buildings of this kind for the confinement of slaves awaiting sale. The establishment represented in the photograph was situated in the western suburbs of Alexandria, near the depot of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. The main building was used by the clerks of the firm and the overseers. The high brick wall enclosed a court yard, in which were stables and out-houses for the accommodation of planters who come in for the purpose of selling or purchasing slaves. The large building on the right was used for the confinement of the negroes. It had a number of apartments, in which the slaves could be kept singly or in gangs, and one large mess room, where they received their food. The establishment was essentially a prison. The doors were very strong and were secured by large locks and bolts. Iron bars were fixed in the masonry of the windows, and manacles were frequently placed on the limbs of those suspected of designs for escape. Auction sales were regularly held, at which Virginia

farmers disposed of their servants to cotton and sugar planters from the Gulf States. If a slave-owner needed money which he could not easily procure, he sold one of his slaves; and the threat of being sent South was constantly held over the servants as security for faithful labor and good behavior. Before the war, a child three years old, would sell, in Alexandria, for about fifty dollars, and an able-bodied man at from one thousand to eighteen hundred dollars. A woman would bring from five hundred to fifteen hundred dollars, according to her age and personal attractions.

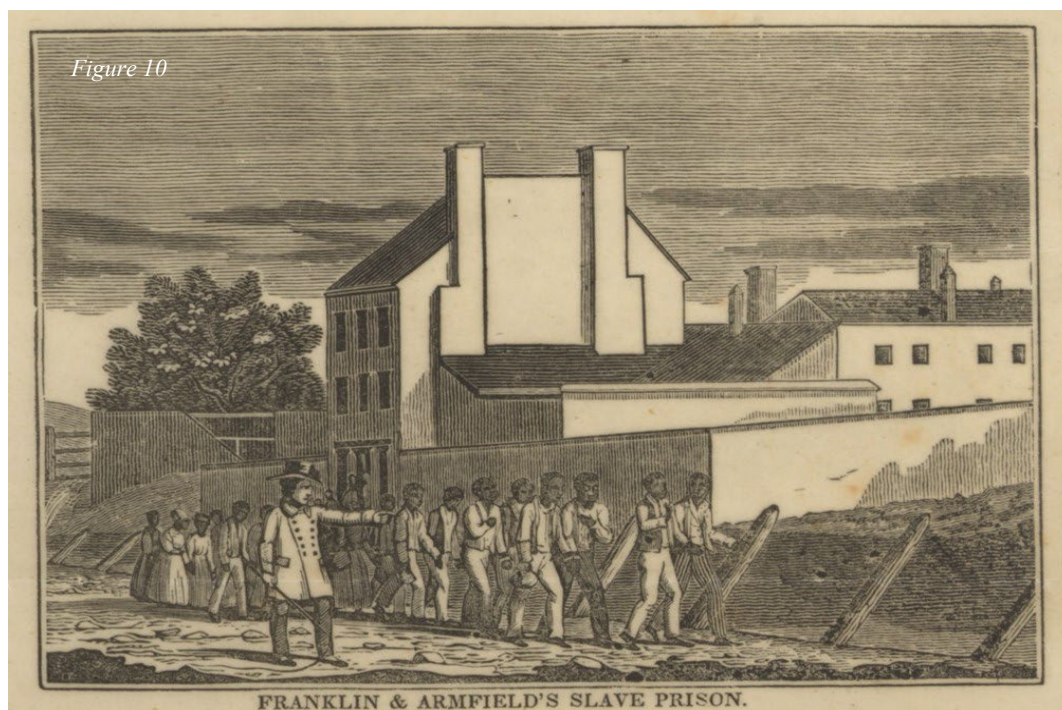
Figure 9

Slave Pen, Alexandria, Virginia.

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Even at first glance, the building in the Pywell photograph is instantly recognizable as the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street. The three-story brick building with its parapeted double chimney, flanked on both sides by tall, bricked-in yards, and emblazoned with the unmissable “PRICE, BIRCH & CO DEALERS IN SLAVES” sign was one of Alexandria’s most visited and photographed sites during the Civil War (perhaps second only to the Marshall House, the site of the double-martyrdom of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth and James Jackson the same morning the slave jail was liberated by the army). Upon closer examination, however, the building seen in the Pywell photograph exhibits some differences from the other Civil War-era photographs of the building. These include shutters that are completely missing from the front of the building, the whitewashed band behind the PRICE, BIRCH & CO. sign has almost completely faded, a single black cloth or banner hangs under one of the third story windows, the brick-enclosed men’s yard on the left of the main building has three barred windows in the south wall along Duke Street, the pitch of the roof over the men’s yard is higher and steeper with two separate roof vents or monitors at the apex of the roof, and there are three trees that should be visible in front of the slave jail here but are seen here as stumps. Because we do not have any pre-Civil War photographs of the slave jail (only a single, extant pre-Civil War illustration of the front of the site that dates to 1836 **Figure 10**), being able to understand the Civil War-era chronology of the building and its changes is a priority for understanding the configuration and use of the site during its use

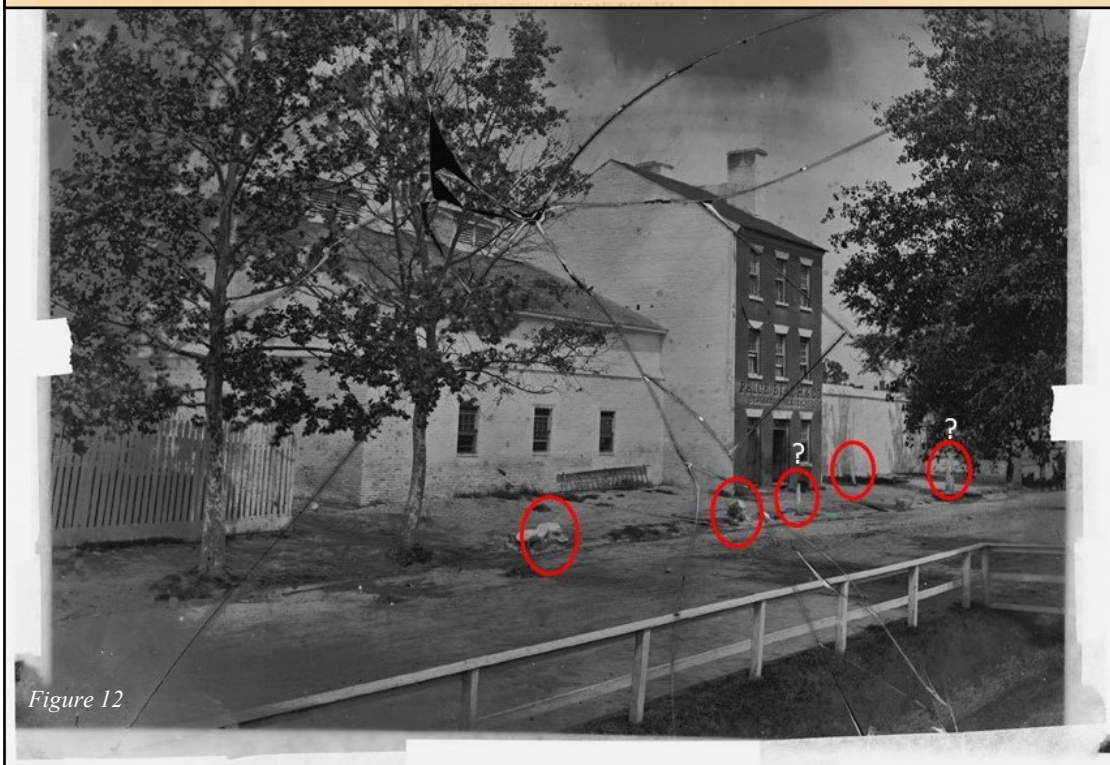
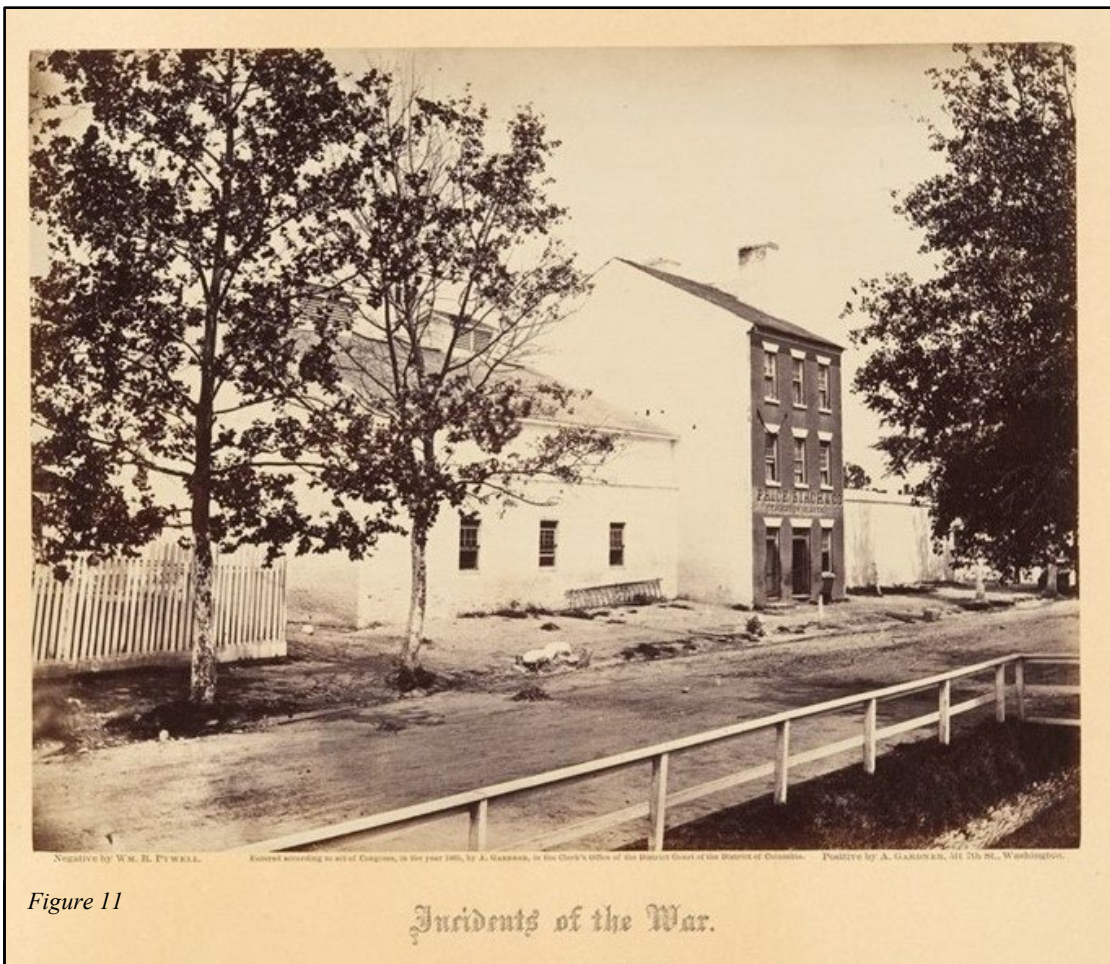
as a slave jail.²¹ What did the painted sign look like? Was there a roof over the yard or was it open? Did the cells visible in the Civil War-era photographs exist during the slave pen period? Were there windows in the yard facing onto Duke Street?



In the bottom righthand corner of the page where **Figure 8** appears, Gardner supplies a date for this scene: August 1862. To complicate matters, another copy of this image, also published by Gardner under his “Incidents of the War” series, carries the date August 1863 (**Figure 11**). Obviously, both the 1862 and the 1863 dates for this photograph cannot simultaneously be correct. Placing Pywell’s photograph in either August 1862 or August 1863 and holding it up to the other documentation we have for the building causes problems when trying to determine the sequence of these changes to the building as detailed below.

While there are several problems that arise with the chronology if Pywell’s image is placed in the middle of the sequence, the most problematic of these issues in terms of correctly sequencing these photographs are a series of trees that appear in front of the flanking brick yards in at least two other photographs but appear as cut down stumps here in the Pywell photograph (**Figure 12**). Given that trees can readily be turned into stumps with the application of a saw or an axe whereas it is much more difficult for stumps to turn back into grown trees over the span of a four year-long war, these stumps act as a kind of temporal marker and *strongly* suggest Pywell’s photograph came toward the end of the sequence of photographs and not at the beginning or the middle. If at least one of the 1862 or 1863 dates had to be incorrect (and my working hypothesis was that they were both wrong), it would be helpful to determine when exactly Pywell took this image.

²¹ Slave Market of America, American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661294/>



To date Pywell's photograph of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street, we can turn to the rest of the historical images and documentation we have for the building in order to build up our understanding of the development of and changes to that building. I borrowed a few tools from my archaeological toolkit. In an ideal world, we would be able to assign an exact date to each of the known photographs of this building. While some of the available photographs and illustrations can, in fact, be dated to a specific day and month (either because they depict a scene known to have occurred on a specific date, some other historical reference can place photographers at a site on a specific date, or the date is written directly onto the image), that is not possible here with the Pywell photograph. Instead, we can turn to relative dating, which can be used to place things in a relative order (i.e., first, middle, last), as opposed to absolute dating that seeks to pin down absolute calendrical dates. We can use the architectural changes identified above as diagnostic markers to help us mark the passage of time and further refine our chronology.

The first Civil War image of 1315 Duke Street that is relevant to this analysis (and that we can absolutely date) is an engraving based on an illustration that was published as the cover of the *New York Illustrated News* on March 1, 1862 (**Figure 13**).

The engraving is captioned with the line, "Frozen to Death.—Scene in a Slave Pen, Alexandria, Va.," and depicts a scene wherein a soldier confined to the military jail at the former slave pen froze to death on the night of February 4, 1862.²² The incident quickly became a national scandal, rising to the level of national newspaper coverage and Congressional hearings. The article accompanying this illustration first appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* almost a month earlier and read:



The old slave pen in Alexandria, to the burning shame of our officers though it be, is still used as a guard house for the soldiers. We visited it on Saturday morning again, with Mr. LUMLEY, the artist of the *New York Illustrated News*, who succeeded in making one of his usual accurate sketches of the bleak walls and iron gates. It is merely a square pen, made by four brick walls, about twenty feet high and two feet thick, covering a space of about sixty feet square.

There are no windows and but one door; no roof over it, except a narrow strip over one corner to keep off the pelting storm or cold and poisonous malaria that fills the air at night. A stream of filthy water runs through the centre, and the floor is of brick—always cold, damp and dirty. Here the soldiers are placed who are arrested for any cause.... Last Tuesday night, a private of the New York Sixty-third was placed in this pen, intoxicated. He laid down on the only vacant space, in bed, snow and slush over three inches deep, and next morning, when the iron grate was swung open, he was carried out a corpse. An inquest was held, and a surgeon testified that he died from drunkenness and exposure; but the surgeon in-chief says he was frozen to death....

In one side are occasionally a few soldiers huddled around a small fire built on the floor.²³

²² Frozen To Death – Scene in a Slave Pen, Alexandria, VA, *New York Illustrated News*, Vol. V, No. 121, March 1, 1862.

²³ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 10, 1862.

While not a photograph, the “usual accurate sketch” drawn by special artist Arthur Lumley and the accompanying text describe an uncovered, roughly 60’ by 60’ square space, enclosed by a 20’ high wall. There exist three known Civil War-era maps that show the layout of the slave pen prison; however, each depicts the size, shape, and arrangement of the complex slightly differently (**Figure 14**).²⁴ In 1985, archaeologists excavating prior to the construction of 1321 Duke Street next door to the west uncovered the remains of the men’s yard wall, which they measured

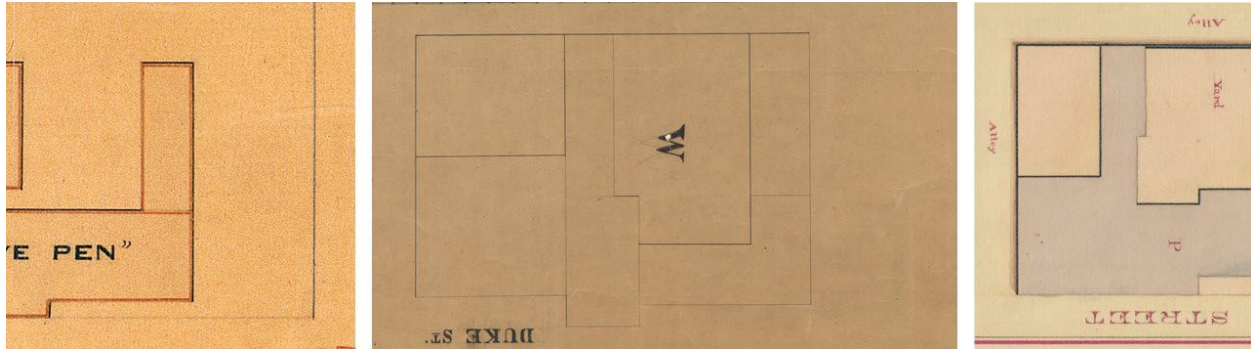


Figure 14 Segments of three Civil War maps

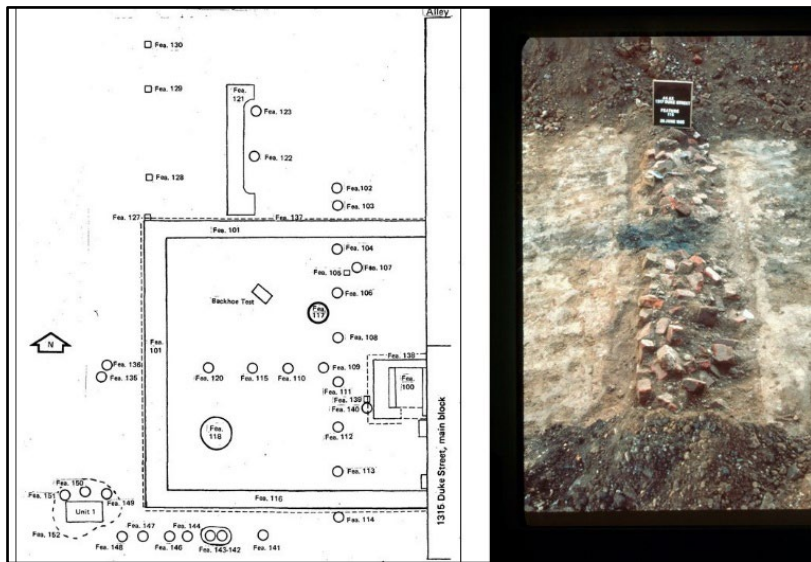


Figure 15 Archaeologists' map of men's yard and remains of men's yard wall

at 52' square (**Figure 15**). From the available maps, photographs, and textual descriptions, the men's yard to the west of the main building at 1315 Duke Street (on the left when looking at the front of the building from Duke Street) was taller than the women's yard, which was attached to the east (on the right when looking at the front of the building from Duke Street), larger than the women's yard (approximately 2,700 square feet versus approximately 1,750 square feet), and square in shape while the women's yard was rectangular. Of these two spaces, Lumley and the correspondent

for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* were most likely depicting the men's yard, drawn from its southeast corner, looking to the northwest. A similar scene was photographed by Mathew Brady or one of his photographers shortly thereafter, albeit with several major differences made to the yard (see **Figure 16** below).

²⁴ “Map of the U.S. Military Railroad Station at Alexandria, Va.,” Wm. M. Merrick, National Archives; Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Civil War Maps File, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/305670>; “Plans for Soldiers Rest, Alexandria VA,” Sheet 5, National Archives, Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Post and Reservation Maps, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/109182998>; “L'Ouveture Hospital, Contraband Barracks, etc.,” Sheet 20, National Archives, Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Post and Reservation Maps, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/109182952>.

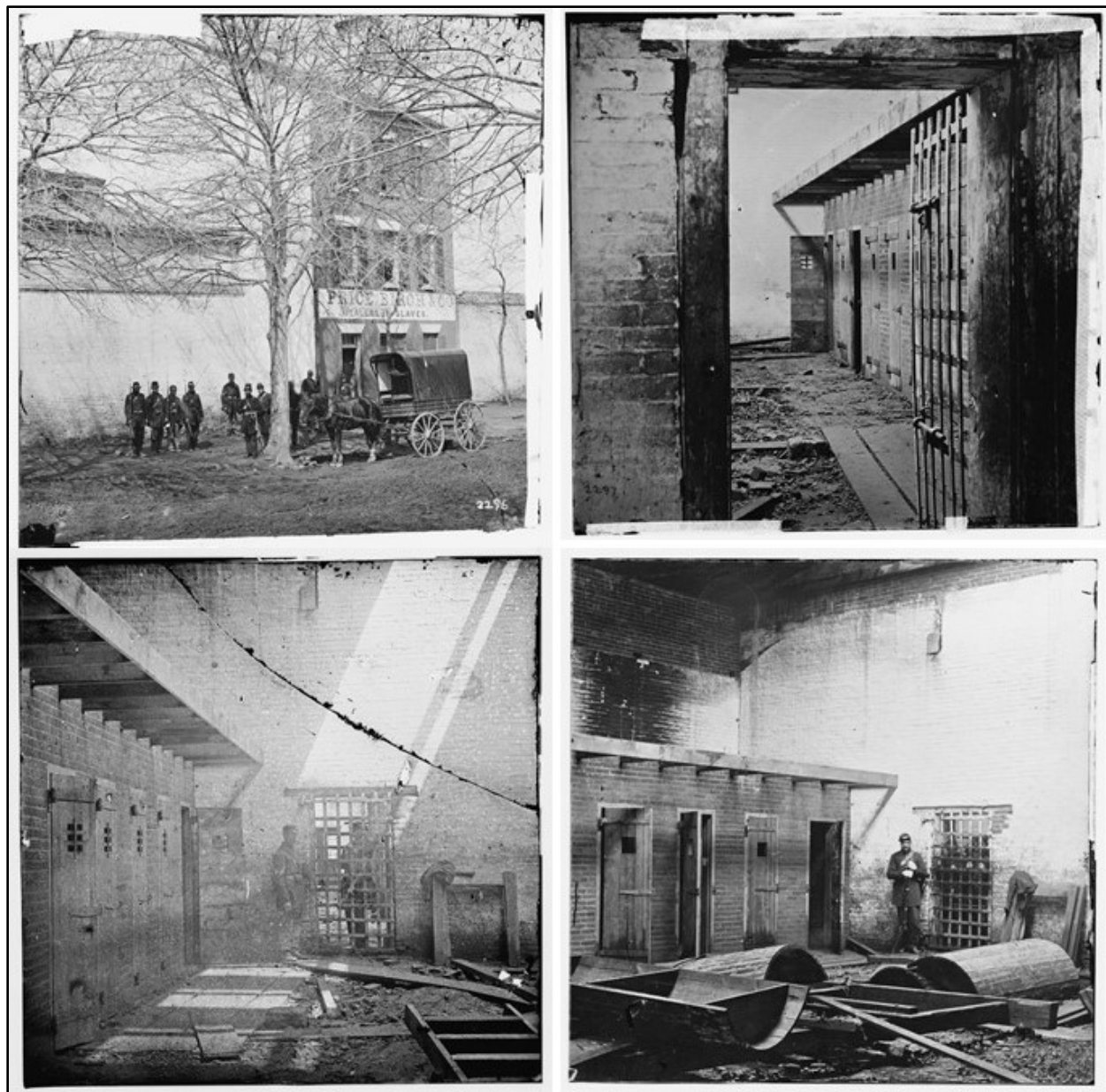


Figure 16 Various Civil War era photographs of the men's yard

The illustration and the textual description showing the men's yard as being uncovered except for a shed roof is important here, because this is one of our temporal markers that allows us to date images of 1315 Duke Street through the Civil War. Accounts written by anti-slavery activists and foreign visitors to the slave jail in the 1830s and 1840s describe the yard: "half of it covered with a roof"; "one side of this yard was roofed, but the principal part was open to the air"; and "an open enclosure, with high walls which it is impossible to scale..."²⁵. Other

²⁵ Leavitt, Joshua, "The American Slave Trade," letter, January 23, 1834, published in the *New York Evangelist*, February 1, 1834; Andrews, Ethan Allen, 1836 *Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States, in a series of letters addressed to the Executive Committee of the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race*, Light & Stearns, Boston; Sturge, Joseph, 1842 *A Visit to the United States in 1841*, Dexter S. King, Boston.

accounts from the first year of the war describe the men's yard as still uncovered up through February 1862: "ten feet of the rear side being covered with a shed roof"; "the walls of the "pen" are high, and there is no roof to shelter the unfortunate soldiers who are placed in it from the weather"; and, "the enclosure is an area of sixty feet square, formed by four high brick walls, over which, for about one-third the space, stretches a roof to protect its inmates from the weather."²⁶ In order for there to be "snow and slush over three inches deep" inside the men's yard in which a soldier can freeze to death, there cannot have been a full roof over that space, and the engraving based on Lumley's illustration and these pre and early-war descriptions of the men's yard suggest the same.

In response to public outrage and Congressional pressure regarding the conditions inside the military prison, changes were made at the military prison, which had until recently been a slave jail. On March 4, 1862, a month after the death of the soldier, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* ran a story that concluded, "the improvement in this place since it has been placed under the charge of Captain Myers has been great, and offers a great contrast to what it was a month ago."²⁷ Later that spring, a letter appeared in the *Concord Independent Democrat* dated April 16, 1862.²⁸ Their correspondent wrote of the jail, "one wing is being covered in and filled up with small dungeon cells, for refractory persons—

a horrid place." This correspondent, who identifies themselves as "Wallace," describes construction as active and ongoing at the time of their visit in mid-April 1862. From this sequence (1315 Duke Street starting 1862 with an uncovered yard, a soldier freezing to death over the evening of February 4, 1862, accountability in the form of public

... every known photograph of 1315 Duke Street had to have been taken some time after February 4, 1862...

outrage and Congressional action, and then changes resulting in the men's yard being roofed-in early that spring), we can therefore conclude that every known photograph of 1315 Duke Street had to have been taken sometime after February 4, 1862 (and likely after March or even mid-April when we learn the yard is being "covered in") because every known photograph of the building shows the men's yard as having been covered with a full roof.

To bookend the construction window for this new roof, we can turn to a series of photographs taken of the slave jail attributed to Mathew Brady (or if not Mathew Brady himself, then to photographers working for his studio), at least some of which appear to have been taken some time in the early spring of 1862 (**Figure 16**). This set consists of one exterior view of 1315 Duke Street featuring soldiers and a wagon (possibly Brady's mobile darkroom) out front on the street (cat. # 2296) and three from inside the men's yard (cat. #s 2297 [from inside the central passageway between the main block and kitchen wing looking west into the men's yard], 2298 [from the

²⁶ "A Slave Pen," *Janesville Daily Gazette*, June 17, 1861, p. 2; "From Washington," *North American*, January 24, 1862, p. 2; "The 'Slave Pen' at Alexandria," *Philadelphia Press*, February 15, 1862, p. 1.

²⁷ "The Alexandria Slave Pen," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 4, 1862, p. 3; reporting from the *Alexandria Chronicle* (a different publication than the present *Alexandria Chronicle*) published February 26, 1862.

²⁸ "A Ramble about Alexandria," *Concord Independent Democrat*, May 1, 1862, p. 1.

west wall of the men's yard looking east back toward the iron door], and 2299 [from the southwest corner of the men's yard looking back to the northeast]).²⁹ A well-known photograph of a woman holding a basket in front of an Alexandria slave pen (**Figure 17**) is listed as cat. # 2300 and was initially assumed to be taken in the space behind the women's yard at 1315 Duke Street,



Figure 17

looking northwest, but recent research has been able to determine this is not correct and that this photograph was taken at a previously unrecognized slave jail in Alexandria (research by the Office of Historic Alexandria is in progress and forthcoming).³⁰ Perhaps not coincidentally, the photographs immediately preceding these views of the slave pen with cat. #s 2294 and 2295 are of the Marshall House. This is the same juxtaposition and order that Gardner, who was still working for Brady in early 1862, uses in 1866 when he published *Sketch Book*.

The presence of the roof over the men's yard in the exterior photograph (and visible roof framing elements and the shadow cast by the

open roof vents in some of the interior photographs) establish these photographs as having been taken after February 4, 1862, when a soldier froze to death in the "snow and slush" inside the yard. This date acts as our *terminus post quem*, (a Latin term I have borrowed from my archaeological toolkit meaning "the date after which," or in this case the earliest possible date the photograph could have been taken). Upon closer examination of the roof vent in the wagon photograph and the shadow in one of the interior views (cat. #s 2296 and 2298), we can further note in **Figure 18** that neither the louver slats



Figure 18

²⁹ Alexandria, Virginia. Slave pen. (Price, Birch & Co. dealers in slaves), LC-B811- 2296, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670631/>; Alexandria, Virginia; Slave pen. Interior view, LC-B811-2297, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670632/>; Alexandria, Virginia; Slave pen. Interior view, LC-B811-2298, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670633/> (there are actually two different versions of this scene that can be differentiated by the poses of the two soldiers in the center of the frame; see <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/107FZ7/>); Alexandria, Virginia. Slave pen. Interior view, LC-B811- 2299 Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670634/>.

³⁰ Alexandria, Virginia. Slave pen. Exterior view, LC-B811- 2300, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670637/>.

nor the hatches/skylights visible in later Russell photograph appear to have been installed on the vent openings when the Brady photographs were taken. (See also **Figure 21** below.) Visible on the exterior west wall of the main building is a series of exposed pockets in the brickwork that would have held the joists of the former roof as depicted by Lumley (**Figure 19**). While the rest of this wall has been whitewashed, the strip that would have been covered where this previous



shed roof articulated with this wall is exposed brick which had not yet been painted or whitewashed. Further evidence of this previous roof can be seen in the form of a sawed-off beam at the top of cat. #s 2297, 2298, and 2299.

Likewise, the available evidence would seem to suggest that the brick cells visible on the inside of the yard (cat. #s 2297, 2298, and 2299) do not date to the slave pen period and appear quite new compared to the surrounding brickwork of the men's yard walls. Cat. #s 2297 and 2299 show cell doors without bars over at least some of their windows whereas cat. # 2298 shows bars over these windows. Given that the horizontal bars required cuts to be made into the face of the door in order to sit flush to it and that the photographs of doors without bars do not show evidence of these cuts, we can conclude that they were taken before the photograph that shows bars over these same windows. The interior photographs also show a number of architectural remnants strewn across the floor: large timber framing elements, wooden forms for building brick vaults, and woodchips. The presence of these items inside a space intended to be used as a prison would suggest these photographs were taken during an active demolition or rebuilding episode in the slave jail and not during a period of active use as a prison. This debris is likely the result of Captain Myers' improvements alluded to by the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in early March 1862 and what *Concord Independent Democrat* correspondent Wallace saw that caused him to report "one wing is being covered in and filled up with small dungeon cells." To further reinforce that these photographs do not depict an active prison scene, even the "prisoners" posed on the other side of the grated iron door are just uniformed soldiers standing outside the prison yard in what the 19th century anti-slavery activists called a "passageway," with the photographer and armed guard stationed inside it.

Working backward, we can establish the *terminus ante quem* (another Latin term I have borrowed from my archaeological toolkit meaning "the date before which" or in this case the date by which this photograph had to have been taken) of Brady's studio's photograph of the exterior of 1315 Duke Street. Returning to the exterior of the prison, we can also note that the trees visible here along Duke Street do not yet have leaves on their branches. Of the snowstorm of

February 3-4, 1862, that contributed to the death of the soldier in the former slave jail, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported:

Snow Storm. —About 7 o'clock this morning, a Snow Storm commenced, which has continued with increased violence up to the time we write this paragraph. The wind is from the East, and the snow falls "fast and furious," and lays upon the ground to the depth of two and a half or three inches. The weather for the past few weeks has been the most remarkable ever experienced in this section.³¹

Additional details of "the most remarkable [weather]" for the winter of 1861-1862 come to us by way of Reverend C. B. Mackee, who was living in Georgetown in Washington DC during the war and who kept a running ledger of temperature and precipitation.³² Mackee recorded the following winter weather events for Georgetown, just 8 miles to the north of Alexandria:

November 24 – at 8 p.m. began to snow	February 3 – snow all day
November 25 – snow covered the roof	February 11 – began snowing at 4 p.m.
December 1 – quite snowlike	February 15 – snow all day, 3 inches
December 2 – snowlike all day	February 17 – snow & sleet all day
December 23 – snow shower 2:30	February 19 – rain & sleet last night
December 29 - snowlike	March 2 – 1" snow
January 5 – began sleeting at dark	March 30 – snow 1.5
January 6 – began snowing about 10	April 7 – snow & rain from 1 p.m., 2.00
January 7 – spitting snow at 8	April 8 – rained & sleeted, 1.55
January 16 – sleeted all day to 9 p.m.	April 9 – snowed last night 2.00
January 25 – snowed & sleeted last night	April 19 – peach & cherry blossoms beg. to develop

Of particular importance here is Mackee's observation that peach and cherry blossoms did not begin to develop until after the middle of April. The weather over the winter of 1861-1862 (and especially the snow and sleet events) likely contributed to Mackee's seemingly late April 19th observation of the start of peach and cherry blossoms. While I cannot identify the species of trees in the photograph (birch?), it would appear that these trees have not yet regrown their leaves from the winter of 1861-1862. It is a little hard to tell from the original image because of the way the exposure is focused, but a case could be made that these trees may be in the early stages of leafing out. Turning for only a moment to the Brady studio's photograph of the woman with the basket taken at a different Alexandria slave pen (**Figure 17**, cat. # 2300), this photograph was presumably taken on the same day as their other photographs of 1315 Duke Street. Here, we get a better look and see what appears to be fairly new growth on these trees, again pointing to before mid or late-April 1862 for the Brady studio's visit to the slave pens in Alexandria. Coupled with the visible work on the men's yard we can date this series of photographs to between February 4, 1862, and the last week or two of April 1862.

³¹ "Snow Storm," *Alexandria Gazette*, February 3, 1862, p.2.

³² Krick, Robert K., *Civil War Weather in Virginia*, University of Alabama Press, 2007, pp. 40-54.

To backstop this assessment, on July 19, 1862, the *New York Tribune* ran a story on Mathew Brady and his efforts to document the first year of the war.³³ The author understood Brady's work in the same light that Gardner described his own, writing, "[Brady's] collection forms a pictorial history of the war." The article then lists the scenes which Brady had captured up to that point, including the slave pens at Alexandria. The text here connects the slave pens with the surrender of the rebel cavalry on May 24, 1861, which like the episode of the soldier

freezing to death February 4, 1862, was captured by an engraving which ran in an illustrated newspaper, this one appearing in *Harper's Weekly* in June 1861. Later that summer, an advertisement placed by bookseller George H. Whitney in the *Providence Evening Press* on August 23, 1862, (**Figure 20**) for photographic prints lists a number of views taken by Brady during the first year of the Civil War (including many that were also described in the *New York Tribune* the previous month, including the Marshall House, Falls Church, and several from Bull Run and at Centreville). This list specifically includes a "View of Alexandria, 1862."³⁴

<p>CARD PHOTOGRAPHS OF— Fairfax Court House. Cub Run. Fortifications at Manassas. Falls Church. Fairfax Seminary, Va. Sudley Church, Bull Run. Old Capitol, Washington. Marshall House. Quaker Gun, Centreville. View of Alexandria, 1862. Grigsby House, Centreville. Fortifications on the Heights at Centreville. Stone Church, Centreville. Stone Bridge, Bull Run. Ruins of Mrs. Henry's House, Bull Run. Thorburn's House at Sudley Church. Chain Bridge. Soldiers' Graves at Bull Run. Block House near Fort Corcoran. Slave Pens, Alexandria. For sale by s22</p>	<p>GEO. H. WHITNEY, 3 Westminster street.</p>
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Edward Tompkins Whitney (no known relation to George H. Whitney), who went to work as a photographer for Brady when the war broke out, later recalled, "We spent the winter [1861-1862] taking view of the fortifications around Washington and places of interest for the Government."³⁵ A former slave jail turned military prison in which a Union soldier just froze to death could certainly qualify as a one of Whitney's "places of interest." Looking at the studio's body of work, historians William G. Thomas and Leslie Working specifically identify March and April 1862 as the date for these expeditions out into the countryside surrounding Washington, D.C. to document the impacts of the first year of the war.³⁶

Given that George H. Whitney appears to have sold prints derived from Brady's photographs and that the extremely similar "View in Alexandria, 1862" is supplied as the caption on a print of Brady's exterior photograph of 1315 Duke Street, it appears likely that Brady and/or his photographers had been to the former slave pen at 1315 Duke Street by July 19, 1862, and this view of the exterior was available for sale by August 23, 1862 at the latest. Furthermore, the absence of leaves on the trees in front of the building here again rule out the late spring and summer months of 1862 when there would have been leaves visible (as seen in the later Russell photograph below), further reinforcing that this photograph had to have been taken prior to the last week or two in April 1862. The existence of these photographs is suggested by the July 1862 *New York Tribune* article on Brady's work and the exterior view is likely included in the August

³³ "Brady's Photographs of the War," *New York Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1862, pp. 3-4.

³⁴ "Card Photographs of—," *Providence Evening Press*, August 23, 1862, p. 4.

³⁵ Whitney, E. T., "Reminiscences," *Photographic Times and American Photographer*, Vol. XIV, No. 159, March 1884, pp. 122-124.

³⁶ Thomas, William G., and Leslie Working, "The Civil War's 'Brother Artists,'" *New York Times*, November 17, 2012, <https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/17/the-civil-wars-brother-artists/>.

1862 advertisement by George H. Whitney in the *Providence Evening Press*. From the above analysis, we can conclude that at least some (if not all) of these four Brady photographs of 1315 Duke Street, but especially the exterior view with the wagon (cat. # 2296), were taken sometime between February 4, 1862 when the soldier froze to death in the open-to-the-air prison yard and sometime before the last week or two in April 1862 when leaves would have appeared on the trees in front of the men's yard.

While the Library of Congress' catalog entries for these photographs only tell us they were created sometime between 1861 and 1869. By examining the details of these photographs and the context surrounding them, we can identify a fairly narrow window of about two and a half months—between February 4, 1862 and the last week or two in April 1862—in which Brady's studio had to have taken at least some of these photographs, including the exterior photograph. Perhaps future research may refine this window or be able to conclude that all four were taken as a set on the same date. If the soldiers here could be identified or if the blurry and pixelated unit number on the hat of the officer standing to the left of the tree could be resolved, perhaps these soldiers could be assigned to the 88th Pennsylvania, which was stationed at the slave jail on guard duty over the winter of 1861-1862 and who were relieved of duty and left Alexandria on the 16th or 17th of April 1862.³⁷ Perhaps an analysis of the angle and length of the shadows in the photographs could help identify the time and date these photographs were captured. Maybe a diary, notebook, or photolog kept by Brady or one of his photographers will be discovered. For now, a two-and-a-half-month window will be enough for us to say that the Pywell photograph was taken after this window in the late winter and early spring of 1862.

Perhaps an analysis of the angle and length of the shadows in the photographs could help identify the time and date these photographs were captured.

About a year after Brady's studio captured their photographs of the former slave pen, Egbert G. Fowx, another photographer who sometimes worked for Brady, began teaching an army captain from New York how to operate a camera. Captain Andrew J. Russell joined the 141st New York Infantry Regiment in August or September 1862 and in February 1863, Russell paid Fowx to teach him the photographic process. By March 1, 1863, General Herman Haupt officially detached Russell from the 141st New York and assigned him to work as a photographer under Haupt and the United States Military Railroad, documenting the engineering, construction, and logistics efforts of that command.³⁸

As a body of work, Russell's photographs are very different than those of Brady and his studio. Rather than capturing and publishing scenes designed to appeal to a general commercial audience like much of Brady's studio's work (and later also Gardner's), Russell's work for the

³⁷ Vautier, John D., *History of the 88th Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War for the Union, 1861-1865*, 1894, p. 25-26.

³⁸ Williams 2002, pp. 444-445.

Army's Quartermaster Department and the United States Military Railroad (U.S.M.R.R.) was generally focused on the kinds of military logistical operations in which those organizations regularly engaged. While he also captured some battlefield scenes and the ruins of Richmond at the end of the war, Russell's photographic attention was largely focused on railroad infrastructure, trackwork, track maintenance, rail straightening, locomotives and train cars, docks and depots, woodyards, stables, arsenals, pre-existing bridges, destroyed bridges, recently constructed bridges, experimental bridge and boat building, miscellaneous construction projects, and military fortifications in a way that other photographers either ignored or did not find profitable enough to capture for posterity.³⁹

Sometime between the spring of 1863 and the fall of 1864, Russell captured a photograph of the front of 1315 Duke Street that is relevant to this study (**Figure 21**). That former slave jail stood only two blocks from the U.S.M.R.R. depot in Alexandria and perhaps it is not surprising



that Russell photographed the exterior of the building given its notoriety and proximity to his headquarters. The original glass plate for Russell's photograph of the building still exists and is held by the National Archives.⁴⁰ Like Brady's photographs discussed above, Russell's image captures it with the low, shallow roof over the men's yard, no windows in the front wall of the men's yard, and with several trees along Duke Street in front of the jail.

Susan E. Williams' research regarding Russell's military service record establishes this photograph as having been taken some time after February 1863 when Russell paid Fowx to teach him how to operate a camera. Because there are leaves visible on these trees (unlike in the Brady photograph), we can refine this slightly and say that this photograph had to have been taken some time in the spring of 1863 or later. Once sequenced correctly, first the Brady photograph and then the Russell photograph also point to a deteriorating trend in the condition of the building over the course of the war. See for example shutters that disappear, windows that break or disappear, and whitewash that fades (see especially in the mortar joints behind the painted sign). Both the Brady photographs and the Russell photograph provide datable documentation for the presence of these trees in front of 1315 Duke Street, for the lack of bricked-in openings in the south wall of the men's yard, and the low, shallow roof with the long continuous vent at least up until the spring of 1863.

³⁹ For an example of Russell's work, see: Russell, Andrew J. and Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana, *Russell's Civil War Photographs: 116 Historic Prints*, Dover Photography Collection, Dover Publications, New York, 1982.

⁴⁰ Slave pen of Price, Birch & Co., Alexandria, Va, NAID: 528808, Local ID: 111-B-4687, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/528808>

Because both Brady and Russell show standing trees where Pywell shows stumps, the most logical conclusion is that the military chopped these trees down sometime after Russell photographed them in or after the spring of 1863, and therefore Pywell's photograph has to date to after the Brady and Russell photographs. If the Pywell photograph was taken *before* these two photographs, then the Army would have had to transplant a very large tree and two smaller saplings from somewhere else to replace very similar-looking stumps already on the site, which seems much, much less likely (although I suspect some familiar with the inner workings of the United States military might not completely rule out this possibility).

We can now establish a narrow window in which at least some of the Brady photographs had to have been taken (February 4, 1862 through the last week or two in April 1862) and a general time after which the Russell photograph had to have been taken

(spring 1863). However, neither of these two exterior photographs show evidence of bricked-in window openings in the front wall of the men's yard to the left of the main building or the higher, steeper roofline. Further, if relying on the assumption that it seems extremely unlikely that the

...it seems extremely unlikely that the Army transplanted three trees ... to replace three suspiciously equal-sized and similar-looking stumps in front of the slave jail...

Army transplanted three trees (one of them quite large) to replace three suspiciously equal-sized and similar-looking stumps in front of the slave jail, we can conclude that the Pywell photograph had to have been taken after the Brady and Russell photographs. And therefore, we can rule out the August 1862 date provided by Alexander Gardner for the Pywell photograph of 1315 Duke Street.

Ruling out the August 1862 date while entertaining for a moment the possibility that the Pywell photograph dates to August 1863, we run into another problem. The Brady and Russell photographs show a roof configuration over the men's yard that is different than the one seen in the Pywell photograph. These two show a lower, less steep roof, with one long continuous vent or monitor rather than the higher, steeper roof with two smaller separate vents as seen in the Pywell photograph. Looking closely at the Pywell photograph, we can even see the outline of this lower roof in the brickwork on the west wall of the men's yard.

Here, we can turn to two series of Civil War-era photographs and an archival collection to help us clarify when the military changed the roof over the men's yard, which in turn will help us date the Pywell photograph of 1315 Duke Street. These photographs were taken from Shuter's Hill to the west of Alexandria and show the camp of the 44th New York, the City of Alexandria beyond, and the Potomac River approximately a mile and a half in the distance. Coincidentally, this second group of photographs was also taken by photographers from Brady's studio and Andrew J. Russell. These can be dated with a fair degree of confidence to March 20, 1864 (Brady's studio's photographs), and sometime after April 18 but before April 29, 1864 (Russell's photographs).

The series of photographs of the camp of the 44th New York Infantry Regiment taken from Shuter's Hill by Brady's studio (see **Figure 22**) can be dated to March 20, 1864.⁴¹ This date is provided by Captain Eugene Nash of the 44th New York in his published history of that regiment.⁴² During the early winter of 1864-1865, the unit was posted on the north side of the



Figure 22

Rappahannock River and at Fairfax Court House and did not receive orders to relocate to Alexandria until January 24, 1864. The 44th New York arrived in Alexandria at 2 AM on January 25, 1864 and spent one or two days at Soldier's Rest, one block west and on the other side of Duke Street from the former slave jail complex at 1315 Duke Street, before moving into their camp at the head of King Street for the rest of the winter.⁴³ The 44th New York camped here until orders sending them to the front came through on April 29, 1864, providing us an initial bracket of dates for these photographs (from around January 27, 1864 to the end of April 1864).⁴⁴

Of that winter camp in Alexandria, Nash wrote:

The grounds were spacious and the camp was laid out with great regularity. It is not too much to say that when completed the camp was a model in all its details....

After the streets and tents of the regiment had been put in superior condition, a beautiful arch was erected at the foot of each street. All the arches, except the central arch, were of similar design and construction, elaborately and beautifully trimmed with evergreens, and the letter of the

⁴¹ Here, I primarily refer to this image: Camp of the 44th N.Y. Inf. near Alexandria, Va, NAID: 524564 Local ID: 111-B-145, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524564>, but a number of other views from this series the rest of the series includes: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524535>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529187>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524612>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529069>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524616>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/527548>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529070>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/525779>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524562>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529167>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524614>, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012648029>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529066>, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529186>, and <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524438>. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524574>, is likely part of this series. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/524616> and <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/527548> depict Slough Hospital in the background and are also taken from Shuter's Hill, but it not immediately clear if these were taken at the same time as this series of the camp of the 44th New York.

⁴² Nash, Eugene Arus, *A History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, in the Civil War, 1861-1865*, 1911, pp. 178-181.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Company suspended from the center of the arch. The central street was wider than the other streets, its arch was higher than the other arches, with canvas attached to framework on which in larger letters were names of the different battles in which the regiment had been engaged. The officers' tents were placed at the head of the street, due regard being had to intervening space. As a whole, it was an ideal camp and maintained with scrupulous care. It was the pride of the whole regiment and did not require drastic orders to keep it in excellent condition.⁴⁵

Visible hanging from the central arch is a "44" (reversed to be visible from the head of King Street) and hanging under each of the smaller arches are letters designating each company in the regiment (from left to right E, G, D, I, A, H, B, C, K, and F). Nash continues and describes how these images of their camp were made:

On Sunday, the 20th day of March, an artist came from Brady's famous war-time picture gallery in Washington and took different impressions of the camp from which large pictures were made, many of which are still preserved by members and friends of the regiment. The picture showed the regiment faultlessly formed at dress parade, with the entire camp in the background. Another picture was taken showing the officers present with the regiment in full dress uniform, standing in the central arch. This, too, was an excellent picture, and many copies of it are preserved.⁴⁶

Even without this description by Nash, we could deduce these photographs were taken



Figure 23

some time after early December 1863 but before the start of the 1864 spring campaign by examining the engagements listed in the photographs taken in front of the central arch (see **Figure 23**). Listed chronologically, these include:

Yorktown (April 5- May 4, 1862), Hanover Court House (May 27, 1862), Gaines Hill [Mill] (June 27, 1862), Turkey Bend (June 30, 1862), Malvern Hill (July 1, 1862), Groveton (August 28, 1862), Antietam (September 17, 1862), Shepherdstown Ford (September 19-20, 1862), Fredericksburg (December 11-15, 1862),

Chancellorsville (April 30 – May 6, 1863), Upperville (June 21, 1863), Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863), Jones' Cross Roads (July 10-12, 1863), Rappahannock Station (first battle August 23, 1862 and second battle November 7, 1863; Nash indicates the 44th NY was present for the second battle), and Mine Run (November 27 - December 2, 1863). In the photograph the central arch listed the 44th NY's engagements from 1862 and 1863 and clearly absent are any engagements from 1864 and 1865, strongly suggesting these photographs are of their winter 1863-1864 camp.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Before examining the appearance of 1315 Duke Street in this series of Brady photographs, I would like to first establish the date of the Andrew J. Russell photographs as well. On his wide-angle panorama of the City titled “No. 284 – General View of the City of Alexandria, VA.,” Russell provides for us a date of April 15, 1864 (**Figure 24**).⁴⁷

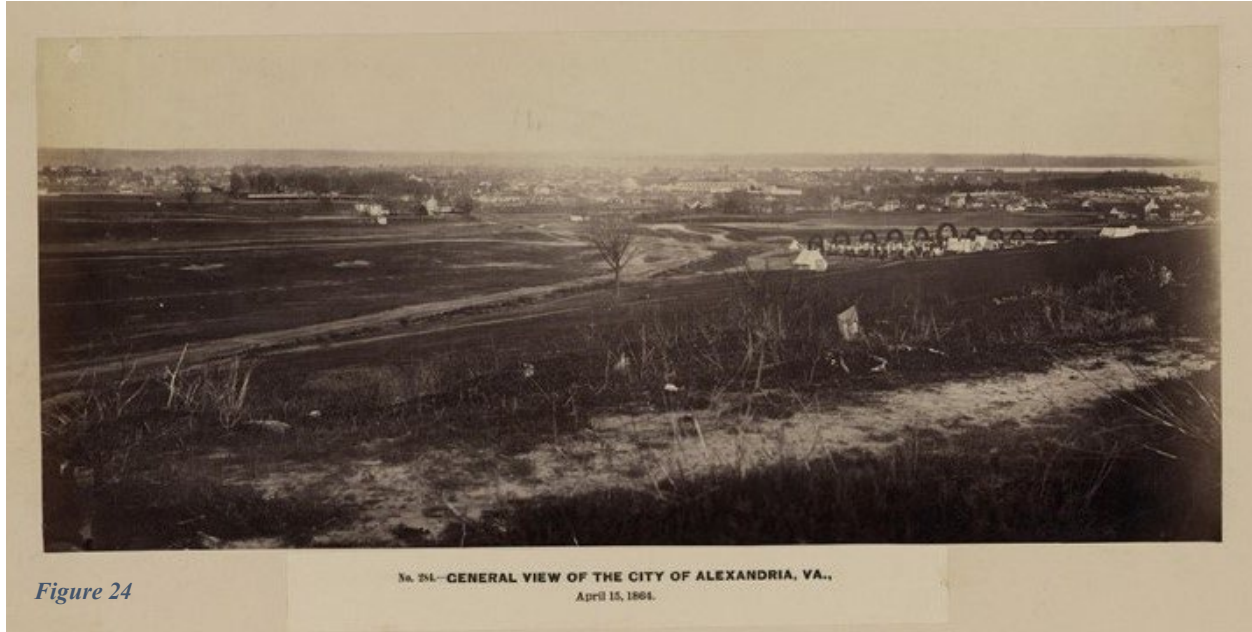


Figure 24

There also exists an unattributed and undated third view taken from Shuter’s Hill (**Figure 25**).⁴⁸ The location of the camp of the 44th New York is cropped out of this image (and therefore cannot be used to help date the photograph) and no other provenience information accompanies



Figure 25 Highlighted Version

this image except to say that it is a part of the same collection at the National Archives in which many other glass plates and prints attributed to both Mathew Brady and Andrew Russell reside. Of these series taken from Shuter’s Hill, this photograph shows the former slave jail at 1315 Duke Street in the most detail, and so, we should attempt to attribute and date this second photograph before proceeding.

⁴⁷ General view of the city of Alexandria, Va., April 15, 1864, Andrew J. Russell, Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2004680107/>

⁴⁸ View of town, probably Alexandria, Va, NAID: 529200, Local ID: 111-B-5095, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529200>

As for the attribution, it should be noted that the composition and angle is extremely similar to the known Russell photograph; however, the Russell print is a wide panorama whereas this one is a much tighter and zoomed-in view. Given the location of the foreground elements (such as trees and flagpoles) in relation to elements behind them in these images, the two photographs had to have been taken within just a few feet (or maybe even less than that) of each other, which is an argument in favor of this image having been taken by Russell at the same time he took his “General View” image. We can also establish an approximate date for this photograph, which also points to Andrew J. Russell as having been the photographer. While it is great that Russell provides us a date for his “General View,” the initial premise of this research article is that we should not always blindly trust the dates provided along with historical photographs, and so, Russell’s date should also probably be interrogated here before we continue. At first glance, this date seems reasonable. It falls within the range provided above for the presence of the 44th New York on Shuter’s Hill, which can be seen to the right of the photograph.



However, on April 18, 1864, three days after Russell claims to have taken his photograph, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported that the brick dwelling and bakery belonging to the estate of the late Mrs. Foy located on Payton Street between King and Prince, burned overnight and was destroyed around at 2 a.m.⁴⁹ All three of these photographs show this site. Brady’s studio’s photographs from the previous month show the building prior to the fire whereas Russell’s and the unattributed one taken from close to the same spot as Russell’s “General View” show it as a ruin (**Figure 26**). The presence of the same brick ruin here near the head of Prince Street in the vicinity of Payton Street in both of these later photographs suggests they had to have been taken after this fire on April 18, 1864. A post-April 18, 1864, date rules out the possibility either of these photographs were taken by photographers from Brady’s studio’s on their trip to photograph the camp of the 44th New York the previous month. Together with the similarity of the two photographs, we can make a

⁴⁹ [No title], *Alexandria Gazette*, April 18, 1864, p. 2.

fairly reasonable argument that Russell was the photographer for both. The presence of the camp of the 44th New York in Russell's "General View" tells us that this photograph (and likely the unattributed and undated one) had to have been taken prior to April 29, 1864, when that regiment broke camp. While we may need to reject the April 15, 1864, date provided by Russell based on the presence of the ruin, we can still date his photographs to a window of about a week and a half starting just three days after the date provided by Russell.

Regardless of the identity of the photographer and date of the unattributed and undated photograph, all three photographs either depict the camp of the 44th New York (late January through late April 1864) or show the ruin of a building that burned down on April 18, 1864. All three of the 1864 photographs from Shuter's Hill show the same roof configuration over the men's yard as the first pair of Brady and Russell photographs and not the roof configuration from the Pywell photograph (**Figure 27**).



Figure 27

All of these March/April 1864 photographs taken from Shuter's Hill that show the earlier, lower, flatter roof over the men's yard with the single continuous roof vent post-date the August 1863 date for the Pywell photograph alternatively provided by Gardner in his "Incidents of the War" series. And so, both of Gardner's dates for Pywell's photograph can be ruled out. Another telling clue that Pywell's photograph does not date to either August 1862 or August 1863 can be found in a catalog of photographs available for sale published by Gardner and his studio (or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the telling clue is that the photograph cannot be found in a catalog of photographs available for sale by Gardner and his studio). Titled *Catalogue of Photographic Incidents of the War from the Gallery of Alexandria Gardner, Photographer to the Army of the Potomac*, this list of views or scenes taken by Gardner and his employees is organized by series and includes the name of the image and the photographer credited with its

creation.⁵⁰ Published in September 1863, the catalog includes scenes from around Washington, D.C., and the aftermath of First Bull Run/Manassas, the Peninsula Campaign, Second Manassas/Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg, but does not include a listing for Pywell's slave pen photograph, nor does it attribute any photographs to Pywell. Had this image been taken by Pywell, Gardner, or one of his other employees prior to September 1863 when the catalog was published, it should have been included here with close to 500 other images available for sale. While the absence of Pywell's photograph alone does not conclusively prove it was not taken prior to September 1863, its absence can be added to the above constellation of evidence presented above that *strongly* indicates as such.

Documentary evidence supporting this timeline and providing further refinement can be found amongst the papers of Captain Rufus D. Pettit. Pettit was the inspector and superintendent of military prisons in Alexandria in 1864 and 1865.⁵¹ Assigned as the commanding officer at the 1315 Duke Street (referred to as the Slave Pen Prison or sometimes the Slave Pen Guard House) was Lieutenant John Y. Donn of the 1st D.C. Volunteer Infantry regiment. As a part of Lieutenant Donn's duties in the daily operation of the military prison, he was required to submit to Captain Pettit a report on the general condition of his prison, the prisoners, the guards, and account for the specific number of prisoners confined there every ten days (or three times each month). Donn's reports for the period between September 10, 1864, and December 20, 1864, record a running average of between 49 and 107 prisoners in the prison during any ten-day period (with a minimum of 43 and a maximum of 112 prisoners at the time he submitted these reports).⁵²

In his December 31, 1864, report, Donn reported a running average of 118 prisoners for the previous ten days with 125 prisoners then confined in the Slave Pen Prison, the largest number he had yet submitted.⁵³ Furthermore, Donn also included the following statement:

No complaint can be made of the condition of this prison, everything being neat and orderly. The Guard is very soldierly in its appearance, and their arms in the most perfect Order. Another Story is being added to the west wing, which will be completed about the 31st of Dec. 1864 [the same day of his report], and the other wards of the Prison about the 5th of Jan. 1865. Two Ninety gallons kettles will be required for cooking.⁵⁴

The prison renovations described by Donn do not seem to have been completed on schedule as anticipated by the lieutenant, as his next report from the 10th of January 1865 read:

⁵⁰ Gardner, Alexander, *Catalogue of Photographic Incidents of the War from the Gallery of Alexandria Gardner, Photographer to the Army of the Potomac*, 1863, Library of Congress.

⁵¹ Captain Rufus D. Pettit Papers, MS093, Alexandria Library Special Collections. This collection has been digitized and is available online at https://alexlibrary.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/SO_f28532a7-919e-43d5-94fe-e61c70926a23/.

⁵² These reports are organized by month in the Pettit Papers and cover several of the military prisons in Alexandria for the period July 1864 through June 1865. They can be found in MS093-01-04 through MS093-01-15.

⁵³ Pettit Papers, MS093-01-09, p. 12.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

This Prison is in a very satisfactory condition and is nearly completed, will be ready to accommodate Five hundred (500) prisoners on the 12th inst. [of January]. There is some difficulty in procuring a Gass fitter and stove Pipe.⁵⁵

While Donn anticipated work to continue for at least two more days, he reported that there were then already 242 prisoners confined at the Slave Pen (a running ten-day average of 181), more than double the number present in the preceding three months for which Lt. Donn reported. On January 20, there were 284 prisoners in the Slave Pen (running ten-day average of 348) and on January 31, there were 371 prisons in the Slave Pen (running ten-day average of 398).⁵⁶ The next tri-monthly report from Lt. Donn is also the last to be found in Pettit's papers and is dated February 10, 1865. In it Donn reports 312 prisoners then in the Slave Pen Prison (with a running ten-day average of 333), between three and six times more than the number of prisoners held there prior to the addition of this "Additional Story."⁵⁷

Furthermore, for most of the reports from the Slave Pen Prison, no additional expenditures or income were recorded. However, Lieutenant Donn's December 1864 monthly report included an expense of \$8.05 for a "Stove Pipe and putting up Stove at Slave Pen Prison," and his

February 10, 1865... 312 prisoners then in the Slave Pen Prison (with a running ten-day average of 333)

January 1865 report included \$3.50 spent on "Large Knives & Forks for Slave Pen Prison," \$1.50 for "two large dippers," and \$20.87 for "one hundred and fifty cups."⁵⁸ Together, this evidence points to a major campaign to increase not just the available square footage of the jail but to equip it for new prisoners as well. This campaign

roughly corresponds to the closure of the Forrest Hall Prison across the river in Georgetown, D.C. and may provide an explanation for why the prison was expanded at this time. Contemporary newspaper accounts suggest between 150 and 300 Union military prisoners were transferred from Forrest Hall Prison in Georgetown to Alexandria prisons in early January 1865.⁵⁹

In Lieutenant Donn's December 31, 1864, report to Captain Pettit, he tells us that "Another Story is being added to the west wing." The men's yard is the only space at 1315 Duke Street prison that could be described as "the west wing." All of the accounts of the slave jail and all of the pre-December 31, 1864, descriptions and photographs of the men's yard describe it as either an open or enclosed yard with a brick or dirt floor and with no additional stories built inside of it. Increasing the height and pitch of the roof as documented in the Pywell photograph would provide more room inside the men's yard to subdivide that space vertically into two stories, a lower ground floor and an upper second floor. This change would also explain the

⁵⁵ Pettit Papers, MS093-01-10, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 7, 11-12.

⁵⁷ Pettit Papers, MS093-01-11, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Pettit Papers, MS093-01-09, p. 16; MS093-01-10, p. 15.

⁵⁹ See "Georgetown Affairs," *Daily National Intelligencer*, January 5, 1865, p. 2; "Affairs in Georgetown," *Evening Star*, January 10, 1865, p. 3; "\$22,000 Belonging to Bounty Jumpers and Deserters," *Evening Star*, January 11, 1865, p. 3; and "The Abolishment of Forrest Hall Prison," *Evening Star*, January 11, 1865, p. 2.

presence of the three windows visible in the south wall of the men’s yard along Duke Street in Pywell’s photograph. The upper story would block any light coming in from the skylights and roof vents and these windows would have been needed in order to replace this light source inside the ground floor. The completion of this work described by Donn as “another story” on the west wing (men’s yard), the accompanying immediate doubling (and the eventual almost-quadrupling) of the prison’s population, the seemingly rare expenditures on interior heating and tableware, and the transfer of a large number of prisoners from Forrest Hall Prison in Georgetown to Alexandria all point to a deliberate campaign to increase the capacity of the Slave Pen Prison.

Returning to the Pywell photograph of 1315 Duke Street, while we do not have photographs from this period that depict the interior of the men’s yard the way we do for the late winter and early spring of 1862, we can turn to the archaeological excavations that took place here in 1985 and examine the extant west wall of 1315 Duke Street (which was the east wall of the men’s yard) to document the internal configuration of this space. Archaeologists documented a series of post holes running east/west down the center of the men’s yard (Features 109, 110, 115, and 120, see **Figure 15**). Their initial analysis suggested these posts may have held up the roof over the yard, but the Brady photographs of the interior show no interior posts holding up the 1862 roof. The engraving based on the Lumley sketch does show several posts holding up part of that earlier, slave pen-period roof, but those run north/south and are not in the center of the yard and could therefore possibly be related to Features 104, 106, 108, 111, 112, and 113. Feature 110 was excavated and in addition to the remains of a wooden post, archaeologists found material dating to the third quarter of the 19th century. Because the post was still in the post hole and had not been removed, the material in this feature would date to when the hole was initially dug and the post was installed, further suggesting it is a Civil War-era feature and does not date to the slave pen-period. Preserved in the west wall of 1315 Duke Street (which would have formed the east wall of the men’s yard) and still visible from the alley, there are two bricked-in doorways that would have connected the second floor of the main block to this “additional story” inside the men’s yard (**Figure 28**). The northern-most of these two doorways would have been aligned roughly with the center of the yard. If this brick opening was a slave pen-period feature, its edge should be visible in one of Brady’s studio’s 1862 photographs of the interior of the men’s yard

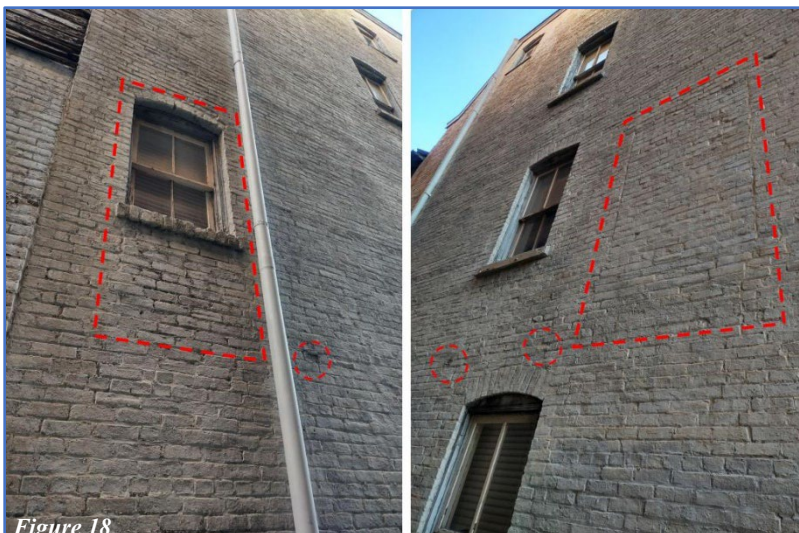


Figure 18

(specifically the right-side stereopair of 2298 and possibly also the right-side stereopair of 2299), but it is not, suggesting this opening was added at some point after Brady’s studio took their photographs in early 1862.

Because we have been able to rule out both the August 1862 and August 1863 dates for the Pywell photograph provided by Gardner, because the Pywell photograph shows the

renovations described by Lieutenant Donn as having been completed in December 1864 and January 1865, and because the trees in his photograph have leaves on them, Pywell must have taken his photograph at some point in the spring of 1865 or later.



Figure 29

With this date range in mind, we can pick out another detail (**Figure 29**) in the Pywell photograph and turn to the historical record to help us further refine this date. This piece of black bunting or crepe hanging between the second and third windows of 1315 Duke Street in the Pywell photograph is visible in only one other photograph of the building and was likely installed on this and other buildings across the City as a sign of mourning in response to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and therefore indicates a post-April 15, 1865 date for Pywell's photograph.⁶⁰

Within hours of receiving the news of Lincoln's death, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported "the stores and shops were all closed, and, for the most part, draped in mourning,"⁶¹ Within a day, "all the public buildings occupied by the civil and military authorities were draped in crape, and before night, every house occupied within the limits of the city, displayed the emblems of mourning."⁶² The Alexandria City Council also met, "to make arrangements for attending the funeral obsequies of the late president, and to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the Council on the subject of the recent national calamity." From this meeting, it was resolved that the Mayor and Council would attend the funeral together as a body. It was further suggested that every Alexandrian would close their business on the 19th of April and proceed together to Washington for the funeral.⁶³ The Council also directed the Committee on Public Property to "drape in mourning for the period of sixty days" public buildings used by the City and resolved for themselves to wear "the usual badge of mourning for a like period of sixty days." A financial statement presented to City Council later that year shows the Council spent \$147.52 "Mourning for President."⁶⁴ While the former Slave Pen at 1315 Duke Street was not a public building used by the City of Alexandria in 1865, these resolutions by City Council help show the ways in which President Lincoln's death was publicly observed, even in a Virginian town like Alexandria, which had voted to secede from the Union just four years earlier. In fact, at the time, it was

⁶⁰ Owen, Walton, personal communication, September 22, 2020.

⁶¹ [no title], *Alexandria Gazette*, April 15, 1865, 3.

⁶² "Local News," *Alexandria Gazette*, April 17, 1865, 4.

⁶³ "Local News," *Alexandria Gazette*, April 18, 1865, p. 4.

⁶⁴ "Corporation Expenditures," *Alexandria Gazette*, October 25, 1865, p. 4; "Report of Finance Committee for 1865," *Alexandria Gazette*, March 10, 1866, p. 4; this statement includes the same \$147.52 entry as the October 25, 1865, statement, but it is labeled "Expenses attending President's funeral."

even reported that “all the public and many of the private buildings in Richmond are hung in mourning for the death of President Lincoln.”⁶⁵

The day after the death of President Lincoln, the War Department announced General Orders, No. 66.⁶⁶ In it, the War Department ordered that “the headquarters of every Department, post, station, fort, and arsenal will be draped in mourning for thirty days, and appropriate funeral honors will be paid by every army, and in every Department, and at every military post, and at the Military Academy at West Point, to the memory of the late illustrious Chief Magistrate of the nation and Commander-in-Chief of its armies.” In Alexandria, the Headquarters District of Alexandria & Ninth Army Corps put out their own order, General Orders No. 3, further emphasizing that the portion of General Orders No. 66 stating, “The Officers of the Armies of the United States will wear the badge of mourning on the left arm and on their swords; and the colors of their Commands and Regiments will be put in mourning for the period of six months.” These rules were to “be strictly observed within the limits of this Command.”⁶⁷ These public displays of mourning installed on buildings for President Lincoln were captured in several surviving photographs and illustrations.⁶⁸

The other photograph of 1315 Duke Street that shows this banner has been identified in a private collection and it depicts the building appears much as it does in the Pywell photograph (including steeper roof over the men’s yard and windows in its south wall, faded whitewashed band around the “Price, Birch & Co.” sign, and no shutters on the windows), with the notable difference being that instead of a single piece of hung black crepe as captured by Pywell, there are five or six hung, one under each of the upper-story windows, suggesting this photograph was taken around the same general time as the Pywell photograph, but likely closer to April 15, 1865 than the Pywell photograph. This pushes the Pywell photograph later than April 15, 1865, by an

These public displays of mourning installed on buildings for President Lincoln were captured in several surviving photographs and illustrations.

⁶⁵ [no title], *Alexandria Gazette*, May 3, 1865, p. 3.

⁶⁶ For a copy of the full text of this order, see “Public Honors to the Memory of President Lincoln,” *Washington Daily National Republican*, April 17, 1865, 2.

⁶⁷ “General Orders, No. 3., Headquarters District of Alexandria & Ninth Army Corps,” May 8, 1865, University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Center, Lincoln Collection, Broadsides, Box 1, Folder 24.

⁶⁸ For examples of other buildings in the Washington, D.C. region decorated in observance of this mourning period, see: “Clerks at Provost Marshall’s Office, Washington, D.C., April, 1865,” Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013651879/>; “[Washington, D.C. President Lincoln’s funeral procession on Pennsylvania Avenue; another view], Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018667102/>; “Lincoln’s funeral,” Alfred R. Waud, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004660393/>; or particularly one from New York titled “Decorating buildings on lower Broadway, NYC for Lincoln funeral procession,” Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015645317/>.

unknown amount of time and represents the earliest possible date the Pywell photograph could have been taken given all the documentation we have been able to gather here.

On the other side of the date bracket, because Pywell's photograph of the Slave Pen appears in *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the War* which was published in 1866, the photograph of the Slave Pen had to have been taken at some point prior to the time when Gardner completed his book and it began appearing in stores. An item appearing in the *Washington Evening Star* on January 22, 1866, noted that "Gardner, the Photographer, is getting out a superb *Photographic Sketch Book of the War*, in two large volumes. The work is considered the finest collection ever published."⁶⁹ From the phrase "is getting out," it would appear that Gardner was then still in the final stages of publishing *Sketch Book*. **The earliest confirmation that Gardner's book was in stores and available for purchase dates to February 6, 1866, when an advertisement appeared in the New York Daily Tribune. It stated that the book could be seen at 200 Broadway in New York and that it contained 100 plates (Figure 30).** The full two volume set indeed has



100 plates, meaning Pywell's photograph of the slave jail at 1315 Duke Street can be accounted for by the

beginning of February 1866.⁷⁰ Given this date of publication, because the trees in Pywell's photograph have leaves on them, it could not have been taken after the late fall of 1865 when these trees would have lost their leaves. **Therefore, the latest possible date Pywell could have taken this photograph was the late fall of 1865.**

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis of the visible changes to the building at 1315 Duke Street, we can document and corroborate these changes with other images, photographs, and historical sources. The conclusion from this analysis is that William R. Pywell's photograph of the slave pen could not have been taken in either August 1862 or August 1863, which are the dates provided by Alexander Gardner in his *Sketch Book*. Instead, we can conclude that this photograph had to have been taken after April 15, 1865, but before the late fall of 1865.

Gardner also claims that Pywell's photograph of the Marshall House on the preceding page of *Sketch Book* was similarly taken in August 1862 (**Figure 3**). Part II of this analysis will conduct a similar deep dive into the Pywell photograph of the Marshall House and conclude that not only could it also not have been taken in August 1862, but was taken during a part of this same window at the end of the war—likely between August 1, 1862, and the late fall of 1865. The creation of these two Alexandria photographs taken by Pywell do not appear to have been

⁶⁹ "Personal," *Washington Evening Star*, January 22, 1866, p. 2; reprinted in "Personal," *Richmond Examiner*, January 24, 1866, p. 4.

⁷⁰ "Photographic Sketch-book of the War," *New York Daily-Tribune*, February 6, 1866, p. 2.

taken during the course of the war, but rather, appear to be linked together and to the production of Gardner's book.

Having undertaken this exercise (and once buttressed with a similar conclusion for Pywell's photograph of the Marshall House in Part II of this study), we can much more confidently describe the Civil War-era changes to the prison at 1315 Duke Street, and in turn, much more confidently describe the configuration of the building when it was used as a slave pen.

[CONTINUED IN PART II: THE MARSHALL HOUSE IMAGES]



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