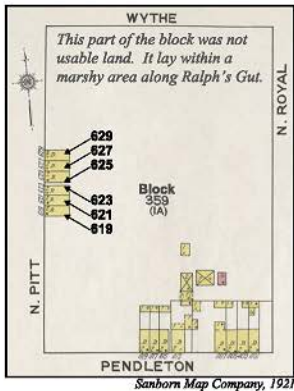


Next Door Neighbors

Neighborhoods function as support networks and knit people together. For Alexandria's Black residents in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, establishing neighborly bonds was essential for survival within a racist, segregated society.

In the early 1890s, an investor built a row of townhouses on N. Pitt Street and for the next 50 years rented them out to block residents until the block was redeveloped in the 1940s. Over the years, these townhouses were home to dozens of working class Black tenants, many of whom worked together in nearby factories or industries. For example, in 1930 at least one member of each household on this block worked at the same nearby fertilizer plant, suggesting that neighbors looked out for each other and helped one another find employment.



Above: Six houses stood on the 600 Block of N. Pitt Street in 1920. Black tenants occupied all six of the two-story frame dwellings. The houses along Pendleton Street also were rental properties occupied by Black residents, many of whom were boarders.

Right: Shown in this 1907 photograph, The Old Dominion Glass Factory on Montgomery Street employed over 300 workers, including Edith Butler who lived here on N. Pitt Street. The factory operated from 1901-1925.

The Black residents of this block were part of the working class neighborhood known as The Berg. The typical male resident of The Berg worked in local factories or industries such as coal yards, brick yards and machine shops, or hired themselves out as day laborers. Most women also held jobs outside of the home; they worked as domestics, laundresses, or cooks, or alongside men in factories.

BLOCK OF HOUSE	NAME	RELATION	SEX	COLOR	BIRTH		CITIZENSHIP		MARRIAGE	
					Y	M	Y	M	Y	M
627 376-958	Johnson, Albert	Head	M	W	17	10	20			
	Boyd, Malinda	Wife	F	W	21	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	12	10	20			
	Fry, John	Boarder	M	W	22	10	20			
377 961	Johnson, Albert	Head	M	W	28	10	20			
427 377-956	Fry, John	Head	M	W	21	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Wife	F	W	17	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	12	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	10	10	20			
600 376-952	Johnson, Albert	Head	M	W	22	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Wife	F	W	17	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	12	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	10	10	20			
423 376-952	Johnson, Albert	Head	M	W	21	10	20			
621 387-950	Johnson, Albert	Head	M	W	21	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Wife	F	W	17	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	12	10	20			
	Johnson, Edith	Daughter	F	W	10	10	20			

Fourth Census of the United States, 1920



Alexander J. Wedderburn's Souvenir Virginia Tercentennial of Historic Alexandria, Va.: Past and Present, 1907.

619 to 629 N. Pitt Street in 1920

In 1920, six Pitt Street dwellings were occupied. Albert Johnson, age 45, who was unemployed, rented the house at 619. His next-door neighbors at 621 North Pitt were 24-year old Malinda Holmes (a laundress), her three younger sisters, and her mother, Georgia, age 50, who worked as a dishwasher. Forty-year old Edith Butler worked at the glass factory and rented the property at 623. Eliza Rollins, age 23, and her young son James occupied the next dwelling at 625, and rented out rooms to two male boarders. The six members of Abraham Light's extended family filled the next frame dwelling at 627. The 34-year old Light was a factory helper, and his 32-year old wife Louise stayed home to care for a niece and three children. Both Jerry Simms, a 45-year old plasterer by trade, and Minnie Smith, age 28, rented 629 separately; Simms sublet rooms to three men who worked as general laborers: Ed Fry (38); Charlie Boyd (35); and Bob Roberson (24).

The locations of these dwellings are individually listed on numbered plaques on the Pitt Street side of this block.