

YLR 9-10-3
NRHP 1-16-4

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Moses Hepburn Rowhouses

other names: NA; site number: DHR #100-5015-0004

2. Location

street & number 206-212 North Pitt Street not for publication N/A city or town Alexandria vicinity N/A state Virginia code VA county Alexandria (Independent City) code 510 zip code 22314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

12/2/03
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

X private

 public-local

 public-State

 public-Federal

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Moses Hepburn Properties
Alexandria, Virginia
Multiple Property Listing: African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0
Name of related multiple property listing African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwellings

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwellings

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK Other
roof METAL
walls BRICK

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
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Alexandria, Virginia
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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE Sub.: Black

Period of Significance 1850-1853

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Moses Hepburn

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (See footnotes in Statement of Significance section of this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Each lot is less than one acre. 1,370 square feet

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	18 322460 4297280	2	_____
3	_____	4	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

Alexandria, VA: Map 64.04, Block 09,
Unit 206, Lot 21
Unit 208, Lot 20
Unit 210, Lot 19
Unit 212, Lot 18

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Moses Hepburn Properties
Alexandria, Virginia
Multiple Property Listing: African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the city lots, in their entirety, which have been historically associated with Moses Hepburn in the mid-nineteenth century..

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Calvit, Francine Bromberg, and Barbara B. Ballentine for the Office of Historic Alexandria
organization City of Alexandria date August 1994, revised October 2000, and Summer 2001
street & number 405 Cameron Street, P.O. Box 178 telephone 703-838-4554
city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22313

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary Description

The row of four brick rowhouses located at 206-212 North Pitt Street was constructed by Moses Hepburn sometime after he purchased the property in 1850. Facing east and located in the middle of the block, they are relatively modest in scale when compared to the other existing houses on the street, which are larger two- and three-story brick houses. According to the G. M. Hopkins 1877 map of Alexandria, the units were bounded by alleys on the north and south elevations, and the site plan remains essentially the same today. The townhouses are on the edge of "The Berg," a historically African American neighborhood in Alexandria. The four units were originally identical, and while three retain a similar appearance, the fourth, unit 206, was updated sometime in the late nineteenth century with the addition of Victorian decorative elements.

The two-bay two-story townhouses are connected to form two pairs of mirror-image side-hall-plan buildings, with a door and single window on the first floor, and two windows on the second. A side-gable, standing-seam metal roof extends across all four units, and is punctuated by chimney stacks at the gable ends for units 206 and 212, and in the middle, between units 208 and 210. All four units have had one- or two-story additions to the rear, most creating an L-shaped plan. The walls are laid in four-course American bond. Currently, the red brick of all of the units is painted.

Detailed Description

There are two types of windows in the four houses. In unit 206, the one-over-one windows were probably added during a late-nineteenth-century renovation. The other three units have wood six-over-six windows. All four have operable window shutters. The lintel above all openings is wood. The window sills of unit 212 are wooden, while the others have been replaced with brick rowlocks. A dentiled cornice is formed by three projecting courses of standard brick.

Each unit has different decorative elements, with unit 206 being the most dramatically different. The late-nineteenth-century renovation included the addition of decorative window hoods, and a wooden door surround composed of simple pilasters topped by ornamental brackets and an entablature. A decorative screen door was also added. The other three units have almost identical entrances that are simple openings, except for slight variations in the transom design.

Interior Description

Number 206 has undergone extensive interior renovation. The original two-room front portion of the ground floor of the rowhouse is now a single room with a kitchen ell to the west. A boxed beam in the ceiling is the only visible remnant of the wall which originally divided the two front rooms. The parlor flooring has been replaced with random-width pine, removing traces of the original wall or door locations.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Two two-foot-square exposed brick chimneys are located along the south wall of this end-unit rowhouse. A banquette was built between the chimney shafts, which may have originally served small coal burning stoves.

On the north side of the room is the original masonry party wall between this dwelling and the adjacent townhouse. This wall has been stripped of plaster to reveal natural common brick that is a dark burnt orange color laid in six-course American bond. The wall has been repointed and sealed. The front (east), wall has been finished with drywall. The eight-panel wood front door is surrounded by twentieth-century trim and a small Georgian-style fanlight above.

The straight-run stairway has oak treads with three simple 1x2 balusters per tread and a late-twentieth-century handrail and newel post. A flame pattern cutout is applied at the end of each tread on the stringer board. Wood ground blocks and an old baseboard on the party wall indicate that the stair was rebuilt in its original location. This orientation is somewhat unusual for Alexandria townhouses in that the stair begins at the opposite end of the room from the entry door and rises up toward the east. The door under the stair probably dates from the 1940s and has cut-glass knobs. Interior six-panel doors, baseboards, and windows toward the back of the house are also twentieth-century replacements.

The first floor of the two-room-deep two-story service ell to the west is elevated 8" above the parlor floors to accommodate the slight rise in grade in the rear yard. The north, or party, wall of both rooms of the ell has also been stripped to expose the brick. The north wall in the east room has a brick haunch which supports a chimney flue above. The brick in the west room reveals a different bonding pattern and also indicates numerous openings which were infilled in the past. Hewn wood grounds in the wall near the ceiling and at roughly five feet above the floor may indicate the location of an early cornice and picture rail. The 1/1 windows in the ell appear to date to the late twentieth century. The second floor of the ell may have been added in the late nineteenth century as the other three rowhouses have a one-story ell with a steeper pitched shed roof. A small powder room and storage room are located in an early- twentieth-century lean-to addition at the far west end of the ell.

Number 212 retains more of its original appearance, although the original two-room front portion of the ground floor of this rowhouse is now also a single room. A boxed beam in the ceiling is the only visible remnant of the wall which originally divided the two front rooms. The flooring has been replaced. Unlike number 206, this house has only one fireplace in the front room located in the center of the north wall in the eastern portion of the room. The western half of the room has a window on the north wall. This feature is also different from 206. The chimney is encased in wood paneling with a mantel shelf. The eight-panel wood front door with transom above is surrounded by simple trim used at all the other openings in the room. The stair to the second floor rises against the south wall turning from west to east at the western end of the room. The balustrade and treads and risers have been

CONTINUATION SHEET

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replaced. The space beneath the stair is enclosed with a closet on facing the front door and smaller cabinets under the rise of the stair. The walls are all clad in plaster or dry wall.

A door from the parlor enters a two-story addition the full width of the house. The room features a fireplace with a raised hearth and a double window. The ceiling molding with dentil work seems to date to the twentieth century. Beyond this room is a one-story addition containing the kitchen and a side porch.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the properties located at 206-212 North Pitt Street stems from their association with Moses Hepburn, a prominent African American businessman and citizen. Born a slave in 1809 and freed seven years later, Hepburn overcame tremendous racial difficulties and became a successful entrepreneur in the antebellum city through his ownership and development of various residential and commercial properties. He also served as a civic leader in the community and was one of the founding members of Davis Chapel as well as the first president of the church's missionary society. In addition, Hepburn exhibited great concern for the education of Alexandria's blacks. He strove to insure that his own children received an education and served as a teacher at the Sabbath School of Roberts Memorial Church, the successor to Davis Chapel. Moses Hepburn built the houses on North Pitt Street after purchasing the properties in 1850, and he lived on the site until leaving Alexandria for West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1853. The structures stand today as a testimony of and a tribute to the business acumen and leadership of one of Alexandria's remarkable early-nineteenth-century free African American citizens.

Historical Background

Born in 1809, Moses Hepburn was the son of William Hepburn, a prominent and wealthy white businessman, and Esther, a slave and mistress of William. Moses' father was a civic leader and successful merchant in Alexandria. From 1783 to 1784, William Hepburn served as member of City Council.¹ By this time, his activities as a merchant were already becoming known to Alexandria's citizens, for a 1784 advertisement in the Alexandria Gazette notes that his King Street store offered the following merchandise for sale:

broadcloth, wiltons, coatings, nankeens, razors, penknives, hinges, stone bottles, china & queen's ware, Egyptian teapots, saddles, steel, bar iron, carpenter's hammers, needles, pins, common felt, gingham, Irish linens, osnaburgs & ticklenburgs, calicoes, cotton & silk handkerchiefs, thread, twine.²

In 1785, William Hepburn entered into a partnership with John Dundass. Hepburn and Dundass, Merchants, continued to advertise an assortment of goods from Glasgow and London in the

¹ Michael Miller, Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom, 1749-1992 (Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, Maryland, 1992), p. 4.

² Cited in T. Michael Miller, Artisans and Merchants of Alexandria, Virginia, 1784-1820, Volume I (Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, Maryland, 1992), p.199.

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Gazette throughout the late eighteenth century until the partnership was dissolved in 1803.³ Hepburn's wealth came not only from his merchant activities but also from the numerous properties he owned, including a mill, distillery, and farm six miles from Alexandria; waterfront acreage and a fishery at the northern edge of town; a wharf and warehouse at Prince and Union Streets; and a dwelling with associated out-buildings at King and Pitt.⁴

William Hepburn was a slave owner. He purchased Esther (whose surname was probably David⁵) from Benjamin Dulany,⁶ another wealthy Alexandria merchant and landowner, and fathered three children with her--Moses, Letty and Juliana Eliza. On February 1, 1816, he sold five slaves (Esther and the three children, and another child, Maria) for \$1,000 to Hannah Jackson, a free black washerwoman and Esther's sister.⁷ Eleven days later, on February 12, Hannah Jackson freed her sister and the children. The deed of manumission indicates that Esther had also served as a washerwoman.⁸

Additional insights into the early life of Moses Hepburn and his family come from comments and stipulations set forth in the will of William, who died in the spring of 1817.⁹ Esther apparently passed

³Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁴Ibid., p. 200.

⁵Carolyn Howard French, citing letter from Juliana Hepburn Waring to William Henry Waring, November 20, 1866, in a letter to Anna Lynch, dated March 24, 1995; on file Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, Virginia.

⁶Will of William Hepburn, Alexandria Will book 2, p. 186, dated 28 February 1817 and recorded 26 May 1817, transcribed by Anna Lynch, June 6, 1994.

⁷Alexandria Deed Book BB, p. 346, cited in Sara Revis, Historical Case Studies of Alexandria's Archaeological Sites, Hannah Jackson: An African American Woman and Freedom, Archival Data Pertaining to 406-408 South Royal Street number 33 (Alexandria, Vir.: Alexandria Archaeology, Office of Historic Alexandria, City of Alexandria, 1985), p. 1.

⁸Alexandria Deed Book BB, p. 382, cited in Revis, 1991, p. 1.

⁹Will of William Hepburn, Alexandria Will book 2, p. 186, dated 28 February 1817 and recorded 26 May 1817.

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away shortly after her manumission, and William, who had “maintained and supported” the children during his lifetime set up his will in such a way as to insure continuation of this support after his death.

Hannah Jackson reared Letty and Juliana Eliza, using the bequest to support and educate the girls until they were eighteen years of age. More specific instructions were given to insure the education of Moses:

I wish and desire Moses to be sent to Philadelphia or some other place where coloured children are carefully educated and there to be boarded with some respectable person who will pay due attention to his meals and after he has obtained his education I wish and direct that he be put to whatever occupation or profession he may select and the expenses born out of the income hereinafter mentioned in this my last will.¹⁰

The will went on to leave Moses a large portion of his father’s estate, including the land and house where William had lived, a large section of property along the waterfront, a bond worth \$10,000, a lot on Princess Street, and the ground rent from lot #124 on Queen and North Pitt Streets. In addition, William left a house on King Street to Letty, and a brick house on King and Pitt Streets to Juliana Eliza. The will stressed William’s desire to express “clearly his views in relation to these three children of Esther.” Other provisions of the will included bequests to three children of Doll Bell, another slave and mistress of William Hepburn; a token bequest to his daughter, Agnes, for whom he had “heretofore provided amply”; and bequests to his two grandsons. To insure that the provisions of his will were carried out, Hepburn stated that if any of his legitimate heirs contested the document, they would be excluded from his estate.¹¹

Family lore and historical documents provide additional glimpses into the later life of Moses Hepburn.

A local West Chester, Pennsylvania, newspaper published an interview with Moses’ son, Moses Garrison Hepburn, in 1892, indicating that the provisions for his father’s education specified in William Hepburn’s will were indeed carried out. Moses, Jr., reported that his father was sent to West Chester in 1818, when he was nine years old, with the tuition for his education paid for in accordance with the instructions in the will.¹²

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹²Amir Ronald Bashir, A Chapter: From An African American Journal, researched by Richard Allen Bond and Amir Ronald Bashir, prepared for the Anderson-Burton Family Reunion of 1994, ms. on file at Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, Va., pp. 6-7.

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After his education, Moses, Sr., returned to Alexandria. According to information extracted from the 1892 interview,

Moses, Sr. became a successful entrepreneur, selling fresh water by the bucket to the residents of Alexandria. He owned nine teams of horses and employed nine men.¹³ Other historical documents confirm Moses' return to Alexandria. The 1830 census lists a Moses Hepburn living in a household consisting of one free black male between 10 and 24 years of age, two free black women between 10 and 24, one male slave between 10 and 24, and one female slave between 55 and 100.¹⁴

Hepburn married Amelia Braddock of Alexandria, but the exact date of their marriage is unknown. It is interesting to note that in the 1830 census, the household of Rebecca Braddock, consisting of four free blacks, is listed directly above that of Moses Hepburn, suggesting that the Braddocks were neighbors of the Hepburns at this time. Moses and Amelia had five children. The 1850 census lists Moses, age 40, mulatto, living in Alexandria with his wife Emily (Amelia), 38, mulatto; and their children Prudence C., 16; Moses G., 14; Thomas, 9; Julia A., 6; and Arthur W., 1. Moses' occupation is given as a farmer. Both he and his wife are listed as literate, confirming that Moses did receive an education, as did his wife.¹⁵

During his adult years in Alexandria, Moses Hepburn served as a civic leader in the African American community. He was one of the nine men who purchased property for the founding of Davis Chapel in 1834. His interest in and support for education is demonstrated by his role as a teacher at the Sabbath school of Roberts Memorial Church, the successor to Davis Chapel. Hepburn was also concerned with the plight of people outside of the local community. The Christian Advocate of March 16, 1838, records that he was elected the first president of the L.T. Morgan Colored Missionary Society Chapel, founded in 1837. This organization raised over \$120 for missionary work in Africa.¹⁶

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴D.C. Census including the Town of Alexandria, 1830, Barrett Library, Alexandria, Va., Microfilm Reel 6, 223.

¹⁵Alexandria, Virginia, City and County, 1850 Census, National Archives, Microfilm Publications, Microcopy No. 432.

¹⁶Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development, "A Study of Historic Sites in the Metropolitan Washington Regions of Northern Virginia and Southern Maryland Importantly Related to the History of Afro-Americans," Part III, 1978, p. 151.

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In addition to carrying out his civic responsibilities, Hepburn was an active businessman and sought to increase and expand his wealth and landholdings. With the property bequeathed to him by his father, Moses Hepburn became a wealthy man, by any standards. Some historians have asserted that he was the wealthiest African American in Northern Virginia,¹⁷ and the 1850 census notes that his assets were valued at \$18,000.¹⁸

Moses Hepburn's business acumen and role in land development in Alexandria can be gleaned from an examination of deed records, tax assessments, and other historical documents. Hepburn added to the waterfront land holdings left to him by his father with the purchase of additional property along the Potomac shoreline for \$1400 from Thomas Swann in 1833.¹⁹ He purchased a lot on the east side of Patrick Street, near Cameron, from Richard and Selenia Tubman in 1851.²⁰ An advertisement in the Alexandria Gazette of September 11, 1849, aptly demonstrates Hepburn's inventive approach to attracting lessees and investors to his waterfront property:

LOOK AT THIS - What a splendid opportunity to make an immense and princely fortune. The subscriber, proprietor of the land and water rights for two or three thousand feet on the left and adjoining the Alexandria Canal Property at its terminus in the river Potomac respectfully informs the public that he will lease the same for twenty years or more to a responsible individual or company, who will make the necessary improvement or fixtures for the trade to the place.²¹

However, the land transaction which perhaps best demonstrates Hepburn's active involvement in development of the city was his purchase of two lots on North Pitt Street (now known as 206-212

¹⁷Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁸Alexandria, Virginia, City and County, 1850 Census, National Archives, Microfilm Publications, Microcopy No. 432.

¹⁹Alexandria Deed Book U2, p. 305.

²⁰Alexandria Deed Book M3, p. 478.

²¹Alexandria Gazette, September 11, 1849; cited in Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development, 1978, p. 150.

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North Pitt) from Quaker Robert Miller in 1850 for a total of \$700.²² The northernmost of these lots probably contained a small frame building at the time of Hepburn's purchase. The property was included in a deed of trust secured by William Miller on March 18, 1844, in which it is described as "a lot of ground with a small frame tenement."²³ Shortly after his purchase, Moses apparently constructed the four brick townhouses (206-212 North Pitt) which still stand on the property today. Tax records for 1850, prior to Hepburn's purchase, indicate that the southernmost of the Pitt Street lots, valued at \$250, was a vacant lot, while the northern one, with a value of \$500, contained one structure,²⁴ undoubtedly the "small frame tenement" mentioned in Miller's deed of trust. By 1851, the tax records indicate that there were four structures on Hepburn's Pitt Street property, two on each lot, and the value of the property doubled to \$1500.²⁵ The value of other lots on the block remained stable between 1850 and 1851, suggesting that Hepburn had improved the property by building the four townhouses immediately after purchasing the land. According to the tax records, Hepburn resided on the property, presumably in one of the newly built brick rowhouses, in 1851, 1852 and 1853. In 1852, he had nine tenants, and in 1853, he leased to eleven individuals.²⁶ By 1854, while Hepburn was still listed as the owner of the North Pitt Street properties, he was apparently no longer living there. The property, by this time valued at \$3600, was still leased to eleven tenants, and George Swain was paying a ground rent of \$350 for its use.²⁷

It is probable that the Hepburn family left Alexandria before 1854. Family tradition cites 1853 as the date of their move to the north, and this is confirmed by Hepburn's obituary in 1861.²⁸ The 1854 tax records, which show that the Hepburns were no longer in residence at Pitt Street, lend credence to this

²²Alexandria Deed Book L3, pp. 575, 577.

²³Alexandria Deed Book F3, p. 4.

²⁴Alexandria Tax Records, 1850, Ward III, Microfilm 00027, Reel 9, Land and Personal Property Tax.

²⁵Alexandria Tax Records, 1851, Ward III, 12, Microfilm 00027, Reel 10, 1851-1855, Land and Personal Property Tax.

²⁶Alexandria Tax Records, Ward III, 1851, p. 12; 1852, p. 13; 1853, p. 15; Microfilm 00027, Reel 10, 1851-1855, Land and Personal Property Tax.

²⁷Alexandria Tax Records, Ward III, 1854, p. 15, Microfilm 00027, Reel 10, 1851-1855, Land and Personal Property Tax.

²⁸Alexandria Gazette, January 22, 1861, cited in Amir Bashir, 1994, p. 8.

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departure date.²⁹ The 1892 newspaper interview of Moses, Jr., suggests that the desire to insure an education for their children provided the impetus for Moses and Amelia Hepburn to leave Virginia. Apparently, Moses, Jr., had been sent to Washington, D.C., for an education at the Bethel Church School run by Bishop Shorter. Upon learning of Moses, Jr.'s schooling, the authorities in Alexandria threatened Moses, Sr., citing the restrictive laws concerning the education of blacks which went into effect in the city when it was retroceded from the District of Columbia to Virginia in 1846. Hepburn received an ultimatum to leave the state or face reprisals for educating his son. As a result, the family decided to leave Alexandria. Their original plans called for them to settle in Massachusetts; however, during their trip north, they visited West Chester, Pennsylvania, the town in which Moses Hepburn had been educated, and decided to make their home there. Moses and Amelia purchased property on Gay Street in West Chester, lived there for a few years, and then bought land on East Miner Street for \$1000. Moses Hepburn, Sr., lived in and worked on building up the Miner Street property until his death in 1861.³⁰ Hepburn left one-third of his estate to his wife Amelia (who died two years later³¹) and the remainder to his five children, Prudence, Moses G., Thomas, Julia and Arthur in equal shares.³² Moses Garrison Hepburn followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a civic and business leader in West Chester after Moses, Sr.'s death. He became the first black councilman in the Borough of West Chester, and he turned the large house on Miner Street into a tavern and inn to serve African Americans in the area, eventually expanding his business to include a horse and buggy carriage service with a regular run to the local station to meet the trains arriving from Philadelphia.³³

The Hepburn family continued to have ties to Alexandria after their move to West Chester and even after Moses' death. In 1859, Moses and Amelia Hepburn, "of West Chester, Pennsylvania," sold property on Queen and Fayette Streets.³⁴ It was not until 1866 that the large waterfront land holdings left to Moses by William Hepburn were sold by his children for \$16,200.³⁵ Given Moses Hepburn's active participation in Alexandria business during the early nineteenth century, it is fitting that an

²⁹Alexandria Tax Records, Ward III, 1854, p. 15, Microfilm 00027, Reel 10, 1851-1855, Land and Personal Property Tax.

³⁰Amir Bashir 1994, pp. 7-8.

³¹Ibid., p. 9.

³²Alexandria Will Book 8, 50, recorded December 12, 1860, probated February 4, 1861.

³³Amir Bashir 1994, pp. 9-10.

³⁴Alexandria Deed Book U3, p. 9.

³⁵Alexandria Deed Book X3, p. 309.

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obituary notice, stressing his intelligence and character, was placed in the Alexandria Gazette on January 22, 1861. It read:

In West Chester on the 8th, □ Moses Hepburn aged 51 years. The deceased was born in bondage, and liberated by his paternal parent and educated by him in West Chester, and returned to Virginia – where was left a bequest of several thousand dollars by his father. He returned to West Chester in 1853, and was in possession of a number of dwelling houses and a handsome garden. He was well read in all the affairs of the country, and exceedingly intelligent, and modest withal. In him was united the blood of the African and Anglo-Saxon.³⁶

While there are certainly gaps in our knowledge concerning the life of Moses Hepburn, it is clear that he was a successful African American businessman and civic leader in Alexandria in the early nineteenth century. He spent the majority of his life in Alexandria, dealing with family concerns, fulfilling his responsibilities to his church and the community, and managing and improving his properties. While Hepburn owned land throughout Alexandria, the property at 206-212 North Pitt Street is the only one in the city where he is definitely known to have resided. In addition, the construction of the houses on this site after Hepburn's purchase of the land in 1850 attests to his involvement in land development activities in Alexandria during the early nineteenth century. It is noteworthy that these houses were constructed after Alexandria was retroceded to the state of Virginia, when many restrictive laws against African Americans were passed and enforced. Hepburn's capacity to overcome all of these hardships and succeed illustrates his depth of character and determination as well as his standing in the community. The properties on North Pitt Street are an important physical reminder of Hepburn's contribution to the development of the city and stand today as a tribute to and testimony of the business acumen and civic leadership of this remarkable early-nineteenth-century citizen of Alexandria.

³⁶Alexandria Gazette, January 22, 1861, cited in Amir Bashir, 1994, p. 8.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Moses Hepburn Properties
Alexandria, Virginia
Multiple Property Listing: African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET
Section PHOTO Page 12

All photographs are of:

MOSES HEPBURN ROWHOUSES
Alexandria, Virginia
VDHR File Number: 100-5015-0004
Elizabeth Calvit, exterior photographs
Kristin B. Lloyd, interior photographs

All negatives are stored in the archives of the Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section PHOTO Page 13

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: Moses Hepburn Rowhouses, looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 4
PHOTO 1 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: exterior of 206 N. Pitt street, looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 2
PHOTO 2 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: exterior of 206 N. Pitt street, looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 3
PHOTO 3 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: exterior of 208 N Pitt street, looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 12
PHOTO 4 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: Exterior of 210 N. Pitt street,
looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 6
PHOTO 5 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: exterior of 212 N. Pitt street, looking
northwest
NEG. NO.: 19170: 5
PHOTO 6 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: detail of 212 N Pitt Street
NEG. NO.: 19170: 10
PHOTO 7 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: exterior of 212 N. Pitt street, looking west
NEG. NO.: 19170: 9
PHOTO 8 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: rear elevations of 206-212 N. Pitt Street
NEG. NO.: 19170:15
PHOTO 9 OF 19

DATE: July 1994
VIEW OF: side elevation of 206 N. Pitt street, looking
east
NEG. NO.: 19170:14
PHOTO 10 OF 19

DATE: March 29, 1996
VIEW OF: 206 North Pitt Street just inside front door,
living room, north wall
NEG. NO.: 19030:10A
PHOTO 11 OF 19

DATE: March 29, 1996
VIEW OF: 206 North Pitt Street, south living room wall
showing beam and both fireplaces
NEG. NO.: 19030:15A
PHOTO 12 OF 19

DATE: March 29, 1996
VIEW OF: 206 North Pitt Street, living room fireplace,
south wall
NEG. NO.: 19030: 14A
PHOTO 13 OF 19

DATE: March 29, 1996
VIEW OF: 206 North Pitt Street, evidence of addition,
north living room wall
NEG. NO.: 19030
PHOTO 14 OF 19

DATE: November 12, 2001
VIEW OF: 212 North Pitt Street, living room fireplace,
north wall
NEG. No.: 19630: 2
PHOTO 15 OF 19

DATE: November 12, 2001
VIEW OF: 212 North Pitt Street, living room stairway to
second floor, south wall
NEG. NO.: 19630: 13
PHOTO 16 OF 19

DATE: November 12, 2001
VIEW OF: 212 North Pitt Street, doorway from front
room (living room) to middle room (dining room)
NEG. NO.: 19630: 14
PHOTO 17 OF 19

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Alexandria, Virginia
Multiple Property Listing: African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia

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Section **PHOTO** Page **14**

DATE: November 12, 2001

VIEW OF: 212 North Pitt Street, fireplace in middle
room

NEG. NO.: 19630: 16

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DATE: November 12, 2001

VIEW OF: 212 North Pitt Street, view through doorway
from middle room to back room (kitchen)

NEG. NO.: 19630: 17

PHOTO 19 OF 19

41 N AMERICAN
IC RESOURCES
ANDRIA, VIRGINIA

MOSES HEBURN
ROWHOUSES
18/322460/4297280

B. ALFRED STREET
BAPTIST CHURCH
18/321990/4296870

C. DR. ALBERT JOHNSON
HOUSE
18/322040/4296900

D. BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH
18/322200/4296800

E. ODD FELLOWS HALL
18/322050/4296720

F. GEORGE LEWIS SEATON
HOUSE
18/322490/4296660

G. ROBERTS MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
18/322150/4296460

