

## Robert Townsend Hooe Warehouse and Store

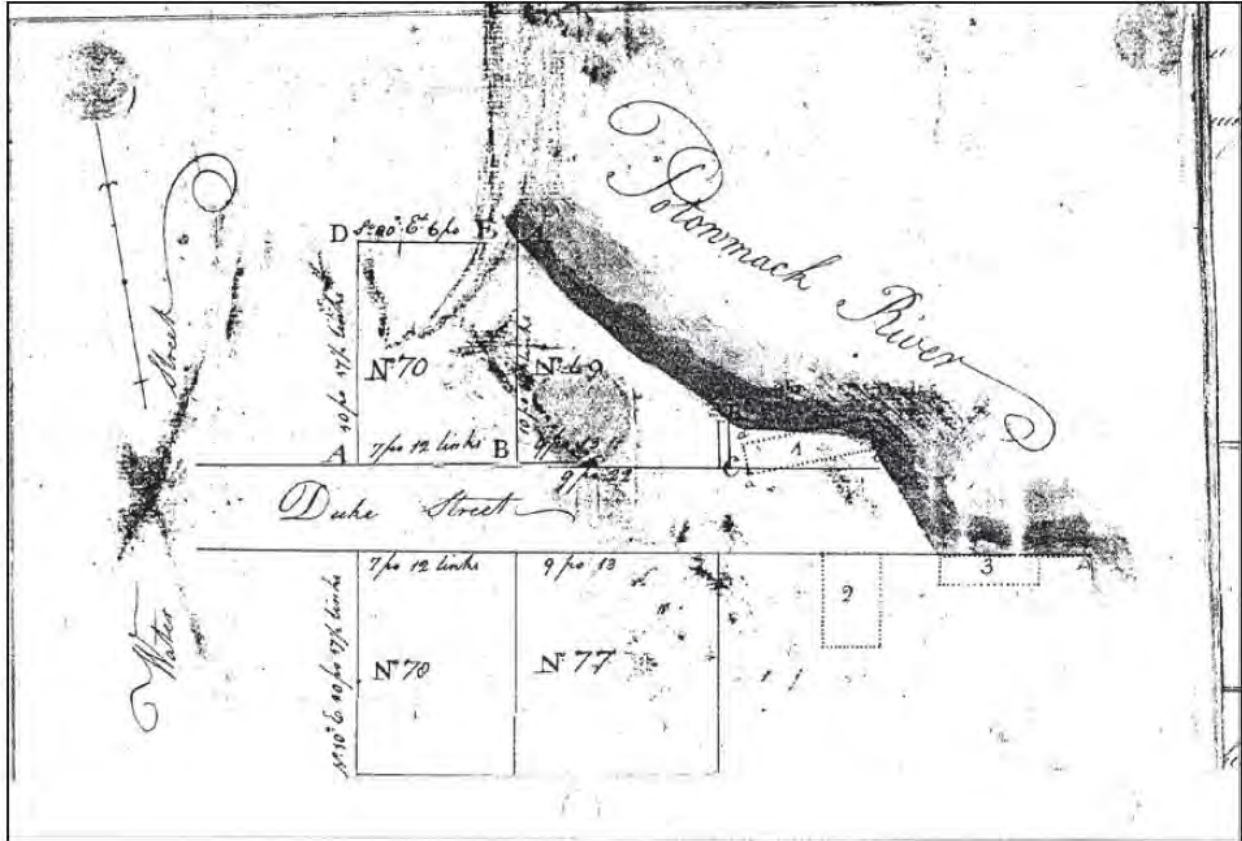
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As archaeology continues at the future site of Robinson Landing, we are excited to announce that archaeologists have located Robert Townsend Hooe's 18<sup>th</sup>-century warehouse and store.



Keen-eyed observers may have seen this approximately 64' long by 12' wide, partial stone foundation lying just to the west of the standing structure at 2 Duke Street. Built between May 1782 and June 1783, the warehouse that stood on top of these foundations played an important role in Alexandria's early history of trade and commerce. Archaeologists from Thunderbird Archaeology have uncovered the still-surviving foundations and one of the next steps will be to excavate beneath this level in order to see how many more courses of stone exist under the ground, if the foundation continues underneath 2 Duke Street, or if there are any material remains associated with the use of this building. So far, they have already answered one of their original research questions, which was whether-or-not the current building at 2 Duke Street rested partially on the foundation of Hooe's warehouse.

A Mutual Assurance Society fire insurance policy taken out by Hooe in 1796 reports that his warehouse was 72' long by 44' wide, was insured for 9,000 dollars, and stood on the spot where these stone foundations were uncovered. Confusingly, the policy states that while the first two stories were built of stone, the second and third stories were built of wood. Additional research may be able to clarify this confusion about the material of the second story.



Robert Townsend Hooe, originally from Charles County, Maryland, was a wealthy merchant in Alexandria and was elected to the office of Mayor of Alexandria in 1780. Together with several business partners, Hooe used this warehouse to import, store, and sell items imported from all over the world including German steel, Congo teas, English and Dutch cordage, Grenada rum, and Italian marble slabs, as well as more-common commercial goods like twine, yarn, glasses, muskets, porter and stout, cloth, blankets, and clothing. Hooe used this warehouse from the time of its completion in 1783 until his death in 1809.

The warehouse was eventually demolished and replaced by the current structure at 2 Duke Street sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This "new" building may actually be more than 100 years old. There is some architectural evidence that suggests it survived the 1897 fire that burned down Pioneer Mill and much of the surrounding area. It also appears to be the same size and in the same location as a building depicted on a Civil War map. It is a little unclear exactly what year Hooe's warehouse was taken down and what year the current structure was built, but further archaeological investigation may be able to help answer that question.