

Alexandria Times

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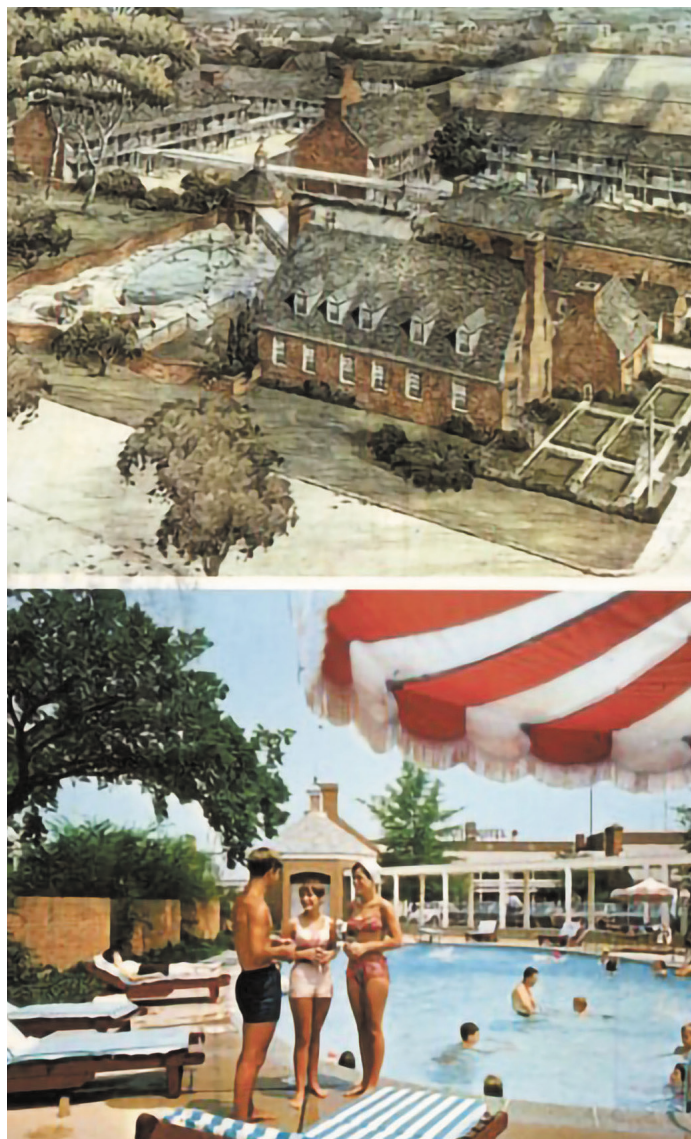
The Olde Colony Motor Lodge and Conference Center

Opened in 1960, the Olde Colony Motor Lodge and Conference Center epitomized a moment in Alexandria's tourism history. Designed by Charles A. Pearson to imitate buildings in Colonial Williamsburg and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, the Olde Colony Motor Lodge reflected Alexandria's desire to compete with Williamsburg for tourists seeking a historical – or presumed historical – experience.

The image here is from a postcard in the early 1960s. The back of the postcard read:

"On beautiful Mount Vernon Memorial Highway in Alexandria, is Virginia's most modern and luxurious motor court. With architecture and grounds designed to simulate a colonial estate, its pink brick buildings reflect the charm of 18th-century manor house life. In the rich atmosphere of the traditional old South, guests enjoy every comfort of modern living, including radio, telephone, air-conditioning and television in every room. Convenient to the nation's capitol, Olde Colony is ideal for families, businessmen and convention groups. 102 Rooms - 3 minutes South of National Airport, cor. N. Washington and First Sts., Alexandria, Va."

A 1963 motel brochure de-



PHOTO/OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

The Olde Colony Motor Lodge in North Old Town.

scribed the complex as "11 buildings laid out to simulate a colonial estate," language that probably sounded better

to early 1960s marketers than current readers. On top of historical tourism, the motor lodge fit in with other trends in North Old Town at the time.

Similar to the Hot Shoppe location owned by J.W. Marriott, the Olde Colony Motor Lodge sought to attract visitors driving up the George Washington Memorial Parkway into Washington, D.C. At the same time that it marketed itself as a vision of the past, the Olde Colony Motor Lodge also sought to appeal to the modern phenomenon of large-scale automobile use.

Few things last forever, even in Alexandria, and the motor lodge was demolished to build the Liberty Row condominiums. The one remaining building from the conference center is the former registration building, which was turned into a private residence. Postcards were regularly sold in Alexandria both as a way to update loved ones of tourist travel and as a form of advertising.

This postcard from the 1960s both captures a moment in Alexandria's history and is an artifact of that history itself.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.