

It is raining now, so I imagine it has been raining then. It is morning, and Massie Nolting has stepped out his front door at 2120 Hanover Avenue. He looks up to see a gray sky. At the urging of his wife, he has pulled a black wool frock coat over his loose-fitting Edwardian suit. He won't need the coat's throat strap; it is unseasonably warm for a winter day -- but the weather can change at a moment's notice in Richmond, you never know. He pulls his black homburg hat a little lower over his eyes against the light mist that meets him as he steps down the stoop; his unopened umbrella is insurance in case the rain becomes heavier. He is glad of the respite -- from the cold of winter and from the heavy rain which he had heard falling last night. He has a bit of a walk to the trolley, and then the ride will take some time. His office is on North 6th Street, and he is on his way to work. It is 1909.

Permitted for construction on 10 November 1908,<sup>1</sup> the home that Nolting and his family lives in is centered among seven identical row houses on the east side of the block. Like many hundreds of houses at the time in the Fan neighborhood and old downtown area of Richmond,<sup>2</sup> it, along with two others of the seven -- at 2122 and 2118 Hanover -- was advertised in June 1909 as available for rent, with occupancy available for that fall. At a rental cost of \$480 per year (about \$1,103 in today's dollars<sup>3</sup>), only a person with some means would be able to take on the financial responsibility, and that person for this house was R. Massie Nolting.

It was considered the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) in the United States and the year 1909 was a notable one. William Howard Taft had just taken over in March as president from Theodore Roosevelt. The Hudson Motor Car Company was founded in February, the first woman to drive across the United States did so in June, and the Manhattan Bridge opened in December. In August, the U.S. Army Signal Corps Division purchased the world's first military

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<sup>1</sup> Online tax assessment data (card) from City of Richmond; card was started in 1956. A search of property records that are not yet online (presumably pre-1956), would undoubtedly provide additional information.

<sup>2</sup> The economics of why so many houses were for rent instead of for sale at this point in time are not currently known to this writer.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1909-dollars-in-2018> (accessed 11 January 2019). All monetary equivalencies in this report are taken from this site.

airplane and the U.S. Navy founded a navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Construction began on the Cape Cod Canal.

Richmond, at the turn of the century and still in recovery from the Civil War, was experiencing a growth boom. Rural Virginians came to Richmond steadily, and the city grew in area by land annexation. Wealthy city elders were known for significant philanthropic works. The nation's first electric street cars had begun operating in Richmond in 1888, but development of lines continued unabated through the early decades of the twentieth century. In June 1900, two locomotives built by the Richmond Locomotive Works pulled the first train from Tampa, Florida, into Richmond over a new bridge over the James River. Richmond was in a period of remarkable industrial growth. From 300 firms employing a little over 7,000 people and producing \$12 million worth of goods in 1880, Richmond over the next 10 years grew to include 724 firms, employing 20,453 people and producing goods worth \$31 million.<sup>4</sup>



*House at 2120 Hanover (center), probably taken in 1956 (see footnote 1). This is the oldest known photo of the house.*

Nolting moved an assortment of family members into the house at 2120 Hanover in 1909,<sup>5</sup> perhaps at least partially depending on some of them to help pay the rent and other expenses. Though the median age of first marriage in the United States at the time was around 25,<sup>6</sup> Nolting, at 38, had only just recently married the two-years-younger Janet Morris on 11 November 1909,<sup>7</sup> and the society column of the Richmond Times Dispatch reported they had “returned to the city” by 25 November and were “at home at 2120 Hanover Street.”<sup>8 9</sup> Living with the young couple were his 60-year-old widowed mother Sarah Thompson Nolting, his 33-

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<sup>4</sup> From an archived history of the fan located at <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://fanofthefan.com/2012/01/the-fan-area-historic-district/> (accessed 15 December 2018).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thespruce.com/estimated-median-age-marriage-2303878> (accessed 10 December 2018).

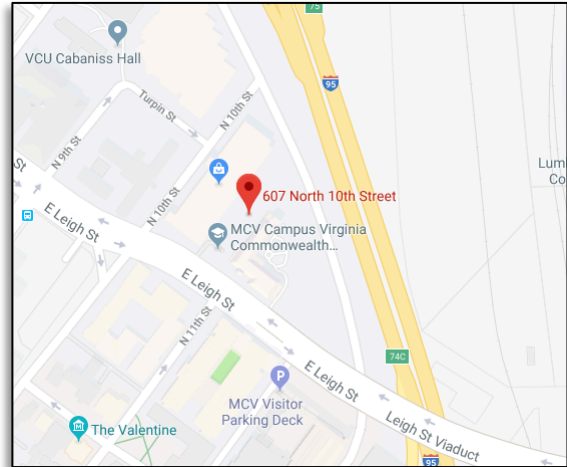
<sup>7</sup> Marriage certificate data from ancestry.com (accessed 10 December 2018).

<sup>8</sup> It is not known why Massie and Janet waited so late in life, statistically speaking, to marry. There is some documentation available that indicates that Janet may have been married during the intervening time to a W. H. Proctor in North Carolina. A relatively quick view of documentation could not determine whether or not this was the Janet of this story; further research might answer the question.

<sup>9</sup> The Times Dispatch, Richmond, 25 November 1909, page 7.

year-old brother George A. Nolting Jr., his single 62-year-old aunt Sue Massie, and an 18-year-old mulatto<sup>10</sup> servant named Blanch Turner.<sup>11</sup>

Massie Nolting was a Richmond native as were both his parents. He used his middle name as his given name, but his first name was Richard, and he is often listed in records, including press accounts, as R. Massie Nolting. He was born on 5 October 1872<sup>12</sup> and first appears in the census as a 7-year-old in 1880 when he lived at home at 607 North Tenth Street in Richmond.<sup>13</sup> His father, George Augustus Nolting, 43, was identified as a hardware merchant at the time, and his mother, Sarah (nee Thompson), 34, kept the house. A 2-year-old brother, George Jr., lived in the home as also did his 73-year-old maternal grandfather, Richard Massie. Though the neighborhood now is part of the VCU medical campus, at the time it was filled with homes of working class Richmonders. Laborers, factory workers, and domestic workers were prevailing occupations on their block.<sup>14</sup> Both his parents listed both their parents' birthplaces as Virginia, so roots to the Commonwealth for this family ran deep. Massie's father had been a Confederate soldier, a sergeant<sup>15</sup> in the Confederate Old First Virginia Infantry, Company H.<sup>16</sup>



*Location of the Richmond home of the young Massie Nolting in 1880 (Google maps).*

Janetta Morris, who is also referred to in documentation as Janet and often used the middle name of Carter,<sup>17</sup> was also a Richmond native. She was born on 15 September 1871,<sup>18</sup> in

<sup>10</sup> Censuses over the years collected different information, depending on what the federal government felt was appropriate to its data needs; the 1910 Census collected data on race. The Nolting family members are all designated as white, unsurprisingly for the times and given their socio-economic status, and Blanch was designated mulatto. These designations were provided by whomever happened to be at home and answering the questions posed by the census enumerator. Where the information is present in the census, people of color are identified in this report in order to preserve their presence in the history. Persons counted in U.S. censuses were generally persons who were actually living in the home.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census, 1910.

<sup>12</sup> Tombstone, <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/> (accessed 26 December 2018).

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>15</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 27 April 1875, page 4, in an article about a regiment group from the Old First Virginia Infantry organizing for reunions.

<sup>16</sup> Pension request filed by Sarah Thompson Nolting in 1920.

<sup>17</sup> As shown in various Richmond newspaper articles and censuses.

<sup>18</sup> Tombstone, <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/> (accessed 26 December 2018).

a family that by 1880 was comprised of four daughters and two sons of Walter H. P. Morris (1839-1910) and Janetta Carter Harrison Morris (1844-1909).<sup>19</sup> Both her parents were also native Virginians. Early censuses are unreadable or unavailable for this family, but in 1900 the family is reported as living at 706 Pine Street in Richmond.<sup>20</sup> Their neighbors seem more economically advantaged than those of the Noltings. Several list white collar occupations, but there were several also who identified as cooks.

For many years, and throughout the early 1900s, Janetta's father, Walter, worked for James N. Boyd and Company,<sup>21</sup> a prominent Richmond tobacco buying and exporting business. Walter, like Massie's father, was a soldier in the Confederate Army, enlisting in Company F, Virginia 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment on 21 April 1861. Promoted to full sergeant, he mustered out on 10 May 1862 and was transferred to 2<sup>nd</sup> Company Howitzers Light Artillery Battery on 10 May 1862. He mustered out of the Confederate Army on 9 April 1865 at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.<sup>22</sup> Walter merits a couple of mentions in the book "One of Jackson's Foot Cavalry: His Experience and What He Saw During the War" by John H. Worsham.<sup>23</sup> No occupation can be found recorded for Janetta Carter Harrison Morris, and she likely viewed herself as a housewife.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census, 1880.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>21</sup> Undated city directory available online from the Reynolds Historical Genealogy Collection, Allen County Public Library.

[https://archive.org/stream/richmondvirginia01unse\\_3/richmondvirginia01unse\\_3\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/richmondvirginia01unse_3/richmondvirginia01unse_3_djvu.txt) (accessed 11 December 2018). Also, other city directories available online at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com).

<sup>22</sup> This outline about Walter Morris' participation in the Confederate Army is available on [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (accessed 11 December 2018). More information about Walter Morris' time in the military might be available through additional research.

<sup>23</sup> Excerpts online with Google books.

<sup>24</sup> Both Walter and his wife are buried in Hollywood Cemetery.

Massie and Janetta's names pop up frequently in society columns of The Times of Richmond or the Richmond Dispatch newspapers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Massie was described as a member of a "dramatic club" that would give performances with names such as "Diamonds and Hearts" and "An Economical Boomerang" in the homes of other young people throughout the city. He began acting in these home productions as early as age 16. Janetta is often listed as one of many young people in attendance. Sometimes dances would be held after a performance. The two are also listed as attending other types of society events: they are present at weddings or debutant balls, but Janetta in particular seems more socially connected as a teenager and young adult than does Massie. Janetta's name is also listed several times as she visited friends or relatives in nearby towns or they visited her.<sup>25</sup> Census documents show both of them graduated from high school, but which school is presently unknown.



*Location of the Richmond home of the Walter H P Morris family in 1900.*

In 1891, at age 19, Massie, in addition to appearing in the home plays, was also working as a clerk at a business at the corner of 9th and Canal in downtown Richmond, possibly Hall Foundry, possibly a precursor to Richmond Iron Works.<sup>26</sup> Though no longer living at home, he was living nearby. His father, who had co-owned a hardware store with a brother for several years,<sup>27</sup> may have fallen on hard times – a hardware store he owned was auctioned -- and he

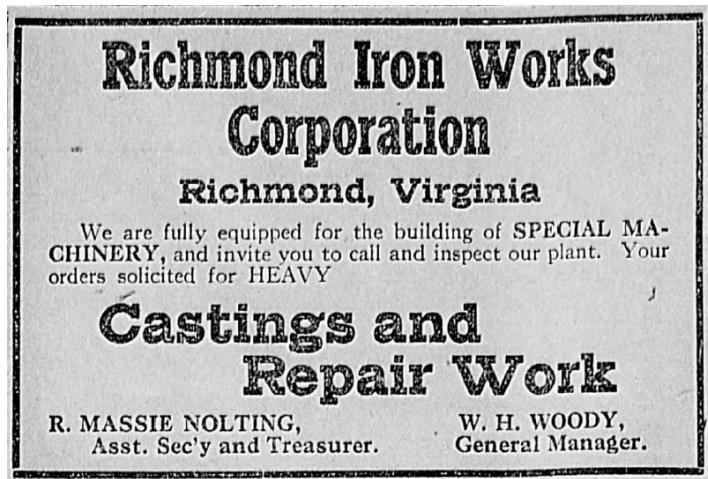
<sup>25</sup> Information for this paragraph is taken from a number of articles found listing their names in The Times and the Richmond Dispatch.

<sup>26</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 3 April 1892, page 12: an article headlined "Gleaned in One Day," reported an incident of an ambulance responding to "the foundry" at Ninth and Canal to a man who had cut his head (he was treated and the ambulance left). There were other businesses located at this intersection, but considering his later trajectory it is mostly likely that Massie worked at the foundry. In fact, the Richmond Dispatch on 29 March 1893 reported in an obituary for Joseph Hall that Richmond Iron-Works was located at the corner, and the companies may have been one and the same and/or co-located and otherwise intermingled.

<sup>27</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 3 September 1870, page 4. There are several advertisements over the years in the Richmond Dispatch for goods sold in the firm called Nolting and Brother (the marquis brother was John M., not George A.). The partnership was dissolved in 1875 (Richmond Dispatch, 7 October 1875, page 2) and each brother was to have opened a separate store – John at 825 Main and George at 521 Broad). John ran an apparently successful hardware store for many years, though he changed location several times (according to ads in the Richmond Dispatch). As late as 1908, he was advertising items for sale in his store. There were a number of hardware stores from the late 1800s and early 1900s, and competition appears to have been



was working as a bookkeeper at 825 East Main, probably for his brother.<sup>28</sup> In 1893, Massie was clearly working as a bookkeeper at Richmond Iron Works at 504 N 6th (his father was also working there as a bookkeeper and his brother was a clerk at the same firm).<sup>29</sup> The building does not exist today; it is located approximately where the Coliseum is now. City directories show him in the same job until 1900, when he is listed as superintendent at the Richmond Iron Works, perhaps not coincidentally the same year his father died.<sup>30</sup> Massie seems to have improved his financial well-being; he also was moving in higher social circles: in 1901 he was a pall bearer for James H. Scott, a founding member of a manufacturing firm which was aggressively pursuing national level iron manufacturing projects and was either associated with or was Hall Foundry.<sup>31</sup> Scott, only four years older than Massie, had died at age 34 of complications from malaria.



*Massie Nolting in a 1910 ad, shown as Assistant Secretary and Treasurer of Richmond Iron Works Corporation.*

By 1910, Massie Nolting was listed in advertisements in the Richmond Times Dispatch as being assistant secretary and treasurer of the Richmond Iron Works Corporation. Massie was probably at or near the peak of his career. He had married and had moved into the house on Hanover the year before, and by mid 1910, he knew he was expecting the birth of his first child, his daughter Mary, who would be born on 2 December.<sup>32</sup> The previous month, his pregnant wife had found time to enter a Times Dispatch scrambled-word contest, and had won 12th place (she won a prize of \$1, worth about \$25 in today's dollars).<sup>33</sup>

fierce. No advertisements for a hardware store for George A. Nolting can be found during the same time frame.

<sup>28</sup> Employment information in this paragraph is provided in the city directories of the years indicated. The auction information was obtained from an ad announcing the auction in the Richmond Dispatch.

<sup>29</sup> City directories.

<sup>30</sup> George Nolting (b. 1836), Massie Nolting's father, died in 1900. His wife, Sarah T. Nolting (b. 1847), died in January 1929. Both are buried in Hollywood Cemetery.

[www.hollywoodcemetery.org](http://www.hollywoodcemetery.org) (accessed 26 December 2018).

<sup>31</sup> Obituaries for James H. Scott (The Times of Richmond, 25 August 1901, page 12) and Joseph Hall (Richmond Dispatch, 29 March 1893, page 1).

<sup>32</sup> Date of birth taken from family tree information posted on ancestry.com.

<sup>33</sup> The contest was called "Logomachy." "Logomachy" was also the name of a board game advertised in local newspapers featured for sale at local Five and Dime stores for Christmas that year. The ad descriptions show it was a kind of parlor game. The Times Dispatch had adapted it

The Richmond Iron Works Corporation is not the same as Tredegar. There were, in fact, several small iron work manufacturing companies in Richmond at the turn of the century that combined, broke apart, and re-combined as micro and macro economic factors affected the business. Richmond Iron Works was one result of a several-company merger (as is hinted in the names of businesses Massie worked for as he rose in the ranks). The financial panic of 1873 and the increasing prevalence of steel over iron brought about evermore difficulties to these Richmond companies by the early 1900s. Still, they persevered.

Richmond Iron Works saw opportunity in the burgeoning automobile industry. At the same time that Massie's family was settling into their home at 2120 Hanover, the Iron Works was attempting to keep itself relevant and profitable by establishing a factory to manufacture cars. A lengthy article accompanied by three large photographs of the Iron Works plant exterior and interior in the Sunday, 30 October 1910, Times Dispatch touted the effort. The plant covered 4.5 acres on North Boulevard near the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railway line. The company had its own electric power plant with plans to expand it to accommodate the manufacture of cars. Noted the reporter, "The company is already manufacturing automobiles and the outlook is already so bright for this new line of business, new not only to Richmond but to the South and the East, that a special department for this work looms up as an actual necessity." He added, "(This) tells in a nutshell of the twentieth century up-to-dateness of the vigorous and far-seeing young men who are at the head of the Richmond Iron Works Corporation."<sup>34</sup>

One car had been completed by the time of the publication of the article and was "daily on exhibition" on the streets of Richmond. It was "very properly named" the Virginian. It was "a beauty" and had been "admired by thousands of people."<sup>35</sup>

In the United States, early automobiles were custom-made in small shops throughout the nation, but the East led the way. In Virginia, the first automobile to appear on the streets in

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as a marketing gimmick. They claimed they had had so many entries that the envelopes containing the answers, "when cut into strips one inch wide and joined end to end, if dropped from Ralph Johnstone's Baby Grand Wright Aeroplane at his Belmont Park world's record height of 9,714 feet, would reach the earth and trail nearly one half mile on the ground" (from an ad in the Times Dispatch, 2 November 1910, page 9).

<sup>34</sup> The Times Dispatch, 30 October 1910, first and second pages of the Industrial section. Seven officers are listed for the company in the article, Massie is listed as number 5. Since there was both a treasurer and a secretary, and Massie as listed as "assistant," he may have had, as part of his duties, responsibilities for marketing. The small display ads that were in the Times Dispatch which listed him and only the general manager (his name shown first), were therefore placed by him, and he may have been largely responsible for this very long article on the effort to produce a car.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

use was in Norfolk in 1899,<sup>36</sup> though in Richmond in 1896, Wood and Meagher had already built a prototype gas-propelled motor carriage.<sup>37</sup> The first Virginia-made car, the Dawson Car, was built in Basic City (now Waynesboro) in 1901.<sup>38</sup> A year later, Richmond joined the automobile manufacturing game. R.W. Coffee & Sons, makers of heavy machinery, gas engines, and transmission gears, and developed a 1-cylinder, 12-horsepower touring car. Deemed worthy enough to compete against other nascent cars, Coffee & Sons entered its car in a 100-mile round-trip endurance test from New York City to South Port, Connecticut. The car was unable to finish the competition, but a businessman in New York purchased it and used it as a taxi there for years. Coffee's motorcar was a one-hit wonder, and although the company managed to produce one more auto, the company ended car production after 1902.<sup>39</sup> The Kline Kar, another early car that has some fame in automotive circles, was first built in York, Pennsylvania (1910-1912), and then production was moved to Richmond, where the competition was no doubt much unappreciated by Richmond Iron Works.<sup>40</sup>

In the early decades of the twentieth century, automobile ownership was increasing rapidly in the United States. In 1910 there were 2,705 motor vehicles registered in Virginia; by 1916 that number had risen to more than 37,000.<sup>41</sup>

The 1910 Richmond Times Dispatch article noted that Richmond Iron Works had a dozen or more of its Virginian automobiles in the process of manufacture.<sup>42</sup> But the company was faced with the prospect of having to raise cash, and in 1911 began a campaign to do so.<sup>43</sup> The manufacture of automobiles in Richmond, however, faced other significant problems. A car was only useful where road conditions made it so, and Virginia road quality was spotty; even as late as 1921, the Automobile Club of America was recommending that motorists traveling from New England to Florida bypass the state of Virginia because of the poor state of its roads.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/transportation-virginia> (accessed 9 December 2018).

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article\\_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html](https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html) (accessed 9 December 2018).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kline\\_Kar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kline_Kar) (accessed 9 December 2018). The first Richmond Kline Kar was built in November 2012.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/transportation-virginia> (accessed 9 December 2018).

<sup>42</sup> The Times Dispatch, 30 October 1910, first and second pages of the Industrial section.

<sup>43</sup> The Times Dispatch, 9 March 1911 ad.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/transportation-virginia> (accessed 9 December 2018).



Richmond Iron Works recognized and tried to confront that challenge, giving their design "advantages adaptable to bad roads."<sup>45</sup>

Richmond Iron Works produced two models of their Virginian automobile -- one for four people, the other for seven, but the car's \$3,000 (about \$75,000 today) price tag limited sales.<sup>46</sup> And the competition coming out of Detroit was fateful. Henry Ford was already selling his Model T for as little as \$1,000 in the early 1900s. In 1913, he was able to cut that price to about \$300 using mass production with interchangeable parts, cutting the time for building a car from more than 12 hours to roughly two.<sup>47</sup>

**Where Stock Often Increases From \$100 to \$1000.00 Within A Few Months Or Years**

**At Last, You Are Offered A Chance To Share In The Earnings Of An Automobile Factory. A Line Of Manufacturing Supplying Only 50% Of The Actual Demand Of The Trade, And Often Paying Share Holders As High As 60% Up To 1300% In Dividends**

But few of us realize how rapidly fortunes have been piled up by manufacturers of Automobiles. Yet in its infancy, some of the most thrilling chapters in the history of twentieth century finance have been written by the manufacturers of these gold-laden, graceful gasoline machines that have within a few years established themselves firmly in the nation's complex modern life.

But, so far, who has made the fortunes? The money lords—the kings of finance—the exclusive few.

But as last you are offered an opportunity to buy stock—to reap some of the matchless dividends—to enjoy the highest earning power from your money.

**What Other Factories Have Paid In Dividends**

The Chalmers Motor Company, headed by Hugh Chalmers, in 1910 DECLARED A DIVIDEND OF 30 PER CENT. IN CASH AND 1000 PER CENT. IN CORPORATE STOCK.

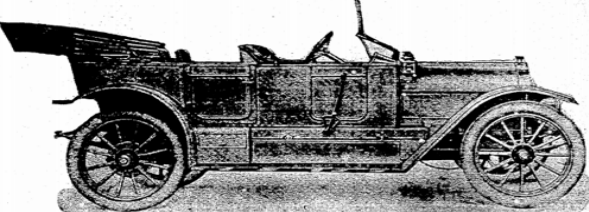
Walter E. Flanders started in the Automobile business with \$195,000, and within TWENTY MONTHS sold his interests for \$6,000,000—A PROFIT OF NEARLY 3000 PER CENT.

General Motors, with a capital of \$16,000,000, EARNED DIVIDENDS OF \$12,000,000 IN 1909—in 1910 it was FAR MORE.

For five years the Reo Motor Car Company have PAID 90 PER CENT. ANNUALLY on their stock.

Talk about the "Arabian Nights"—the record of the Automobile business in this country reads like a golden dream that would have CRAZED KING MIDAS HIMSELF.

**YET IT IS IN ITS INFANCY.**



**VIRGINIAN—A-50. PRICE \$3,000, FULLY EQUIPPED**

**To Manufacture "Virginian" Automobiles**

But right here in Richmond there is a factory already in operation—already turning out a successful and superior car.

The name of the factory is The Richmond Iron Works Corporation.

The name of the Automobile being manufactured is the "Virginian."

The possibilities for large dividends are just as promising as were those of the companies named here.

But the output of the factory is not great enough to supply the demand—people are clamoring for "Virginian" cars.

The Richmond Iron Works must have more capital or miss the sale of many cars—and dividends.

So we are placing on the market a limited amount of stock—selling it to the public—the automobile buyers.

It is a rare chance.

**You May Be Too Late If You Delay**

But as wonderful as this opportunity is, you will have to do your part, and do it quickly, if you wish to PERSONALLY share in the earnings of the Richmond Iron Works Corporation.

As stated, the shares of stock to be sold are limited.

And the price is liable to mount upward without warning. We cannot guarantee that it will remain at \$1.25 per share long (par, \$1.00).

Show your good judgment—your independence—your business foresight—by writing us now.

It will take but one minute of your time—but two cents of your money—to fill in, cut out and mail the coupon below.

**American Finance Corporation**

MERCHANTS NATIONAL BANK BUILDING . . . . . RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

**AMERICAN FINANCE CORPORATION,**  
**Merchants National Bank Building, Richmond, Va.**

Gentlemen:

Kindly send me your booklet telling about stock in the Richmond Iron Works Corporation.

Names . . . . .

T.D. . . . . Address . . . . .

*Ad in the 9 March 1911 Richmond Times Dispatch seeking to sell stock to finance the manufacture of "Virginian" automobiles. Note the lithograph of the actual A50 Virginian automobile.*

While Richmond Iron Works was in the business of producing automobiles, the Nolting family, still living at 2120 Hanover, seemed to be prosperous -- in 1911 they advertised for an

<sup>45</sup> The Times Dispatch, 30 October 1910, first and second pages of the Industrial section. The reporter noted that the Virginia was "a perfect car, equal of any high-priced car made in this country."

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article\\_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html](https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html) (accessed 9 December 2018).

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article\\_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html](https://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/behind-the-wheel-cars-once-were-made-in-richmond-and/article_15bab9c1-c513-5230-a363-02d688467f1a.html) (accessed 9 December 2018).

"experienced nurse" to take care of their daughter.<sup>48</sup> But Richmond Iron Works couldn't survive its efforts to expand into the automobile manufacturing. The company, "(building) the Virginian car and failing to realize the success anticipated," filed for bankruptcy by February 1912 with assets of \$111,351.90 and liabilities of \$67,577.96 with an additional valuation of real estate (on Boulevard) worth \$75,000.<sup>49</sup> The president of the company, M. A. Finn, went on to incorporate a new company, Henrico Iron Works, in 1913,<sup>50</sup> but by 1917 appears to have left the industry altogether, chartering a real estate company in Hopewell and in Norfolk, and having some involvement in Southside Loan and Savings Corporation in Richmond.<sup>51</sup>

The Nolting family added another baby to their family in 1912 (Richard Jr., born 22 November),<sup>52</sup> but a general decline in family fortunes seemed to follow the demise of Richmond Iron Works and the Virginia automobile industry. By mid 1913, the family had moved from their home at 2120 Hanover<sup>53</sup> and Massie Nolting, judging by later newspaper advertisements, appears to have gone into business for himself. By 1917, he was advertising himself as an estimator of brick, terra cotta, and steel, with an office in Richmond's Mutual Building.<sup>54</sup> By 1920, the family appears in the U.S. census as living at 3304 Hanover with their three children: Mary, 9; Richard Jr., 7; and Janetta, 4; as well as with Massie's widowed mother, Sarah, and an African American cook named Nora Gray. A 10 October 1921 ad in the Times Dispatch shows Massie as a factory representative of Detroit Steel Products with an office, perhaps the same office, at 119 Mutual Building at 909 East Main in Richmond.<sup>55</sup>

By 1930, the U.S. census reflects that the family had moved again to 3323 Franklin Street,<sup>56</sup> but living in the home were only the core family members: Massie and Janetta and their three teenaged children (19, 17, and 14). In 1940, they were still living at 3323 Franklin Street, and the census provided intriguing information about the Nolting family economic status. Massie's wages were listed as \$1,200 a year (about \$21,500 in today's dollars). All three children were still at home. Mary, 29, was working as a librarian at the city library, making \$1,040 a year; Richard Massie Jr., 27, was working as a draftsman for the state highway department, making \$1,520 a year; and Janet, 24, was working as a stenographer, possibly for or with her father, and making \$520 a year. All wages combined would have created conditions for a comfortable household, but those of Massie alone would have made things financially

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<sup>48</sup> The Times Dispatch, 22 June 1911, ad on page 9.

<sup>49</sup> The Accessory and Garage Journal (Google books), February 1912.

<sup>50</sup> Google Books, The Iron Trade Review, 20 November 1913, page 952.

<sup>51</sup> Google Books, State Corporation Commission of Virginia General Report for the year ending 31 December 1917, pages 664-665.

<sup>52</sup> Date of birth taken from family tree information posted on ancestry.com.

<sup>53</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, 8 June 1913, classified ad on page 36 for the property ("rent list" for the property at 2120 Hanover).

<sup>54</sup> The Times Dispatch, 3 December 1917, ad on page 5.

<sup>55</sup> The Times Dispatch, 10 October 1921, ad on page 7. The Mutual Building is an historic high-rise in downtown Richmond. It was built in 1904 by the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Census 1930. The census does not indicate whether they owned or rented the house.

more difficult for even the couple alone. It is worth noting that the Great Depression had just started (in 1929), and things could have been much worse.

Massie Nolting died on 8 September 1941.<sup>57</sup> Janet Carter Nolting died on 2 March 1944.<sup>58</sup> Both are buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. All three of their children are likely deceased.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Death certificate available online at [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com).

<sup>58</sup> Death certificate available online at [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com)

<sup>59</sup> Some further information is available of the grown children and their lives on [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com), but data after 1940 is more difficult to find as censuses after 1940 and certain other information is not available for privacy reasons. Some persons have included Mary, Richard Jr., and Janetta in family trees on [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com). There are a number of people with Nolting as their surname still living in Richmond who may be descendants of this core family, although it appears from a quick look at the family trees as though Mary moved to Ohio after marrying and Janetta may have never married (and may not have descendants).

**Final Notes:**

The sources noted in this document are abbreviated (not full and formal) and are provided to help give direction to someone who seeks to confirm or find additional information.

Because the house at 2120 Hanover Avenue was rented out instead of purchased by the first homeowner, it was fairly lucky circumstance to be able to identify the first residents. Right away, a search on [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) using "2120 Hanover" revealed the article about Massie Nolting and wife returning home on 25 November 1909. Searching for information by using names is much easier than searching by addresses, and it was made even easier by the fact that Massie Nolting had a somewhat unusual name. Once there was a name for what was an early resident, if not the first resident, it was somewhat easier to put a timeline together indicating that the Noltings were the first:

1. The permit for construction is dated in online city records as November 1908.
2. An ad appeared in the newspaper in June 1909 that 2120 Hanover would be available for rent in fall 1909.

Another lucky circumstance was that it was rented out just before the 1910 census, which identified the entire household.

Records on the ownership of the property may exist further back than what is available online (as noted, online for Richmond city they start at about 1956), but they are likely located in Henrico County. They may reveal who actually owned the property at the time it was built – possibly a consortium since there were several operating in the Richmond booming real estate market at the time. As noted in the story, the owners sought to rent it out again in mid 1913, most certainly after the Noltings left, but who may have rented it at that time might be lost (the next census, of course, did not occur until 1920, though city directories, if they exist, might provide the information). The records at Henrico County might reveal when the next sale of the property occurred, however – presumably when it converted from a rental property to a resident-owned property. The next best hope to find out names of any renters in the house would be the 1920 census unless records of the owner/consortium still exist. It is more difficult to search on addresses than on names of people on census records which exist online. The best way to do it is to use the very slow search engine of the censuses at the National Archives; but as of this writing (5 January 2019), the National Archives site is closed due to the government shutdown over the budget and so a quick look today to see if the 1920 residents could be identified was fruitless.