

The 18th Century Burial Ground of The Old Presbyterian Meeting House

The earliest grave in this Churchyard Burial Ground dates from 1761. A formal Presbyterian congregation was established in 1772, and the Meeting House was erected as their place of worship in 1775. The original Meeting House was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in the 1830s. The Churchyard Burial Ground continued in active use until 1809, when the congregation established the Presbyterian Cemetery on Hamilton Lane; it continues in use to this day. The current Meeting House congregation of 1,000 members is actively engaged in twenty-first century affairs.

Some 300 persons from Alexandria's colonial and early national periods are interred in this Churchyard Burial Ground, though relatively few gravesites remain marked. A plaque in the northeast corner of the site commemorates all who are buried in this hallowed spot. A second plaque, in the same area, memorializes the patriots of the American Revolution who are interred here. The Churchyard Burial Ground and the Presbyterian Cemetery together contain more than 40 graves of Patriots of the American Revolution, believed to be the largest number in Virginia. Also interred here are members of some of Alexandria's founding families, numerous persons who served in the French and Indian War, and some founding members of the local Masonic Lodge, which George Washington served as Master.

SELECTED BURIALS

Gravesite numbers in the following entries refer to locations on the map (see reverse).

Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution

(Gravesite 19). This memorial was erected by the National Society Children of the American Revolution in April 1929. It honors an unidentified veteran who was originally buried north of the current memorial and was relocated to this site when St. Mary's Catholic Church was expanded in 1826. The epitaph to the Unknown

Soldier atop the memorial reads in part, "Here lies a soldier of the Revolution... his was an idealism... that... lifted high the torch of civil liberty..."



Rev. James Muir, D.D. (1757-1820; memorial at 14; gravesite inside the Meeting House). Born in Scotland, Reverend Muir served for 31 years as the third minister of the Meeting House congregation. He worked with George Washington as president of the Alexandria Academy, as head of Alexandria's Poor Relief Committee, and as chaplain of the local Masonic Lodge. Respected and beloved by all, he was an energetic and influential clergyman and public-spirited citizen. Rev. Muir is buried under the north aisle of the Meeting

House (a memorial plaque is on the north interior wall). The tablet memorial in the Burial Ground was placed near the graves of his wife, Elizabeth Welman Muir, and several of their children.

William Hunter, Jr. (1731-1792; gravesite 26). Born in Scotland, William Hunter, Jr. came to Alexandria, where he became a successful shipping merchant. In 1788, he founded Alexandria's St. Andrew's Society, a benevolent and social organization for people of Scottish descent. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church and served as a magistrate, member of Alexandria's Common Council, and twice as Alexandria's mayor.

Dr. James Craik (1730-1814; gravesite 38). Dr. Craik was born at the family estate in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. Emigrating to Virginia in 1751, he served with George Washington as a surgeon in the French and Indian War and as Chief Physician and Surgeon of the Continental

Army during the American Revolution. A close friend of Washington, he attended at his death in 1799. The current granite memorial replaced the original in 1928.

Margaret "Peggy" Vowell (1773-1806; gravesite 33). Born in Alexandria, the daughter of Captain John Harper, she married John Cripps Vowell in 1795. She died of consumption and is buried beneath a tablet stone behind the sanctuary with the remains of four of her children who died in infancy. John Cripps Vowell is buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery.

Mary Vowell (1772-1805; gravesite 32). Born in Philadelphia, the daughter of Captain John Harper and elder sister to Peggy, she married Thomas Vowell, brother of John Cripps Vowell, in 1794. She died of consumption at age 33, the year before her younger sister, and is buried in a box tomb near her, together with the remains of four of her own infant children who predeceased her. Thomas Vowell is buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery.



Maj. John Carlyle (1720-1780; gravesite 11). Born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, John Carlyle emigrated to Virginia in 1741. He became a successful merchant and trustee and overseer of Alexandria at its founding. He was appointed a Major and Commissary of the Virginia militia in the French and Indian War. He was a member of the local Committee of Correspondence and Committee of Safety during the American Revolution.

Sarah "Sally" Fairfax Carlyle (1731-1761; gravesite 10). The daughter of William Fairfax of Belvoir and wife of John Carlyle, Sarah is buried beside her husband. Her epitaph reads in part, "To the memory of Mrs. Sarah Carlyle... She was

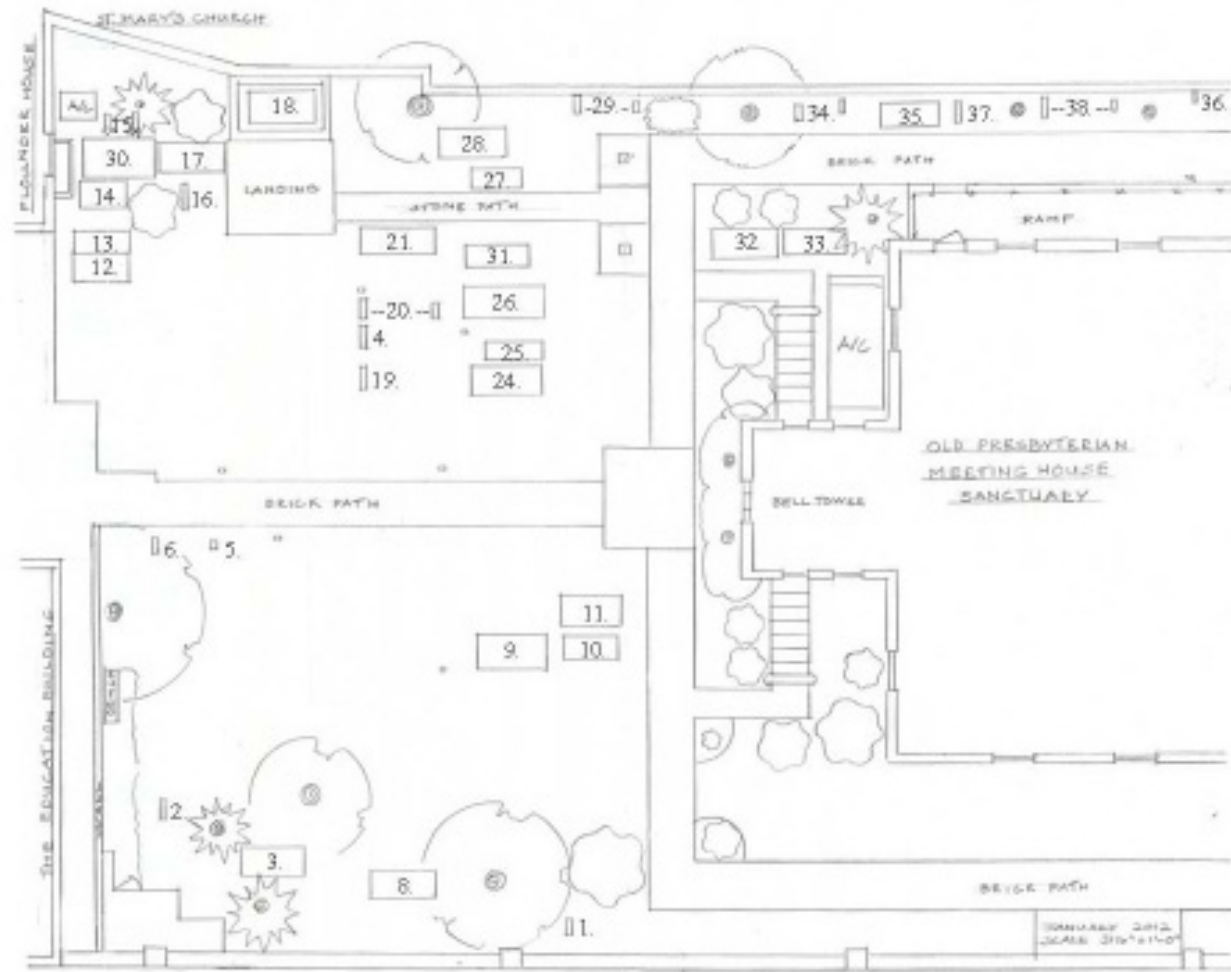
amiable through life as a dutiful child, loving wife, affectionate parent, indulgent mistress, faithful friend, and sincere Christian, and is thence justly lamented by all who knew her... Nigh her lie five of her children... "

Rev. William Thom (1750-1773; gravesite unknown). Rev. Thom, the first minister called to serve Alexandria's Presbyterians, arrived here from Philadelphia in 1772. He died of yellow fever in August 1773. His widowed mother, Mary Thom, who accompanied him to Alexandria, died in the same epidemic.

Captain John Harper (1728-1804; gravesite unknown). As a young man, Capt. Harper commanded a schooner engaged in the West Indies trade. A merchant, whose local partnership with William Hartshorne flourished, he also operated Harper's Wharf at the foot of Prince Street. Among his financial ventures were the development of "Captains Row" and "Gentry Row" on Prince Street.



George Washington plaque. (North wall, above gravesite 29). In 1932, in conjunction with the City of Alexandria's celebration of the bicentennial of George Washington's birth, the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution constructed the wall around the Burial Ground and installed this commemorative plaque. It reads in part, "In this churchyard rest the remains of many of the comrades in arms, intimate friends and fellow Masons of George Washington... To these, as a memorial, the wall around this sacred enclosure was erected..."



* Stone known to have been moved.

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| 1. Sarah Ricketts (d. 1802)* | 12. Thomas Smith (d. 1803) |
| 2. Mary Halloday (d. 1786) | 13. Rebecca Smith (d. 1803) |
| 3. Unknown* | 14. Rev. James Muir (d. 1820) |
| 4. Elizabeth Anne White (d.1795)* | 15. Infant Elizabeth Muir (d. 1799) |
| 5. Unknown (d. 1787) | 16. Frances Wardlaw Muir (d. 1791) |
| 6. James Mitchell (d. 1787) | 17. Elizabeth Muir (d. 1831) |
| 7. Stone fragment | 18. Tomb of the Unknown |
| 8. Ann Russell (d. 1807) | 19. Jenny Young (d. 1797) |
| 9. Judith Bogue (d. 1799) | 20. Archibald Thompson (d. 1772) & John Hepburn |
| 10. Sarah Fairfax Carlyle (d.1761) | 21. Agnes Hepburn (d. 1811) |
| 11. John Carlyle (d. 1780) | 22.-25. Unknown |

Preserve Our History

You can help the Old Presbyterian Meeting House to maintain, preserve, and restore our historic churchyard burial ground. Please leave your contribution of cash or check at the church office or mail a check to:

Old Presbyterian Meeting House
 323 South Fairfax Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314
Attn: Burial Ground Fund

Thank you for helping us to honor the memories of some 300 men and women buried at this site, including colonial and early national church leaders, some of Alexandria's founding fathers and civic leaders, patriots of the American Revolution, and colleagues of President George Washington.

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| 26. William Hunter, Jr. (d. 1792) |
| 27. John Wise (d. 1790) |
| 28. Robert Creighton, M.D. (d. 1807) |
| 29. Daniel Douglas (d. 1803) |
| 30. David Lindsay (1791)* |
| 31. Grace Hall (d. 1798)* |
| 32. Mary Vowell (d. 1805) |
| 33. Margaret Vowell (d. 1806) |
| 34. Paul _____ |
| 35. Smith |
| 36. Laura Ann Gilman (d. 1807) |
| 37. Margaret Janney (d.1810) |
| 38. James Craik, M.D. (d.1814) |

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