

The **Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex** came into being due to a *Yellow fever epidemic* that swept Alexandria, D.C. in 1803 and killed over 200 people died. Believing that decomposing bodies spread the disease through well water, The Common Council decreed that graves were not to be dug “*in any ground within the corporation not opened or allotted before the twenty-seventh of March, eighteen hundred and four*”. As a result, town churches established “new” cemeteries outside of the town limits, in the 82-acre Spring Garden Farm, located then in Fairfax County, VA and near the 1796 municipal **Penny Hill Cemetery**.

Since then, over 35,000 burials have occurred within the 13 separate cemeteries in the complex that consist of Christian and Jewish cemeteries, several burial associations and the second oldest national cemetery in the country. Nine of the cemeteries are still active and funerals occur regularly.

In 1847, Alexandria, along with what is now called Arlington County, was retroceded back to Virginia from the District of Columbia. In 1915, Alexandria annexed 1300 acres of land, which included the cemetery complex, from Fairfax County.

**Self Guided Tour (see red stars on complex map)**

**The Alexandria National Cemetery** has over 4500 burials, including the graves of 249 United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T) who served in the Civil War, and four civilians killed while pursuing Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth. When it ran out of space in 1864, military burials moved to

the Arlington Estate, now known as the Arlington National Cemetery.

Buried in **Christ Church** is Samuel Cooper, who at age 16 participated in the December 1773 Boston Tea Party, and fought in the Revolutionary War. Also buried within, is Confederate Envoy James Mason, who was forcibly removed as *Contraband of War* from the British mail packet *RMS Trent* and imprisoned in Boston at the beginning of the American Civil War. The incident almost caused a war between the US and Britain.

**St. Paul’s** is the resting place of the Female Stranger, Alexandria’s most visited grave. Her ghost is said to haunt Gadsby’s Tavern. Wilmer McLean, whose home in Appomattox Court House, VA was where R. E. Lee surrendered to U. S. Grant on April 9, 1865, is also buried in the cemetery.

Buried in **The Presbyterian Cemetery** is Dennis Ramsay who fought in the Revolutionary War and was one of Washington’s pallbearers. Robert Allison, Jr. who was killed on September 5, 1814, at the Battle of The White House, is also buried in the cemetery

Julius Campbell, Co-Captain of the 1971 state championship football team told in the movie *Remember the Titans*, is buried in **Bethel Cemetery**.

Joseph H. McCoy lynched April 23, 1897 after being falsely accused of sexual assault is buried in **Penny Hill**. (site not known). Benjamin Thomas, lynched on August 8, 1899 near King and Fairfax Streets is buried in either Penny Hill or **Douglas Cemetery**.

## Guided Tour Information

Take a guided 90-minute walking tour of **The Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex**, one of the most fascinating places in the United States.

Scan the QR code for schedule and additional information.



The complex is **one mile west** of Old Town and easily accessible by driving, walking, or using the King Street Trolley.

### From the Alexandria Visitors Center

**Driving:** Enter the complex by going to 1475-1501 Wilkes Street. Ample Parking is available.

**Walking:** Head two blocks to the river, head south on Union Street, enter the east end of the Wilkes Street Tunnel, then walk **one mile** west to the complex using Wilkes Street.

**King Street Trolley:** Disembark at **West and King**. Walk one block east on King to Payne Street. Walk four blocks south on S. Payne Street to Wilkes Street to enter the complex.

### From Alexandria’s Carlyle section

Head east on Jamison Avenue **1/2 mile**. Cross over Hooff’s Run. Enter the complex via the pedestrian gate in the Alexandria National Cemetery or use the dirt walking path that cuts through Christ Church Episcopal Cemetery.

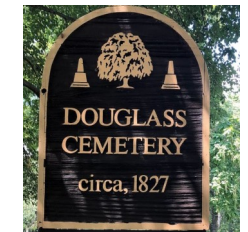
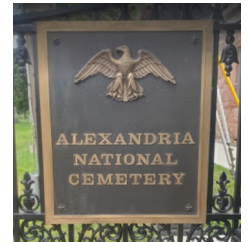
*All tours start at the intersection of Wilkes Street and Hamilton Avenue.*

Visit [www.gravestonestories.com](http://www.gravestonestories.com) for additional information.

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## The Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex

1475 - 1501 Wilkes Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314



*Alexandria’s historic 82-acre cemetery complex, with over 35,000 burials within 13 cemeteries, dates back to 1796.*

Guided Walking Tours offered by

**Gravestone Stories**

[www.gravestonestories.com](http://www.gravestonestories.com)

*Cemeteries in the Complex, their starting dates and contact info*

1. **Douglass Memorial Cemetery** - 1895; 1421 Wilkes Street. Maintained by the City of Alexandria
2. **Christ Church Episcopal Cemetery** - 1808; 1501 Wilkes Street. 703-549-1450
3. **Trinity United Methodist Cemetery** - 1809; 1503 Wilkes Street. 703-549-5500
4. **Black Baptist Cemetery** (African American Heritage Park) - 1885; 600 Holland Lane Maintained by the City of Alexandria
5. **Alexandria National Cemetery** - 1862; 1450 Wilkes Street. 703-221-2183; Administered by the Quantico National Cemetery, Triangle, VA
6. **Methodist Protestant Church Cemetery** - 1833; 1500 Wilkes Street. Maintained by the City of Alexandria
7. **Presbyterian Cemetery and Columbarium** - 1809; 600 Hamilton Lane. Mr. David Heiby, Superintendent; 703-869-0872; [cemetery@opmh.org](mailto:cemetery@opmh.org)
8. **Union Cemetery of the Washington Street United Methodist Church** - 1860; At the end of Hamilton Lane. Mr. James Click, Operator; 703-548-8281 or 571-214-3617
9. **Agudas Achim Cemetery** - 1933; 700 S. Payne Street. 703-998-6460
10. **Penny Hill Cemetery** - 1796; South Payne Street. Maintained by the City of Alexandria
11. **Home of Peace Cemetery** - 1857; 601-699 S Payne Street. 703-370-9400
12. **St. Paul's Episcopal Church Cemetery** - 1809; 601 Hamilton Lane. Mr. Andrew Blair, Superintendent; 571-317-4306; [andrewcarterblair@gmail.com](mailto:andrewcarterblair@gmail.com)
13. **Bethel Cemetery** - 1885; 1300 Wilkes Street; and **Little Bethel** (located inside Union Cemetery). Mr. James Click, Owner/ Operator; 703-548-8281 or 571-214-3617

Map of the Wilkes Street Complex

