

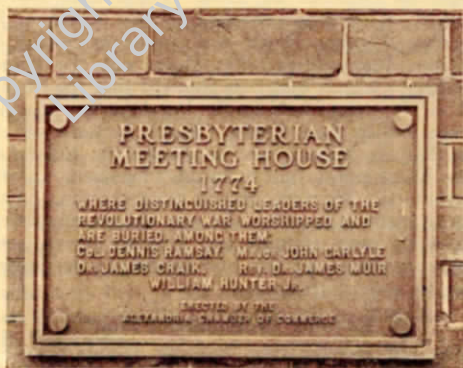


The Old

PRESBYTERIAN

Meeting House

South Fairfax St. near Duke St., Alexandria, Va.



ALEXANDRIA, as was most of Virginia beyond tidewater, was settled by Scotch and Scotch-Irish pioneers. This hardy race of men forged into the trackless wildernesses away from the earliest settled areas along tidewater and gradually pushed back the savage Indian tribes beyond the Appalachian mountain chain.

The Presbyterian Meeting House, built in the Georgian period in 1774, remains as one of the last relics of the religious life of this hardy race of pioneers.

One of Most Beautiful and Historic Colonial Churches in America.

It is one of the most beautiful and historic colonial churches in America. In it was held the first religious meeting of the Masonic lodge of which George Washington was worshipful master. This was in the year 1783 and in succeeding years for many years thereafter the anniversary of St. John the Evangelist was commemorated in Masonic fashion in the old church. It seems clear that George Washington was an attendant at various of these Masonic religious ceremonies.

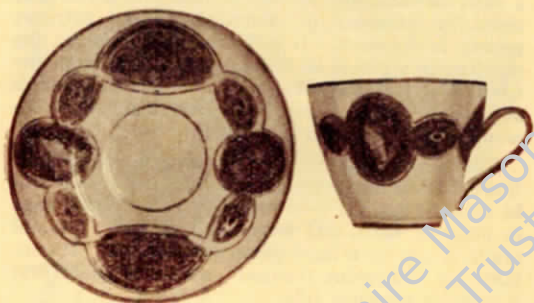
Only Memorial Services for Public After Gen. Washington's Death Held Here.

The Memorial sermons for the public which were delivered after the funeral of George Washington were delivered in the old Presbyterian Meeting House on December 29, 1799. These were two in number. One was preached in the forenoon by the Rev. Thomas Davis, and in the afternoon by the Rev. James Muir. Dr. Davis was the Rector of Christ Church, and it is thought that the memorial services were held in the Presbyterian Meeting House rather than Christ Church because of the fact that the Masons who conducted the funeral of Gen. Washington were largely members of the Presbyterian Meeting House congregation. Also, it is an historic fact that the two old churches were always on most friendly and intimate terms, some of the members of the two congregations having pews in both churches.

A Masonic Westminster Abbey.

The old Presbyterian Meeting House has been called a Masonic Westminster Abbey. Under the pulpit is buried the body of the Rev. James Muir,

one of the two chaplains of the funeral lodge which buried George Washington and Revolutionary-day pastor of the old Presbyterian Meeting House. He died in 1820 and a memorial tablet in his honor was placed on the north wall of the church.



Cup and saucer presented by General Washington to his personal friend, Rev. Dr. James M. Jamon, Revolutionary day pastor of Old Presbyterian Meeting House. These memories now in possession of J. Stearn Houston, of Coatesville, Pa., a descendant.

In the churchyard are buried 33 fellow Masons of General Washington, and many of these famous Masons were members of the funeral lodge which conducted the funeral of George Washington.

Notable among these were Col. Dennis Ramsay, one of Washington's pallbearers, who was also the Mayor of Alexandria in 1789, and in his official capacity at that time made the farewell address to Washington on behalf of his fellow citizens when he left Alexandria to assume the Presidency of the United States.

Washington's Pallbearers Rest Here.

Col. Little, another of Washington's pallbearers, was a member of the old church, although he is not buried in the churchyard. Col. Deneale, commander of the 108th Va. Militia which was the military escort at Washington's funeral, and who was master of Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, for a period of 12 years shortly after General Washington's death, was married in the old Presbyterian Meeting House. George Wise, another pallbearer, was also a member of the old church's congregation. Mrs. Philip Marsteller, wife of the only pallbearer of General Washington who was

not a Mason, is buried in the Presbyterian Meeting House churchyard.

Dr. James Gillies, master of Alexandria-Washington Lodge from December, 1795, to December, 1797, rests in the old churchyard; also John Kincaid, first deputy grand master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. Besides, there are numerous others of the officers of the lodge of Washington whose mortal remains rest here.

Wm. Hunter, Jr., founder of the St. Andrew's Scottish Society, lies here. He also was a famous Mason, being junior deacon of Alexandria-Washington Lodge in 1789. He was also a mayor of Alexandria in those days.

Washington's Family Physician and Closest Personal Friend.

Dr. James Craik, one of the most colorful figures of Colonial and Revolutionary days, rests here. He was born near Dumfries, Scotland, 1730, and immigrated to America in 1750; was surgeon in Washington's first command and with him in the battle of Great Meadows in 1754, and in every other battle participated in by Washington thereafter on down to Yorktown in the Revolution. He was surgeon-general of the Continental Army and director of the hospital at Yorktown. He ministered to the dying British General Braddock after the ambush at the field of the Monongahela. Was at the death bed of John Custis—Mrs. Washington's son—at Ephan, after Yorktown; dressed Lafayette's wounds at Brandywine. He ministered to George Washington when he passed into the great beyond, and closed the eyes of Martha, his wife, in her last sleep. He was perhaps the most intimate friend of General Washington, who refers to him as "My old and intimate friend, Dr. Craik."

John Carlyle, Builder of Famous Carlyle House, Rests Here.

Here also is the grave of John Carlyle, builder of the famous Carlyle House in Alexandria, and of Christ Church, in part. He was one of the most famous citizens of colonial America.

John Carlyle was the quartermaster general of the ill-fated Braddock. His house, built in 1752, served as Braddock's headquarters, and from thence on housed conclaves of epoch-making importance in American history.

The "Unknown Soldier of the Revolution."

Buried in the old Presbyterian Meeting House churchyard are scores of Revolutionary soldiers of distinction. Not least among those is the "Unknown Soldier of the Revolution," whose grave was marked on February 22, 1928, by the American Legion Post in Alexandria, aided by committees from the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, the Sons of the Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Colonial Dames and other patriotic societies. A permanent monument was later erected with money subscribed by children in all parts of America—members of the Children of the American Revolution. The beautiful inscription on the Unknown's monument was written by Wm. Tyler Page, author of "The American's Creed." It reads as follows:

Here lies a soldier hero of the Revolution whose identity is known but to God.

His was an idealism that recognized a Supreme Being, that planted religious liberty on our shores, that overthrew despotism, that established a people's government, that wrote a Constitution setting rates and bounds of delegated authority, that fixed a standard of value upon men above gold, and that lifted high the torch of civil liberty along the pathway of mankind.

In ourselves his soul exists as part of ours, his Memory's Mansion.

Commander of Last Body of Troops Reviewed by Gen. Washington.

Captain Charles McKnight, a noted Revolutionary soldier and veteran of the War of 1812, rests nearby. He had the honor of commanding, in the War of 1812, the Alexandria Independent Blues, the last body of troops which were reviewed by General Washington before his death.

Two of the men of his command, who were killed in the battle of "The Whitehouse" in the War of 1812, Robert Allison and Samuel Bowen by name, rest here in unmarked graves.

David Arrell rests here. He was commander of Troop No. 2 from Alexandria in the War of the Revolution. Another of the Revolutionary soldiers who rests here, a Mr. Allison, is said to have been an ancestor on the maternal side of President Wm. B. McKinley.

John G. Vowell, chairman of the Reception Committee to Lafayette when he came back to America in 1824, rests here.

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Old Meeting House Restored by National Campaign.

The old Presbyterian Meeting House was restored from a dilapidated condition as a result of a national campaign started in 1925 and which was aided by members of practically every patriotic society in America. It had closed its doors in the eighties as a result of differences arising from the Civil War. Remarkable to relate, the old church adhered to the Northern Presbyterian Assembly up to the day its doors closed in 1886.

The furnishings in the old church are unique. Some of the old pews dating from 1774 may still be seen. They are held together with wooden pegs in place of nails, and were hand carved. The old organ is run by a hand pump and bellows. It contains an "Egyptian trumpet" which is today a priceless relic.

The lighting system is a copy of the old whale oil lamps of Colonial days and was installed with money contributed by Eliza Root, Andrew Mellon and Daniel Willard.

Some of the most famous preachers of early America have made the walls of the old Presbyterian Meeting House ring with their eloquence.

It was the meeting place of the Washington Society of Alexandria, founded in 1800, and which endured until 1843. It was recently revived, and held its first meeting in the old Meeting House.

Chief Justice John Marshall and Francis Scott Key Have Spoken in Old Meeting House.

Chief Justice John Marshall and Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star-Spangled Banner," both delivered famous orations in the old Presbyterian Meeting House.

It has stood, a silent sentinel of the past, for over 150 years. Its walls are built to have the endurance of the pyramids. The mighty hand-hewn roof timbers are such as carried the brave Scotch and Scotch-Irish pioneers over the wind-blown Atlantic to the new world. Through the generous aid of patriotic American citizens it should stand through the flight of other centuries an integral part of our national traditions.