

ORIGINS OF THE WILKES STREET CEMETERY COMPLEX

The Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex is the most historic cluster of cemeteries in the United States. It dates back to the 1803 Yellow Fever epidemic, which claimed over 200 lives in Alexandria. Concerned about the spread of disease, city officials banned new burials in any ground *"not opened or allotted before March 27, 1804."*

In response, churches established cemeteries outside city limits, within the 82-acre Spring Garden Farm, near the 1796 Penny Hill Cemetery. Over time, these burial grounds expanded, forming what is now the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex.

EXPANSION & LEGACY

- In 1915, Alexandria annexed 1,300 acres, incorporating the complex into city boundaries.
- The last cemetery added, Agudas Achim, was founded in 1933.
- Today, the complex contains 13 cemeteries reflecting Christian, Jewish, and burial association cemeteries.
- Nine cemeteries remain active, preserving their historical legacy.
- It includes the Alexandria National Cemetery, the second-oldest national cemetery in the country.

SOME NOTABLE BURIALS IN THE COMPLEX

Alexandria National Cemetery

- Holds over 4,500 burials, including 249 U.S. Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) who served in the Civil War.
- Among them are six Buffalo Soldiers, some of whom later fought in the Indian Wars.
- Final resting-place of four civilians killed while pursuing John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

- Expanded in 1864 as it neared capacity; two acres were added while Arlington National Cemetery was established five miles north.

Christ Church Cemetery

- Samuel Cooper – At just 16 years old, he participated in the Boston Tea Party (1773) and later fought in the Revolutionary War.
- James Mason – A Confederate envoy whose removal from the British mail packet RMS Trent nearly led to war between the U.S. and Britain.

St. Paul's Cemetery

- The Female Stranger – Alexandria's most visited grave; her legend lives on through ghost stories at Gadsby's Tavern
- Wilmer McLean – His home in Appomattox Court House was where Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant (April 9, 1865), ending the Civil War.

Presbyterian Cemetery

- Dennis Ramsay – Revolutionary War veteran and pallbearer for George Washington.
- Robert Allison Jr. – Killed in the Battle of the White House (Sept. 5, 1814) during the War of 1812.

Bethel Cemetery

- Julius Campbell – Co-captain of the 1971 state championship football team, whose story was told in *Remember the Titans*.
- Fields Cook – A Baptist minister, Republican leader, educator, and advocate for African American rights.

Penny Hill Cemetery

- Joseph H. McCoy – Lynched on April 23, 1897, after false accusations.
- Benjamin Thomas – Lynched on August 8, 1899, near King & Fairfax Streets; believed to be buried in Penny Hill or Douglass Cemetery.

STEP INTO HISTORY AT THE WILKES STREET CEMETERY COMPLEX

The Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex is the most historic cluster of cemeteries in the United States—a place where more than 35,000 lives reflect the story of America itself.

Visitors can:

- Walk through centuries of history in a serene, tree-shaded landscape.
- Join expert-led tours that uncover the stories behind the stones.
- Attend special events that highlight Alexandria's rich past.

Reflections from a Recent Tour

Attended an excellent tour this morning with my DAR chapter of the Wilkes Street Cemetery, led by historians David Heiby and Madeline Feierstein of Gravestone Stories. They were a wealth of knowledge about early U.S. and Virginia history. Fascinating!"

— Amy D., Daughter of the American Revolution Member

Planning Your Visit

- Tour Start Point: Wilkes Street & Hamilton Avenue
- Address: 1475–1501 Wilkes Street, Alexandria, VA
- Parking: Street parking on Wilkes and Hamilton
- Metro Access: - 1 mile from King Street Station
- Trolley Option: Exit at West Street → Walk 4 blocks south → Take stairs at Roundhouse Lane to enter the cemetery complex

Visit [GravestoneStories.com](https://www.gravestonestories.com) to book a tour or explore more

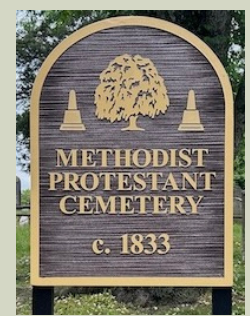
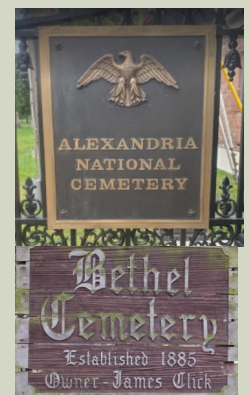
Gravestone Stories

Preserving Alexandria's Past—One Grave at a Time!

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For inquiries, visit www.gravestonestories.com.

The Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex

1475 - 1501 Wilkes Street
Alexandria, VA 22314



*Walk Through History with Gravestone Stories
Discover Alexandria's historic cemetery complex,
the final resting place of over 35,000 individuals
across 13 cemeteries dating back to 1796.*

*Guided Walking Tours by Gravestone Stories
Uncover the stories behind the stones and explore
history like never before!*

Book a Tour Today!

www.gravestonestories.com

Cemeteries, Founding Dates & Contacts

(Listed in map order; superintendents/operators noted where applicable.)

1. **Douglass Memorial Cemetery** (1895) – 1421 Wilkes St | 703-546-4554
2. **Christ Church Cemetery** (1808) – 1501 Wilkes St | 703-549-1450
3. **Trinity Cemetery** (1809) – 1503 Wilkes St | 703-549-5500
4. **Black Baptist Cemetery** (1885) – 500 Holland Ln | 703-546-4554
5. **Alexandria National Cemetery** (1862) – 1450 Wilkes St | 703-221-2183 (Managed by Quantico National Cemetery)
6. **Methodist Protestant Cemetery** (1833) – 1500 Wilkes St | 703-546-4554
7. **Presbyterian Cemetery** (1809) – 600 Hamilton Ln | 703-869-0872 (Call/Text) | cemetery@opmh.org | Superintendent: David Heiby
8. **Union Cemetery** (1860) – 1400 Wilkes Street 703-548-8281 | 571-214-3617 | Operator: James Click
9. **Agudas Achim Cemetery** (1933) – 700 S. Payne St | 703-998-6460
10. **Penny Hill Cemetery** (1796) – S. Payne St & Jefferson St | 703-546-4554
11. **Home of Peace Cemetery** (1860) – 600 block of S. Payne St | 703-370-9400
12. **St. Paul's Cemetery** (1809) – 601 Hamilton Ln | 571-317-4306 | Superintendent: Andrew Blair
13. **Bethel Cemetery** (1885) – 300 Wilkes St | 703-548-8281 | 571-214-3617 | Owner/Operator: James Click

PLAN YOUR VISIT

HOURS: OPEN DAILY FROM DAWN TO DUSK

PARKING: WILKES STREET & HAMILTON LANE

FUNERALS: SERVICES OCCUR REGULARLY; PLEASE RESPECT CEREMONIES IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBILITY: UNEVEN TERRAIN IN AREAS—WEAR STURDY SHOES

VISITOR GUIDELINES:

- STAY ON PATHS AND AVOID WALKING ON GRAVES
- DO NOT TOUCH OR RUB HISTORIC STONES
- PHOTOGRAPHY IS WELCOME—PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL

Map of the Wilkes Street Complex

