



A PRESBYTERIAN WALKING TOUR OF EARLY ALEXANDRIA

This walking tour leads you through 1½ miles of Old Town Alexandria's fascinating streetscapes (see map). It starts and concludes in the churchyard of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, a Presbyterian congregation established in 1772. You should allow about two hours for the tour, but it can be completed in as little as an hour. Allow more time if you stop to shop, eat, or engage in additional exploration along the way.

Virtually every block of Old Town possesses associations with the Meeting House congregation, so the tour is selective. It includes about sixty sites, most of which were businesses or residences of congregation members. It also includes most of Alexandria's important features that survive from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The names of clergy and congregation members appear in **boldface** type. The entire tour lies within the Alexandria Historic District, a U.S. National Historic Landmark. Enjoy your expedition of discovery!

■ **START:** 321 South Fairfax Street, the **churchyard of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House**. On the Fairfax side of the churchyard are the **Meeting House** (1775, rebuilt 1837) and **Elliot House** (1842, restored and extended 2005). In the center are the **Burial Ground** (active 1760s to 1809) and the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution** (1929). More than forty members of the congregation who served in the Revolutionary War lie in the Burial Ground or in the Presbyterian Cemetery. The Presbyterian Cemetery is located one mile west of the churchyard on Hamilton Lane and remains active. [See plaques at both locales.]

On the Royal Street side are **Flounder House** (1787, restored and extended 1952) and the **Education Building** (1957). Flounder House, originally the parsonage, was built by **Robert Brockett, Sr.**, a member and builder, as Alexandria's first flounder-style structure. Brockett also constructed the original portion of City Hall. Flounder House, described as a *commodious house* by Rev. Muir in 1794, served as the residence of **Rev. Isaac Stockton**

Keith (minister, 1780-88), **Rev. James Muir** (minister, 1789-1820), and **Rev. Elias Harrison** (minister, 1820-63).

■ **EXIT** churchyard and **TURN RIGHT** onto **SOUTH FAIRFAX STREET:**

323 South Fairfax, **Elliot House**, was constructed by Charles B. Unruh as a family residence in 1842. It later served as the **residence of Robert W. Bell, Jr.**, book seller, printer, and a member of the Church Committee from the 1860s to the 1890s. It subsequently served as the **residence of Sherrard and Jean Elliot**. Sherrard was a banker and an elder in the Presbyterian Church. Jean was Poet Laureate of both Alexandria and Virginia. They became members in the 1960s and donated their residence to the congregation in 1978.

412 South Fairfax, a flounder-style house, was the **residence of Thomas Porter**, merchant and member, who participated in the Boston Tea Party in 1773 and served on Alexandria's Common Council.

428-430 South Fairfax, site of the **residence of John Yost**, gunsmith and member during the 18th century, and a relative of **Phyllis Kent**, a member and elder in the Presbyterian Church during the 20th century.

■ **TURN LEFT** onto **WILKES STREET:**

This one-block long stretch of Wilkes is atop the Wilkes Street Tunnel. It was constructed in 1851 by the Orange & Alexandria Railroad to connect lines along the waterfront with lines that extend to the southwestern portion of the state.

■ **TURN LEFT** onto **SOUTH LEE STREET:**

419 South Lee, the **residence of James Keith**, member, merchant, owner of Keith's Wharf, mayor of Alexandria, and president of the Potomac Canal Co.

418 South Lee, the **residence of Daniel Roberdeau**, member and elder in the Presbyterian Church, who signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers. While a resident of Philadelphia, he served as a general in the Revolutionary War and as a delegate to the Continental Congress.

321 South Lee, a flounder-style house, the **residence of Charles W. Bell**, member, book seller and printer.

■ **TURN LEFT** onto **DUKE STREET:**

202 Duke, the **residence of Samuel Craig**, merchant, captain in the Revolutionary War, and member who sold copies of Rev. Muir's publications in his store; subsequently the **residence of John Gardner Ladd**, a merchant, banker, and member of the Church Committee in the early 19th century.

210 Duke, the **residence of John B. Murray**, merchant and member of the Church Committee in the 18th century; and subsequently the **residence of Dr. James Craik**, member, doctor, surgeon general in the Revolutionary War, and George Washington's closest friend, who attended Washington during his

final hours.

212 Duke, the **residence of John Dunlap**, wholesale merchant, who served in the Revolutionary War, and was a member who signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers.

■ RETRACE STEPS on DUKE STREET and TURN LEFT onto SOUTH LEE STREET:

221 South Lee, **residence of Dennis Ramsay**, member, colonel in the Revolutionary War, mayor of Alexandria, member of Alexandria's Common Council, and justice of the Hustings Court.

219 South Lee, **residence of David Arell**, member, captain of Alexandria's Independent Blues in the Revolutionary War, mayor of Alexandria, and justice of the Hustings Court.

209 South Lee, the **residence of Laurence Hill**, cooper (barrel maker), who served on Alexandria's Common Council and was a member of the Church Committee in the early 19th century.

■ TURN LEFT onto PRINCE STREET:

Northwest corner of Lee and Prince, the **Athenaeum**, built in 1851 as the Bank of the Old Dominion. It is now home of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association. **Lewis McKenzie**, who served on the bank's board of directors, was a member of the Church Committee for fifty years in the 19th century. He was a businessman, who also served as mayor of Alexandria and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives [*Athenaeum is open to visitors*]

207 Prince, adjacent to the Athenaeum, the **residence of Robert Adam**, merchant, miller, member of the Committee of Safety during the American Revolution, and a member who signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers. In the nineteenth century, it served as the **residence of Lewis McKenzie**.

209 and 211 Prince, **residences of Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick** at different times. He was a member, who early in life trained for the Presbyterian ministry with the **Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith** before turning to medicine. He cared for George Washington with **Dr. James Craik** during Washington's final days.

213 Prince, **residence of John C. Vowell**, merchant, member of the Church Committee during the first half of the 19th century and elder in the Presbyterian Church.

317 and 319 Prince, former (1855) and current (1917) firehouses of the **Relief Fire Engine Company** (now Alexandria Fire Station #201). From the company's founding in 1794 to the mid-1830s, its engines were housed on the north side of the Meeting House churchyard. Many members served as volunteers in this historic company. [*Friendship Fire Company, at 107 South Alfred Street, is open as a museum*]

■ RETRACE STEPS on PRINCE STREET and PROCEED DOWNHILL from LEE STREET:

100-block of Prince, called **Captain's Row**, is one of Alexandria's remaining cobblestone streets. Residences on the north side of the street were constructed by **John Harper**, member, merchant, ship's captain, who served in the Revolutionary War, and was a member of Alexandria's initial Common Council. Harper also erected several residences on the north side of the 200-block of Prince Street.

Warehouse at the end of the block, on the northwest corner of Prince and Union (Christmas Attic store), was originally the site of a warehouse built by **John Harper** in 1785. The current structure provides a classic example of early 19th century commercial architecture complete with advertisements painted on its walls. It was erected in 1827.

■ TURN LEFT onto SOUTH UNION STREET:

Wales Alley, mid-block to left and right, is named for **Andrew Wales**, tavern keeper, brewer, and member who signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers. Taking a few steps down any of Alexandria's surviving alleys, which once teemed with residences and business operations and are often lined with cobblestones and stone walking paths, will provide you with intriguing prospects on eras long gone. Ramsay and Swift alleys (sites still to come) are also named for congregation members.

Waterfront and the Potomac River are to the right. To see the river, wend your way behind the Torpedo Factory, home of artist studios, galleries and archaeology exhibits. Views along the waterfront extend north to the United States Capitol in the District of Columbia and south to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The complex of facilities that once lined the waterfront served as the heart of the local economy for more than a century and included businesses to process and store imported and exported goods and to support the shipping industry.

■ TURN LEFT onto KING STREET, away from the river to view two blocks lined with commercial establishments and residences that date from the 18th and 19th centuries – more than a dozen congregation members owned properties here.

117 King Street, was the business establishment of **Anthony C. Cazenove**, and one of the many commercial structures owned by members near the waterfront. He was an exporter-importer, consular agent for several countries, and elder in the Presbyterian Church for more than three decades.

On Lee Street, in the second block north of King was the Jamieson Steam Bakery, operated by **Andrew Jamieson** (now residences). Established in 1785, the bakery was famous for its Jamieson Crackers and operated into the 20th century. Rev. Muir regularly sent these crackers to relatives in Bermuda. Jamieson served as an elder in the Presbyterian Church and

was a member of the Church Committee in the early 19th century.

202 and 204 King, business establishment of **Jonathan Swift**, merchant, consular agent for several countries, and member of the Church Committee in the early 19th century. Rev. Muir spent his final days at *Colross*, the Swift family mansion on Oronoco St. *Colross* was dismantled and reconstructed at Princeton, New Jersey in the 1920s.

207 King was constructed as the **residence of William Bartleman** in 1809. He was a merchant who served in the Revolutionary War, and was a member of the Church Committee in the early 19th century.

Intersection of King and Fairfax, **Visitor's Center**, was the **residence of William Ramsay**. It was erected in the first half of the 18th century and reconstructed in 1956. Ramsay was a founding trustee of Alexandria, merchant, ship's captain, county court justice, member of the Committee of Safety during the American Revolution, and congregation member.

[Visitor information and restrooms.]

Northwest corner of this intersection, **Market Square**, the plaza south of **City Hall**. This has been the site of a market from Alexandria's earliest days (it continues to operate on Saturdays). The open plaza was created in the 1960s when buildings located here were razed as *urban renewal*.

The site included the bookstore, stationer, and printing operation of **Robert W. Bell, Sr.** and his sons for more than fifty years. Bell was an elder in the Presbyterian Church for more than forty years and active in the Sunday School for more than fifty years.

This was also the site of two taverns owned by congregation members. One was operated by **William McKnight**, who served in the Revolutionary War and signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers. The other was operated **Richard Arell**, who in 1772 traveled to Carlisle, Pennsylvania with **James Hendricks** to issue a call to the **Rev. William Thom** to serve as the congregation's first installed minister (served 1772-73). In 1773, **Richard Arell** and his wife, **Eleanor Arell**, gave the congregation the parcel of land that is the today's churchyard. In 1774, Alexandrians signed a resolution at Arell's tavern condemning the British government's blockading of Boston.

■ TURN LEFT onto SOUTH FAIRFAX STREET:

105-107 South Fairfax, **Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary**, a retail-manufacturing enterprise where Alexandrians procured medicinal products from 1796 to the 1930s. *[Open as a museum]*

117 South Fairfax, the **Coffee House and residence of Nicholas Hannah**, a congregation member and captain of infantry in the U.S. Legion during the 1790s.

Parking lot south of Swift's Alley and 118 and 120 Fairfax, **store and residence of Joseph Riddle**, dry goods and hardware merchant, director of Washington & Alexandria Turnpike Co., and member of the Church Committee in early 19th century who signed the Meeting House's 1809 incorporation papers.

124 South Fairfax, the **residence of James Wilson**, merchant and ship owner, who served in the Revolutionary War, and was a member who signed the congregation's 1786 incorporation papers.

■ RETRACE STEPS on SOUTH FAIRFAX STREET and cross KING to NORTH FAIRFAX STREET:

Past the Visitor Center and to the right is Ramsay Alley.

121 North Fairfax, the **residence of John Carlyle**, a founding trustee of Alexandria, member of the Committee of Safety during the American Revolution, and member who served as general contractor with **William Ramsay** on construction of the Meeting House in 1775. Carlyle's home, completed in 1753, served as a headquarters for Major General Edward Braddock, commander of British forces during the French and Indian War. It was here in April 1755 that Braddock assembled the governors of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts to discuss strategy. The *Congress of Alexandria* served as a turning point in inter-colony dialogue and in questioning the tax policies of Britain toward her colonies here. *[Open as a museum]*

Southeast corner of North Fairfax and Cameron streets, **Bank of Alexandria**, erected 1803-07. In 1792, this became the first chartered bank in Virginia, with **Rev. Muir** and other members as original shareholders and officers. The bank's failure in 1834 eliminated the endowment of the Alexandria Academy. The building served as one of many local temporary hospitals during the Civil War. Walt Whitman, member **Charlotte Wright**, and no doubt other members as well, attended to wounded and sick Union soldiers here.

Northeast corner of this intersection, site of the **Alexandria Inn and Coffee House**, was owned by **Henry Lyles**, who served as a captain in the Revolutionary War, and was a member of the congregation. The structure was later known as **Wise's Tavern**, when owned by member **John Wise**, *Alexandria's Tavern King*. In April 1780, member **Dennis Ramsay** addressed George Washington here as the mayor of Alexandria, when Washington was leaving for New York City to be inaugurated as the nation's first President.

Southwest corner of this intersection, site of the **Assembly Hall**, built in 1760 as the young town's community center. Alexandria's first public Presbyterian worship services were held here. The Assembly Hall was eventually replaced by City Hall.

■ HEAD WEST on CAMERON STREET:

To the left is **City Hall** (portions date from 1817 to 1961). More than a dozen congregation members have served as mayor and many others as members of the governing council.

305 Cameron, initially Duvall's Tavern this was the **Bank of Alexandria** from 1793 to 1807.

Southwest corner of Cameron and Royal, **Gadsby's Tavern**, which today incorporates the original tavern, built by **John Wise** about 1785 and the City Tavern and Hotel built in 1792. Numerous political and social events were held here, including many George Washington Birthnight Balls. It also served as the terminus of numerous street parades to and from the Meeting House to hear charity sermons. **Elizabeth Muir** ordered a "carry out" leg of lamb from Gadsby's Tavern in May 1805, when the Muir family was called upon to entertain unexpected house guests. [*Open as a restaurant for lunch and dinner and as a museum*]

Northwest corner of Cameron and Royal, site of the **Royal George Tavern**, once owned by **William Ramsay**. Ramsay served as the town's postal agent when the post office was located here (1770-1775).

400 Cameron, **American Legion Post 24**, which was actively involved in restoring the Meeting House in 1925-28 and then in restoring Gadsby's Tavern, which it purchased in 1928.

508 Cameron, **townhouse of George Washington**, the original structure, erected in 1769, was demolished in 1855. This replica structure was erected on the original foundation in 1960.

607 Cameron, the **residence of William Yeaton**, merchant and member; subsequently the townhouse of Thomas Fairfax, Ninth Lord Fairfax of Cameron and descendent of Thomas Fairfax, Sixth Lord Fairfax of Cameron, initial proprietor of Virginia's Northern Neck land grant in the early 18th century.

609 Cameron, erected by **John Bogue**, a member, cabinetmaker, and builder, as the **residence of James Irvin**, businessman, who served in the Revolutionary War, served on Alexandria's Common Council, and was an 18th century member of the Church Committee and elder in the Presbyterian Church.

611 Cameron, built by **John Bogue** in 1795 as a residence for his family. Subsequently, the residence of General Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee; and still later, the **residence of Worth Hulfish**, hardware merchant and member who taught Sunday School in the 1870s. [*You have completed half of the tour!*]

■ CROSS NORTH WASHINGTON STREET:

Southwest corner of Cameron and Washington, **Christ Episcopal Church**. This structure was erected in 1773 as the parish church. [*Open to visitors*]

■ HEAD SOUTH on NORTH WASHINGTON STREET, which will become South Washington

Street at King Street:

112 North Washington (Ross store) is the site of the **Methodist Protestant Church** from 1828 to 1952, which formed from the Methodist Episcopal Church (see entry below). The congregation subsequently relocated to West Braddock Road and became the Alexandria Bible Church.

115 South Washington, **Washington Street United Methodist Church**, which formed from the Methodist Episcopal Church (1850) as the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) in 1849 (see entry below).

114 South Washington, parking garage on the east side of the street, site of **Methodist Episcopal Church** from 1804 to 1942. The congregation continues as Trinity United Methodist Church on Cameron Mills Road. Prior to 1804, Alexandria's sole Methodist congregation was known as the Methodist Meeting House and was located in Chapel Alley immediately to the north of the Presbyterian Meeting House (the site is currently occupied by the eastern portion of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church).

122 South Washington, six-story building on east side of street (the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) was built as the George Mason Hotel. While a hotel, it served as the site of meetings of the Joint Commission on Presbyterian Union in 1970, which were hosted by the **Rev. William R. Sengel** (minister, 1960-86). In 1983, this group's efforts led to the unification of the two major Presbyterian denominations, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (national) and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern Presbyterians), into the current Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Southwest corner Washington and Duke, the **Alexandria Lyceum**, was built in 1849 to house the Lyceum and the Alexandria Library Company.

The Lyceum was established in 1834 by **Rev. Elias Harrison**, Benjamin Hollowell, a Quaker educator, and others. It served as Alexandria's major adult education and cultural organization through the Civil War years. **Rev. Harrison** managed its lecture series for many years.

The Alexandria Library Company was established in 1791. It continues as today's Alexandria Library at multiple locations. **Rev. Muir** and **Rev. Harrison** served as presidents of the Library Company and numerous members of the congregation were founding members. [*Open as a museum*]

Appomattox, statue and memorial at the center of the intersection of Washington and Duke. It lists the names of Alexandrians who were killed in the Civil War, most while fighting for the local Seventeenth Virginia Infantry Regiment, including members **John T. Hart**, **William T. Morrill**, **Addison E. Saunders**, and **George T. Warfield**.

Just south of this intersection, at 220 Washington Street, was the **residence of William Cranch**, Chief Judge of the U.S. Circuit Court for D.C., who signed the 1828 petition to the U.S. Congress to eliminate slavery in D.C., with **Rev. Harrison** and others, and who enjoyed playing the church's Hilbus organ. At the intersection of Washington and Duke was the school conducted by **Elizabeth Muir** and her daughters following the death of **Rev. Muir** in 1820.

■ CROSS SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET and HEAD EAST on PRINCE STREET:

607 Prince, Society of American Military Engineers, originally a residence on land owned by **Charles McKnight**, member and captain of Alexandria's Independent Blues in the War of 1812.

601 Prince, now an office building, was the **Second Presbyterian Church** from 1840 to the late-1960s (built 1840, additions and remodeling 1889). Alexandria's second congregation of Presbyterians was established in 1817 and functioned as an active congregation until 2002.

■ TURN RIGHT onto ST. ASAPH STREET:

208 South St. Asaph, the **residence of William H. McKnight**, builder, member and a superintendent of the Sunday School in the 19th century.

Northwest corner of St. Asaph and Duke, 601 Duke, the **residence of Robert J. Taylor**, a graduate of Alexandria Academy, lawyer, president of Alexandria's Common Council and early 19th century member of the Church Committee.

Southeast corner of St. Asaph and Duke, 518 Duke, the **residence of Rev. James M. Nourse** (minister, 1885-89).

317 South St. Asaph, outstanding flounder-style house.

319 South St. Asaph, **residence of Rev. J. J. Bullock** (minister, Union Presbyterian Church, 1874-80) while he served as minister of Second Presbyterian.

■ PROCEED TO WOLFE STREET; CROSS WOLFE, TURN RIGHT and pass the Little Theater of Alexandria, which was erected in 1961 on site of the former Quaker Meeting House:

604 Wolfe, the three-story brick building set back from the street and now utilized for offices, was erected in 1785 as the **Alexandria Academy**. It was Alexandria's initial attempt to provide what we now consider public education, and was closely connected with the Meeting House throughout its history. **Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith** served as its founding president and members **James Hendricks** and **Josiah Watson** served as founding directors. Members **Thomas Conn**, **William Lowry**, and **William Paton** signed its 1786 incorporation papers. Presbyterian clergy who taught here include the **Reverends William McWhir**, **William Maffitt**, **James Wilson**, **Elias Harrison**, and **James Harrison**. Member **Dr.**

Henry Rose and Meeting House clergy served as examiners. Members raised funds to sustain it, particularly through the Washington Society of Alexandria, which **Rev. Muir** served as founding president. Children of Meeting House families attended it, and the public examinations of students were regularly conducted in the Meeting House. The plaque in the yard was placed here by the Washington Society of Alexandria following a service at the Meeting House in December 1932, which closed that year's local celebration of George Washington's birth bicentennial.

■ RETRACE STEPS on WOLFE STREET and CONTINUE EAST to INTERSECTION with SOUTH PITT STREET:

At the northwest corner of the intersection, a **highway marker** directs visitors to the Meeting House. It was erected by the American Automobile Association and the City of Alexandria in 1930.

Southeast corner of intersection, 400 Pitt and 428-416 Wolfe, site of the **Female Orphan Asylum**, which was established here in 1832 and operated into the 1880s. A public institution, the asylum was long a mission project of the congregation, with **Rev. Elias Harrison** serving as founding and long-term president; member **Ellen P. Newman** serving as matron and *guiding light* from the 1840s into the 1880s; member **Esther L. Sanford** serving as manager; and members **John F. Dyer**, **Hugh Smith**, and **Robert Jamieson** serving as trustees.

■ CONTINUE on WOLFE STREET and TURN LEFT onto SOUTH ROYAL STREET:

404 South Royal Street (to the right), the residence of George L. Seaton, an African American builder, who was elected to the General Assembly during Reconstruction and served on the grand jury that indicted Jefferson Davis for treason.

Churchyard of Old Presbyterian Meeting House is to the right.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, to the north of the Meeting House churchyard, has been located here since 1810. St. Mary's was established in 1795 as the first Roman Catholic parish in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The residence immediately to the north of St. Mary's Church, at the corner of Royal and Duke, was the congregation's **Lecture Room** from about 1830 to the late 1860s. It was then a one-story building. From 1976 to 2010, it was the **residence of Fred and Susan Morhart**, who are both members of the congregation and elders in the Presbyterian Church.

