

INSTALLED CLERGY AT THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE, 1772 TO PRESENT

Information about the installed clergy of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House is presented in three sections:

- (1) “Overview of Names of the Congregation, Installed Clergy and Dates of Service” – A list of the names used to identify this particular congregation and all of the installed clergy who have served the Meeting House.
- (2) “Installed Clergy Who Are Deceased” – Biographical sketches of installed clergy who are deceased.
- (3) “Installed Clergy Who Are Living” – A list of the names and positions of installed clergy who are still living.

OVERVIEW OF NAMES OF THE CONGREGATION, INSTALLED CLERGY, AND DATES OF SERVICE

Alexandria Presbyterian Church (1772-1817)

Rev. William Thom (1772-73)

Rev. Dr. Isaac Stockton Keith (1780-88)

Rev. Dr. James Muir (1789-1820)

Rev. Dr. Elias Harrison (1817-20)

First Presbyterian Church (1817-1899)

Rev. Dr. Elias Harrison (1820-63)

Rev. George M. McCampbell (1866-68)

Rev. Dr. William A. McAtee (1870-72)

Union Presbyterian Church (1874-1880)

Rev. Dr. J. J. Bullock (1874-80)

First Presbyterian Church (1817-1889)

Rev. James M. Nourse (1885-89)

Old Presbyterian Meeting House (1949-present)

Rev. Dr. Kenneth G. Phifer (1950-59)

Rev. Lawrence W. Avent (1957-59)

Rev. Dr. William R. Sengel (1960-86)

Rev. Samuel Lee McCoy (1970-71)

Rev. David M. Milbourn (1971-74)

Rev. Ronald E. Minnich (1978-80)

Rev. Dr. Thomas K. Farmer (1987-91)

Rev. Dr. Edna Jacobs Banes (1988-2003)

Rev. Dr. Gary W. Charles (1993-2004)

Rev. Lisa Kenkeremath (2001-06)

Rev. Ann Herlin (2001-present)

Rev. Dr. Robert R. Laha, Jr. (2006-present)

INSTALLED CLERGY WHO ARE DECEASED

Rev. William Thom

Born 1750 - Died 1773, Served Alexandria Presbyterian Church as Minister 1772-73

William Thom was born to the Rev. David and Mary Thom in 1750. The Thom family lived in Lancaster County, Colony of Pennsylvania, about 15 miles south of the town of Lancaster. The Rev. David Thom served as minister at Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church from about 1745 when he was licensed to preach by the Synod of Philadelphia (the Chestnut Level congregation continues to exist today). We know little about William's youth except that his father died while he was young and that it was "early discovered [that he possessed] an extensive Memory, a quick Penetration, and a strong Judgment." The family name "Thom" is sometimes mistakenly represented as "Thorn" and "Tom".

At sixteen he entered the University of Pennsylvania, then known as the College of Philadelphia and affiliated with the Anglican Church. Upon successful completion of an entrance examination that was personally administered by the college's trustees, he pursued the standard three-year course of study, which included a core sequence in Greek, Latin, and English, mathematics and natural science, geography, ethics, and oratory. He received his Bachelor of Arts (A.B.) degree in 1769. During the two years following graduation, he served as a tutor (i.e., teaching assistant) at the university and at the same time studied with the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon at nearby Princeton College in the Colony of New Jersey. At the conclusion of two years of theological studies with the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, he received a Certificate of Proficiency (today's graduate degree), and sought entry into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, which since 1758 had as its highest governing body the Synod of Philadelphia and New York.

In 1771, William Thom was accepted "on Trials for the Work of the Ministry" by the Presbytery of Donegal, the Presbyterian Church jurisdiction covering all of the Colony of Pennsylvania west of Philadelphia and extending south into the colonies of Maryland and Virginia. His trials, initiated at the presbytery's spring stated meeting, included inquiry of "his acquaintance with experiential Religion," and the preparation of an exegesis in Latin and a homily on the Letter of Paul to the Romans 3.31, both of which were delivered the day following their assignment. He was licensed "to preach the Gospel" at the presbytery's fall stated meeting, following the successful delivery of a "Lecture" on the Song of Solomon 5.2-11, delivery of a "popular Sermon" on the Letter of Paul to the Romans 5.1, and examination in "the Hebrew Language, Philosophy natural & moral, Divinity didactic & exegetic..., [and] having declared his approbation & acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith & catechisms as received by this Church, of the general plan of Worship & form of Government contained in the Westminster Directory & promised Subjection in the Lord to this judicature."

Licensed as a probationer by the Presbytery of Donegal in October 1771, he was immediately assigned to supply pulpits on an itinerant basis, mainly in Pennsylvania but also throughout the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and as far west as Warm Springs in Bath County, which he visited "while recovering health" in the summer of 1772. While engaged in this circuit riding form of ministry, he received calls from several congregations seeking his service as their installed minister. Toward the conclusion of his probationary period, he also received a call from the Presbyterians in Alexandria, who at that time had been led in worship by part-time supply ministers for over a decade. The call included an annual salary subscription pledge of £1/18/11 (1 pound, 18 shillings, 11 pence) Virginia Currency. He accepted Alexandria's call and was

ordained and installed at a meeting of the Presbytery of Donegal at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in December 1772. Commissioners Richard Arell and James Hendricks represented Alexandria's society of Presbyterians at the ordination and installation services.

The young Rev. Thom launched his ministry in Alexandria just as Colonial British America began moving toward an open break with the mother country. During 1773, Virginia's Peyton Randolph led efforts to establish Committees of Inter-Continental Correspondence. A new Tea Act by the British parliament granted the East India Company a monopoly on the sale of tea with an accompanying tax. By the end of the year, Bostonians had dumped \$90,000 worth of the East India Company's tea into their harbor.

Tragically, the Rev. Thom lived to experience only the first seven months of these events—he was struck down by the smallpox epidemic that swept through Alexandria in the summer of 1773. His nurturing of the fledgling congregation during those active months, however, were full of accomplishments that in retrospect can be seen as having successfully launched our congregation. Although worship services continued to be conducted in the two-story structure referred to as the Assembly Hall or Town House, located at the southwest corner of Fairfax and Cameron streets, and some of the local Presbyterians who regularly worshipped in the Anglican Church had purchased pews when Christ Church's sanctuary was completed in 1773, a monumental step forward was made when the Rev. Thom personally accepted the donation by Richard and Eleanor Arell of a parcel of land on which to build the Meeting House. That gift continues to serve us today as the current Meeting House, parsonage (Flounder House), Christian Education Building, and burial ground are all located on this property. As one of the very few installed Presbyterian ministers in northern Virginia, the Rev. Thom's duties required that he also supply pulpits for other emerging congregations, including those located in Culpepper, Fauquier, and Rappahannock counties, some of which continue to the present. In July 1773, his earlier successful completion of studies with the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon was recognized when the University of Pennsylvania awarded him a Master of Arts (A.M.) degree.

At 23 years of age, while still discerning his way as a minister in the service of Christ, the Rev. William Thom died on Sabbath Day, August 8, 1773. His widowed mother Mary, who had accompanied him to Alexandria, had died three days earlier, also of the "ardent fever" of smallpox. They were but two among the forty residents of Alexandria who succumbed to that summer's smallpox epidemic. A letter sent that autumn from Alexandria to George William Fairfax, just returned from here to London, refers to the "prodigiously sickly" season that had struck the town and taken the lives of "Mr. Thom our Presbyterian Minister, his mother, and Mr. Joseph Watson" among others.

Philadelphia's *Pennsylvania Gazette* provides a fuller appreciation of his life — "His public Performances were received with Approbation by all who heard them. He explained and enforced the most important Truths of Christianity. A lively Imagination enabled him to paint Vice in the most striking Colours, and to represent Piety and Virtue in the most amiable Light. He had a happy Talent of communicating his Thoughts. His Language was flowery, yet obvious to the meanest Capacity. Sensible of the Importance of religious Truths, he spoke with that Warmth, which engaged the Attention, and affected the Hearts of his Hearers. He was equally worthy of Esteem in private as in public Life. He well deserved the Character of a sincere Christian —of an affectionate and dutiful Son —of a generous Friend —and of a cheerful and agreeable Companion. Free from all Austerity and Moroseness, he cultivated a laudable Charity to those, who differed from him in religious Sentiments... He lived happy in the Love and

Esteem of Persons of all religious Denominations in [Alexandria], and to the inestimable Sorrow was removed by Death in the Bloom of Youth, and in the Midst of growing Usefulness."

Rev. Dr. Issac Stockton Keith

Born 1755 - Died 1813, Served Alexandria Presbyterian Church as Minister 1780-88

Isaac Stockton Keith was born to William and Margaret (Stockton) Keith in January 1755. The Keith family, which included two girls, older brother Robert, and Isaac, resided on a large farm near Newtown, in the Colony of Pennsylvania. The farm was located near the famous Presbyterian "Log College" school of theological instruction that had been conducted by the Rev. William Tennant from 1726 to 1749. Newtown is located in current-day Bucks County, Pennsylvania about midway between Philadelphia and Trenton, New Jersey.

At fourteen years of age, Isaac was sent to the new preparatory school in Princeton, Colony of New Jersey, an adjunct to Princeton College, then known as the College of New Jersey and headed by the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon. Upon graduation, he entered Princeton College (fall of 1772), following in the footsteps of his brother Robert, who had graduated from Princeton the prior spring. Robert was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1774 and ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in 1776. The Rev. Robert Keith served as a chaplain for military forces throughout the Revolutionary War and died in 1784, at 31 years of age.

Princeton college's faculty in the early 1770s consisted of the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon, William Charles Houston as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Richard Devens as Senior Tutor and instructor in Hebrew. Keith's fellow students included Aaron Burr, Charles Lee and Henry Lee of Virginia, and at least four others who became well-known Presbyterian ministers — John Duffield, Philip Vicker Fithian, John Blair Smith who also became president of Hampden Sidney College in Virginia and Union College in New York, and John McKnight who also became president of Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. An outstanding student, Keith won numerous prizes in the college's annual academic competitions, including Latin prizes each year. At graduation in the spring of 1775, he was honored with the opportunity to deliver an oration. He presented *Pax nationis summa felicitas* within months of the eruption of open hostilities at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts between colonists and British troops.

Immediately after graduation, the twenty-year old Keith taught Latin at the grammar school in Elizabethtown, New Jersey for one year, followed by two years of theological studies with the Rev. Dr. Robert Smith, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Pequea and head of Pequea Academy, a renowned classical and theological school, located about 20 miles northeast of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Graduates of Pequea Academy include two of Rev. Smith's own sons, both of whom followed him into the ministry — Samuel Stanhope Smith, who became the first president of Hampden-Sydney College and then president of Princeton College, and John Blair Smith, a fellow-student with Keith at Princeton College, who also became president of Hampden-Sydney College and then of Union College in Schenectady, New York, both Presbyterian-affiliated schools. At the conclusion of his studies at the Pequea Academy in 1778, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Philadelphia and received a Master of Arts degree (A.M.) from Princeton College.

The newly licensed Rev. Keith was assigned to supply pulpits on an itinerant, essentially circuit rider style basis, which was common practice for probationers in the Presbyterian Church at the time. One of the many pulpits the young Rev. Keith supplied was that of the Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, with its brand new (original) Meeting House. The congregation responded

positively to him and called him to serve as its first installed minister since the death of the Rev. William Thom in 1773. Based on the call he received from Alexandria, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia *sine Titulo* and transferred to the Presbytery of Donegal in 1780.

Rev. Keith led the congregation at Alexandria for seven years, through the difficult final years of the Revolutionary War and into the infant republic's bumptious post-natal period. In addition to normal congregational duties that have remained essentially unchanged to present times, the Rev. Keith prepared the congregation's first set of governance procedures, a response no doubt to strong-minded individual members seeking to direct the congregation and to Paul's admonition to the Corinthians that "all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:37-40). He also oversaw erection of the parsonage (residence for the minister), which is the western portion of today's Flounder House; supplied pulpits throughout northern Virginia and nearby Maryland; and contributed regularly to the work of the Presbytery of Donegal and the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, still the national governing body of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Meetings of these two groups nearly always required him to travel to southeastern Pennsylvania or Philadelphia.

Rev. Keith was instrumental in establishing and directing the Alexandria Academy, whose initial instructors were nearly all Presbyterian clergy. The Alexandria Academy became well known both for the quality of its instruction and as a very early experiment in providing equal access to education without regard to gender, race, or ability to pay. The Rev. Keith also worked to disestablish the Anglican Church in Virginia through petition to the Commonwealth's General Assembly. He participated in meetings in 1788 that led to creation of the General Assembly, replacing the Synod of New York and Philadelphia as the highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. He promoted Alexandria's first efforts at formal cooperation among Christian denominations, and he opened the doors of the Meeting House to Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, the two most distinguished American Methodists of the day to conduct services when they first ministered in Alexandria.

In 1787, the prestigious Independent Church of Charleston, South Carolina, sought the Rev. Keith to serve as a collegiate pastor with the Rev. William Hollingshead. The Independent Church dated from 1681, when it was established as a dissenting congregation, i.e., outside the dominion of the Church of England, South Carolina's established denomination. Many of its members had fled from Charleston during the Revolutionary War to St. Augustine and to Philadelphia. By the late 1780s, the congregation's worship services were being conducted at two locations under a plan devised by the Rev. William Tennant, Jr., so collegiate or co-pastoring was important. Alexandria's Presbyterians responded to this announcement formally in presbytery — the Rev. Keith "has stood high in the estimation of all denominations [in Alexandria], and particularly so with his own, whose exertions for his accommodations are perhaps unequally, and sufficiently evidence their regard and attachment. There had subsisted no feuds nor animosities to disturb the peace of our church, to render his residence here uncomfortable to himself, or his labours unprofitable to the people." He departed Alexandria late the following year, and for the next quarter-century served the Charleston congregation with distinction. That congregation continues today as the Circular Church, affiliated with both the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with clergy over the years drawn from the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Unitarian denominations. The sanctuary constructed on Market Street during the Rev. Keith's tenure, which is today's Circular Church, was destroyed during the Civil War but then rebuilt as seen today.

A bachelor when he left Alexandria, the Rev. Keith married three times in Charleston — first to Hannah Sproat of Philadelphia and then Katherine Legare of Charleston, both of whom died, and finally to Jane Huxham of Exeter, England, whose family subsequently moved to South Carolina and who survived him. There had no natural-born children, but he and Hannah adopted a daughter. He was described as "large in stature, dignified in manner, grave in aspect and in speech, and you felt that you were in the presence of no ordinary man... but, notwithstanding his appearance and manner, he was courteous and affable as to invite the confidence of the most timid child... he was an elegant writer, his discourses were well elaborated and his applications direct and pungent... he was fully devoted to the work of the ministry, and unwearied in his endeavors to promote the cause of Christ." He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) from the University of Pennsylvania in 1791.

In addition to his ministerial responsibilities with Charleston's Independent Church, the Rev. Keith founded and managed a local society for the promotion of religion, which was active in organizing prayer meetings and conferences, and the Charleston Bible Society, which was active throughout the Southeast region. He returned to the Meeting House pulpit at least once while journeying north. Several of his sermons were published during his lifetime and an anthology of his sermons and discourses appeared posthumously, which survives. He was well-known for assisting fellow Charlestonians in securing publishers, particularly with William Woodward, the noted Philadelphia book seller-publisher. At his demise in 1813, his estate was valued at \$30,000, of which \$5,000 was designated for the Independent (Circular) Church, \$2,500 for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, a portion for Princeton Theological Seminary's scholarship fund (his widow subsequently contributed independently to the same fund), and for Bibles for the twenty-some children named for himself or his wives.

Rev. Dr. James Muir

Born 1757 - Died 1820, Served Alexandria Presbyterian Church as Minister 1789-1820

James Muir was born to George Muir and Isobell (Wardlaw) Muir on April 12, 1757, in the town of Cumnock in Ayrshire, south of Glasgow, Scotland. He was the third child born into a family that consisted of three brothers, Crichton, George, and Ebenezer, and one sister, Jean, who survived to become adults. His father and both his paternal and maternal grand-fathers were ministers in the Church of Scotland. The Rev. Dr. George Muir engaged professionally first in law as "Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh", but later turned to the ministry, and was ordained to serve the congregation in Cumnock in 1752, and subsequently the High Kirk at Paisley from 1766 to 1771. The Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon served Paisley's Laigh Kirk (Low Kirk as it is situated at a lower elevation in the town than the High Kirk) from 1758 until he departed to head Princeton College in New Jersey in 1768. The Rev. Dr. George Muir was an active member of the circle of Scottish evangelicals that included Witherspoon, John MacLaurin, and John Erskine. He died in 1771 and was followed in death just one year later by his wife. Upon the deaths of his parents, it is said that the mind of the young James Muir became "deeply impressed with the importance of things eternal... and he found no peace till he had fled for refuge to the ark of the everlasting covenant."

Shortly after the deaths of his parents, James Muir entered college to pursue classical and philosophical studies at the University of Glasgow. Upon receipt of a degree in 1776 at 19 years of age, he turned directly to theological studies at the University of Edinburgh. His preparation for the ministry was completed in London, where he studied with his well-known cousin, the Rev. Dr. Henry Hunter (1741-1802), pastor of the Scots Church on London Wall Road in The

City. He received his license to serve as a probationer from the Presbytery of Cupar (Scotland) at services conducted on May 12, 1779 by the Rev. Dr. Henry Hunter and five other "Dissenting Ministers in the City of London and neighborhood, conforming to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Scotland". His next two years were spent in London as assistant to the Rev. Hunter at the Scots Church and as a teacher at the Camberwell School.

Hoping to find a warmer climate more beneficial to his health, the Rev. Muir accepted a call from the Scots Congregation on the Island of Bermuda, and was ordained to minister there by the Presbytery of Cupar (Scotland) at the Scots Church on August 10, 1781. He filled the pulpit of Christ Church (Church of Scotland) in Warwick, Bermuda for seven years (1781-88). The Scots Congregation, established with the British settlement of Bermuda in 1612, is the oldest Presbyterian congregation in British Colonial America, and the same church at which the great British evangelizer George Whitefield had preached for three months on one of his numerous trips to Colonial British America.

While in Bermuda, he sought to establish a private school but soon came to be employed by the Warwick Academy, of which he became headmaster (Warwick Academy was founded in 1662 and continues today). Rev. Muir's successor at Christ Church was the Rev. Enoch Matson, whose training for the ministry in the United States he facilitated. The Rev. Matson served Christ Church thirty-eight years and was the first minister in Bermuda to admit free persons of color and slaves to membership.

While living in Bermuda, the Rev. Muir married Elizabeth Welman (1766-1831), daughter of Captain Samuel and Margaret Harvey Welman of Warwick on February 29, 1783. Their marriage of 37 years was broken only by his death in 1820. Their family would come to include seven children, four of whom survived to adulthood. Their three adult daughters, none of whom married, were Jane Wardlaw Muir, Mary Wardlaw Muir, and Elizabeth Muir. As adults living in Alexandria the three daughters conducted the Misses Muir's Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies, first in the parsonage (Flounder House) and, eventually from their residence at the corner of Prince and Washington streets. They also served the Meeting House congregation as organist and as Sabbath-Day School teachers.

The Muir's only son to survive to adulthood, Samuel C. Muir (1785-1832), studied locally at the Alexandria Academy and then traveled to Scotland, where he trained to become a medical doctor at the University of Edinburgh. Upon completion of his studies in 1813, he was commissioned a medical officer in the U.S. Army and served at frontier posts in today's Indiana and Illinois portions of the Northwest Territory. In 1818, he resigned his officer's commission to marry a daughter of the chief of the Sac and Fox tribe and became a merchant in the area of Galena, Illinois. He died in 1832 while treating victims of a cholera epidemic among American troops fighting in the Black Hawk War.

In May 1787, while still in Bermuda, the Rev. Muir transferred his membership from the Presbytery of Cupar (Scotland) to the Presbytery of New Brunswick (New Jersey), no doubt under the influence of the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon, president of Princeton College, whom he knew from his youth in Paisley, Scotland. The following year, the Rev. Muir and his family sailed for Britain, but their ship was diverted to New York City. He attended that May's annual meeting of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia (then the highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) in Philadelphia, where he was assigned as a supply pastor to congregations in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

Later that same year, he sought, along with the Rev. Jedidiah Morse, to become collegiate pastors with the famous Rev. Dr. John Rodgers at First Presbyterian Church in New York City.

The two candidates both served the congregation for short periods, after which nearly equal proportions of the members supported each of them, so they both withdrew. Rev. Morse, a graduate of Yale College, led a distinguished career as a Congregational minister in Charlestown, Massachusetts and authored America's first books in geography. He had visited the Meeting House several years earlier, so it could have been he who first informed Rev. Muir about Alexandria's Presbyterians. Word about Alexandria's Presbyterians could also have been received from the Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith, who had attended the same 1788 meeting of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia attended by Muir.

In March 1789, the Rev. Muir received a call from the Presbyterian congregation in Alexandria which he accepted. The thirty-two year old pastor, his wife Elizabeth, four year old Samuel and infant Jane, arrived in Alexandria in May. He retained the position as the Meeting House's third installed minister for the remaining 32 years of his life. During his long ministry, Alexandria served as a bustling and economically booming port and market town for agricultural hinterlands that extended across Northern Virginia to the Shenandoah Valley. Rev. Muir fit comfortably into the congregation's already evident model for Meeting House ministers — well-educated leaders actively engaged in the affairs of the larger church and community. His ministry proved to be a stalwart example of the tradition — a truly remarkable career marked by innumerable contributions to both the congregation, the larger Presbyterian Church, and the Alexandria community.

As an active participant in the work of the Presbytery of Baltimore, then the presbytery to which the congregation belonged, he regularly attended meetings in Baltimore and elsewhere in Maryland. Meetings of the General Assembly, which he also frequently attended, were nearly always conducted in Philadelphia, and he frequently supplied pulpits in Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and nearby Maryland, so he was engaged in a fairly considerable amount of travel on ecclesiastical business throughout his ministry. He inspired several young men to enter the ministry, including William Buell Sprague, whose subsequent career included not only a productive ministry but creation of the monumental nine-volume *Annals of the American Pulpit*, the outstanding contemporary chronicle of nineteenth-century Protestant denominations in America. He expanded the congregation's involvement in missionary work and Christian education through founding and then leading the Bible Society of the District of Columbia (1814), Sabbath Day-Sunday School (1816), and the Onesimus Society for support of the destitute (1816). African Americans were received into the congregation as active communicants and couples of "free persons of color" married with some frequency, including Ford West, of George Washington's plantation, and Priscilla Bell, who resided at Gum Springs in Fairfax County south of Alexandria.

In the pulpit, Rev. Muir was described as "holding up his little black Bible before him with both hands, and reading sometimes half a chapter at a time by way of illustrating his subject, and in an accent so intensely Scotch (sic) that it seemed strange to the unpracticed ear... [yet] there was not the least occasion for [his reading Biblical texts] for few men probably ever committed more of the Bible to memory than he did. Indeed such was his familiarity with the Scriptures in the original languages, that he could quote the Hebrew and the Greek, almost as readily as he could the English. He always preached without notes."

Late in his career, the decision was made by the congregation to engage in the singing of hymns during worship services in addition to the chanting of psalms. This new form of congregational worship was facilitated by the acquisition of the congregation's first pipe organ. Installed in 1817, this organ, constructed by Jacob Hilbus of Washington, D.C. is considered the

first to be used for worship in any American Presbyterian church. Later Presbyterian Church in the U.S. arch-reactionary, Rev. Dr. Robert Lewis Dabney, lamented this act as an expression of “popery and idolatry” as late as 1889.

The good works of this zealous disciple overflowed into the broader Alexandria community in numerous ways. He was instrumental in founding and directing several local organizations, including the Alexandria Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge (1790), Alexandria Library (1794), Alexandria Relief Society (1794), Washington Society of Alexandria (1800), and Alexandria Board of Guardians of the Free Schools (1811). He also headed for many years the governing board of Alexandria Academy. As chaplain of Masonic Lodge No. 22, which George Washington served as grand master, he participated in setting the initial boundary marker for the District of Columbia at Jones Point (1791), laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol (1793), and preaching at numerous worship services on St. John the Baptist Day and St. John the Evangelist Day. He was an active participant in the activities of the local St. Andrew's Society, which he also served as chaplain, and as preacher during annual St. Andrew's Day worship services.

At the death of George Washington, he participated in the funeral service at Mount Vernon and presided at the several memorial services conducted at the Meeting House. Perhaps the Rev. Muir's most notable service to the larger Alexandria community occurred during the War of 1812, when he was called upon to travel to the District of Columbia with two other distinguished Alexandrians to negotiate with the British, who had already occupied and burned the City of Washington. As the town of Alexandria sat completely defenseless, and elements of the British fleet already sat just downstream in the Potomac River, they certainly were not able to negotiate from a position of strength, and surrendered the town. Nearly two centuries later we can be grateful that while warehouses were sacked of goods, none of the town's buildings were destroyed.

Rev. Muir's sermons frequently appeared in print, mostly through local Alexandria printers, but also through printers in Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. Forty some remain available today, as do several hundred pages of the short-lived religious periodical he founded and edited, *The Monthly Visitant*. Some of his individual sermons received widespread distribution, including those delivered at the service conducted at the Meeting House on the National Day of Solemn Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer in May 1798, attended by George Washington; at the memorial service for George Washington; and following Richmond's calamitous theater fire of 1811. His distinguished ministry was recognized by Yale College with an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) in 1791.

When his health eventually began to fail, Rev. Muir sought a collegiate pastor to share his ministerial responsibilities. Several candidates presented themselves, most notably the newly ordained Rev. Daniel Baker, who is considered the greatest Presbyterian evangelist ever to serve in the American South. The congregation came to adopt two different mind sets, those who preferred “emotional preaching” and those who preferred “intellectual preaching”. A breach in Alexandria's only Presbyterian congregation resulted in the formation of a new congregation, Second Presbyterian Church, from the continuing congregation, now renamed First Presbyterian Church (today's Meeting House). The Rev. Elias Harrison, a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate, then serving as headmaster of the Alexandria Academy, and the candidate preferred by the Rev. Muir to assist him, was called to become his collegiate partner.

Rev. Muir delivered his final sermon on the last Sabbath of May, 1820, while his colleague, the Rev. Elias Harrison, attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church meeting in

Philadelphia. His decline through the summer months was precipitous, and he died on August 8, at Colross, the home of Jonathan and Ann Roberdeau Swift, located just outside of town. The Rev. James Muir was buried beneath the original sanctuary's pulpit, located inside the current sanctuary's north wall. The memorial tablet on the north wall captures the essential elements of this remarkable Christian's character — "Amiable and unobtrusive in his manners, kind and benevolent in his disposition, diligent and unwearied in the discharge of his pastoral duties."

Rev. Dr. Elias Harrison

Born 1790 - Died 1863, Served First Presbyterian Church as Collegiate Minister (1817-20) and as Minister 1820-63

Elias Harrison was born to Thomas and Nancy (Osborn) Harrison on January 22, 1790, at Orange, New Jersey, about 10 miles west of New York City. Elias's birth family included a sister and a younger brother, James (1802-1877), who also became a Presbyterian minister. James began his ministerial studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1828 and completed them with Rev. Harrison while teaching at the Alexandria Academy (1830-31). He served congregations in Ohio and Iowa. The young Elias attended the local Bloomfield Academy, antecedent institution of today's Bloomfield College in Bloomfield, New Jersey, west of New York City. Instruction at the school, which provided a classical education and emphasized preparation for the ministry, was led by two graduates of Princeton College, the Rev. Humphrey Mount Perine and the Rev. Abner Brundage.

Elias entered Princeton College in a class composed of about thirty students in 1812. Princeton was then headed by the newly arrived Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, and the faculty included the Rev. Elijah Slack, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Philip Lindsley, Professor of Languages and Senior Tutor, and John F. Clark, Junior Tutor. One incident that occurred while Elias was a student at Princeton provides a sense of college life *in extremis* in those days — students exploded enough gunpowder at one of the campus's entrance gates to destroy it on a Sabbath evening in 1813, which led to the expulsion of nearly a dozen.

During his second year of college, a widespread spiritual "awakening [occurred] to the importance of personal piety and of a well-founded hope of vital union with Christ [that resulted in] not a few who became ministers of the gospel, and some of them quite eminent in their respective churches". We know nothing about Elias's specific response to this revival but his fellow student, Daniel Baker, who would so disrupt Alexandria's Presbyterian congregation a few years later, became an active participant.

While a student, Elias served as manager of the Bible Society of Nassau Hall (Princeton), which in 1814 distributed seventy-five Bibles "that word, which may enable them to obtain those [gifts] that are heavenly and everlasting" to the U.S. Navy squadron commanded by Commodore Stephen Decatur. He received his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree with distinction in the spring of 1814. Commencement exercises, which featured an appearance by General Winfield Scott, just returned from military operations in Canada in conjunction with the War of 1812, also included *An Oration* by Elias Harrison.

Following graduation from Princeton College he entered the embryonic Princeton Theological Seminary, which had separated from the college while Elias was a student. The seminary's normal course of study, still strongly under the influence of John Witherspoon, extended three years, with instruction then provided by only two professors — Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, and Samuel Miller (1769-1850), Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Governance. Each professor delivered one class session

each day of the week except Sabbath. Sabbath Day included an afternoon Conference and an Evening Lecture — a full schedule for faculty and students! Classroom instruction continued to take place in Princeton College buildings.

While at Princeton Theological Seminary, Harrison also served as tutor (teaching assistant) at Princeton College during the 1814-15 and 1815-16 academic years. He completed his course of theological studies and received his “Certificate of Approbation” in 1817 (the seminary’s graduation exercises with degrees had yet to be formalized). Elias’s seminary classmates included Wells Andrews, who would serve as Alexandria’s Second Presbyterian Church as its first installed minister (1818-27), Sylvester Larned, who applied to serve as co-minister of the Meeting House at the same time as Elias Harrison, and Thomas Bloomer Balch, son of Rev. Dr. Stephen Bloomer Balch of Georgetown Presbyterian Church, who subsequently served several congregations in Northern Virginia.

With a “license to preach the Gospel” from Princeton Seminary in hand, Elias Harrison took the position of headmaster of Alexandria Academy (still standing on Wolfe Street between Washington and Pitt streets) in late 1816. The challenge to the Meeting House congregation of selecting a candidate to serve as collegiate pastor to assist the failing Rev. Dr. James Muir during 1817 led to such controversy that the congregation divided into two groups — the continuing congregation becoming Alexandria’s First Presbyterian Church (today’s Meeting House), and a newly formed congregation becoming Alexandria’s Second Presbyterian Church. Following the division of the congregation into two groups, the Rev. Harrison was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Baltimore in a service conducted at the old Georgetown Presbyterian Church to serve as co-pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in December 1817. Two years later, the Rev. Dr. Muir died, and Elias Harrison was installed as the congregation’s fourth minister. He served in that capacity for the next 43 years, until death in February 1863.

Three months prior to becoming sole minister of the Meeting House, he married Elizabeth Veitch, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Veitch of Alexandria. They had a son, who died in infancy, and two daughters, Mary Harrison, born in 1821, and Jane Bell Harrison, born in 1822. Four years into their marriage, Elizabeth died, at 26 years of age. The Rev. Harrison raised their two daughters, both of whom survived to adulthood and married. During his latter years, he lived with Jane and her husband Thomas M. McCormick.

The Rev. Harrison’s ministry of four decades at the Meeting House extended through a period when the nation engaged in a continuous and torturous struggle over the propriety of treating people brought from Africa as property and of continuing to hold them in slavery. The tensions produced by this struggle pervaded most aspects of society, including the life of religious congregations. It was evident in relations between Alexandria’s two Presbyterian congregations and within the Presbyterian Church more generally, both in preaching from the pulpit and as near-constant organizational strife.

Organizational strife in the larger church during Rev. Harrison’s ministry may be seen in the congregation shifting among five different presbyteries, either because of divisions of existing ones or the creation of new ones. The congregation also shifted among three different synods, some multiple times, and endured splits in the national denomination — first from a single denomination into the independent Old Side and New Side Presbyterian denominations, when our congregation remained with the Old Side while most District of Columbia congregations transferred to the New Side, and secondly into two regional denominations in conjunction with the Civil War — the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America (later the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.), the southern church, and the Presbyterian Church in the United

States of America, the northern church, with which our congregation remained. Alexandria even shifted from one state to another during Rev. Harrison's tenure — from the District of Columbia to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1846, and between countries — from the United States of America to the Confederate States of America in 1861, thence to the Restored Government of the Commonwealth of Virginia in a city occupied by the Union Army, representing an effective return to the United States of America.

Each of these organizational restructurings included attendant disruptions in congregational life. All may have paled in comparison with the more immediate disruption caused by the near-total destruction of the Meeting House by fire in 1835. Later that year, when the *State of Religion in the Presbytery of Washington City* report was authored by the Revs. Harrison and Laurie, they concluded a litany of woes by citing that the Meeting House congregation “has been deprived by the lightening of heaven both of the ordinances of the gospel and the house in which they were dispensed, so that at no previous period, perhaps since its original organization, have the calls upon the presbytery for humility and abasement been so frightfully loud or so frequent in their occurrence as during the interval which has elapsed since the last report.” During the next two years, when the congregation transferred to a new synod, lead local efforts to maintain organizational continuity when the Presbyterian Church split nationally into Old School and New School denominations, and endured the severe nation-wide financial panic of 1837, which had already been well underway in Alexandria for several years, the congregation rebuilt and enlarged the Meeting House to create the structure that we continue to utilize.

Pastoral duties of this quiet capable man extended well beyond our immediate congregation — from serving as a supply minister for congregations requiring temporary clergy throughout Northern Virginia and adjacent Maryland and District of Columbia to assisting in the establishment of new congregations at Occoquan, Lovettsville, Lewinsville, and Falls Church in Virginia, and Beltsville, Bladensburg, and Darnestown in Maryland. He was a leader of Alexandria's Young Men's Bible Society from the time it was created in the early 1820s. He served as moderator of presbytery a dozen times and as commissioner from the local presbytery to General Assembly numerous times over a forty-year period extending from 1818 when he attended the General Assembly meeting in Philadelphia to its 1858 meeting in New Orleans when he was 68 years of age. In the 1840s, he served on the Board of Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, then located at Hampden-Sydney College near Farmville, Virginia (now Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia). His efforts addressing slavery in Virginia included establishing the Alexandria chapter of the American Colonization Society and serving on that group's national board of directors; petitioning the U.S. Congress for the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; performing the service of marriage for slaves at the Meeting House; and serving as legal witness to the manumission of slaves in Alexandria.

His support and promotion of public education included service as headmaster or president of the board of Alexandria Academy for forty years; superintendent of Misses Muirs' Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies for at least twenty years; president of Alexandria's Board of Guardians of the Free Schools for a similar length of time; establishment of Alexandria's Female Free School; and creation of the Alexandria Lyceum, the town's major adult continuing education and intellectual entertainment center throughout most of the nineteenth century. His efforts to promote the general assistance of the town's needy included creation of Alexandria's Female Orphan Asylum, and support of the Onesimus Society as well as the delivery of innumerable charity sermons. His example, and no doubt quiet encouragement as well, resulted

in many members of the congregation also assuming leadership roles in these institutions. The Rev. Harrison's distinguished career within and beyond the congregation was celebrated by the presentation of an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) from Washington and Lee University in 1852.

While the nation continued to consume itself in the tragic Civil War, the Commonwealth of Virginia remained in the Confederate States of America, and Alexandria was under the control of the U.S. Army, the Rev. Elias Harrison died at 73 years of age, on February 13, 1863. Speaking for all its citizens, the *Alexandria Gazette* declared that he had "labored with zeal, and humility, and devotion, and constancy... won the esteem of his fellow citizens for his upright conduct, his unpretending manners, and his active benevolence... was foremost in every good word and work in our community on behalf of the cause of charity and education and whatever else could benefit his fellow man. It was our pride and pleasure to have been furnished occasionally from his pen with appeals in behalf of our philanthropic institutions... or to turn the attention of our citizens to such objects as were worthy of their support."

In war-weary Alexandria, where all but two houses of worship had not been called into direct war service, usually as a hospital, his remained in use for worship by a congregation that remained largely pro-Union. At his passing, he would have been easy prey for acts of derision by fellow citizens, who overwhelmingly turned against the Union, nonetheless, his memorial service, conducted in the Meeting House, "was crowded by our most respectable citizens, and hundreds unable to gain admittance thronged the adjoining side walks, and waited until the services in the church were concluded [when] hundreds went up to take a farewell look at the placid countenance of the deceased... the hearse [to the Presbyterian Cemetery] was followed by long lines of citizens, who mourned, as if each one had been personally bereaved by the dispensation of Providence." The memorial plaque on the south wall of the Meeting House continues to remind us that this servant of the Lord was "Modest and unassuming; a diligent Bible student and teacher; faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties; and greatly beloved by his people and the citizens of Alexandria."

Rev. George Meriwether McCampbell

Born 1841 - Died 1918, Served First Presbyterian Church as Minister 1866-68

George Meriwether McCampbell was born on September 9, 1841 in Jeffersonville, Indiana, just across the Ohio River from Louisville, Kentucky. His parents, James Harvey McCampbell, local businessman, banker, politician, elder for 44 years in Jeffersonville's First Presbyterian Church, and superintendent of its Sunday school for 20 years, and Letitia Meriwether McCampbell, daughter of Samuel Meriwether, a medical doctor. Their family included seven children. George McCampbell's youth, the *New York Times* reported later in his life, "passed under the refining and enlightening influence of a Christian home. His earliest memories were of a pious parentage. His associates and relatives were of a similar stamp." He attended Presbyterian-affiliated Hanover College, also in southern Indiana, where he completed both Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees. Directly following completion of his studies at Hanover College in 1862, he entered military service in the Union Army, serving with an engineering unit in the Army of the Cumberland during its Tennessee campaign. Following military service, he entered Princeton Theological Seminary in the fall of 1865, and graduated in the spring of 1867.

During and after the Civil War, the student body of Princeton Theological Seminary numbered about 170, and its faculty consisted of five professors — Charles Hodge as Professor of

Exegetical, Didactic, and Polemic Theology, Alexander T. McGill as Professor of Ecclesiastic, Homiletic, and Pastoral Theology, William H. Green as Professor of Oriental and Old Testament Literature, Rev. Caspar W. Hodge as Professor of New Testament Literature and Biblical Greek, and James C. Moffat as Professor of Church History. This faculty would train all three ministers installed at the Meeting House during the post-Civil War era, McCampbell, William A. McAtee, and James M. Nourse, whose periods of study at Princeton Seminary overlapped.

Upon graduation from Princeton Seminary, McCampbell received a call from the Meeting House congregation to serve as its fifth installed minister. The 25-year old minister and his wife Jennie moved to Alexandria in the fall of 1866, just a little more than a year after General Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox. At his ordination service, conducted on the afternoon of September 13, 1866, the Rev. McCampbell preached on Galatians 6.14 "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our lord Jesus Christ." His installation service was conducted that same evening. Both services were presided over by the Rev. Dr. Septimus Tustin of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church of the District of Columbia, at whose installation the Rev. Dr. Elias Harrison had presided.

Newspaper accounts inform us that the Meeting House's young minister was "of the middle height and slender in stature [and also] subject to hay fever [at a time when antihistamines were not available. He was] a fluent speaker, and always self-possessed and at ease in the pulpit [and] of a warm and ardent temperament. The latter is kept well in hand, both in his sermons and in his public and private expression. The overwrought manifestations of religious feelings, which are in so many cases fraught, if not with positive harm, at least with discredit. In direct opposition to this, he strives to inculcate that calm, unostentatious, but deeply rooted growth in religion which is much better calculated to withstand the trials of every-day life and every-day temptation. His sermons are marked by the same tone of thought, composed with care, and delivered with force and animation. As a pastoral and missionary worker in the outside circles which surround every prominent congregation, and in a measure look up to it for example and encouragement, Mr. McCampbell is worthy of all commendation."

Of necessity, the Rev. McCampbell's ministry must have focused on restoring stability to a congregation that had been reduced to 66 communicant members from 200 at the time of the Rev. Dr. Harrison's death three years earlier. This diminution of the congregation's size notwithstanding, the Meeting House in physical terms survived the Civil War in good condition. The local community's economy and social fabric had both been devastated by the war, however, and were a shambles at best in the immediate post-war period. Within a year of his arrival, the Rev. McCampbell served as moderator of the Presbytery of Potomac, which met at least once during this period at the Meeting House, and he assisted in restoring other Presbyterian congregations in Northern Virginia that had remained with the northern denomination. Apparently he made real progress in accomplishing these daunting tasks as the local presbytery reported that "an interesting work of grace is reported in the church of Alexandria that has given great encouragement to the brethren there and has gladdened all our hearts."

Within two years of his arrival, however, the Rev. McCampbell felt that his talents could be utilized more effectively elsewhere, and by the end of 1868 his relationship with the congregation was dissolved. While serving a congregation in New York City a few years later, the *New York Times* noted about his time in Alexandria, "He was of Northern birth [and one might add, served in the Union Army], and that was enough to prejudice him in the eyes of the Southerners by whom he was surrounded. For two years the struggle continued, but it was a

difficult task, and he felt that a further stay, under the circumstances, was impairing his usefulness to the Church and the community". A daughter, Letitia Hall McCampbell, was born and baptized while he service here.

After leaving the Meeting House, the Rev. McCampbell first served as an associate minister to the famous Rev. Dr. Gardner Spring at New York City's Brick Presbyterian Church, whose previous associate minister left the congregation to serve in the Confed-erate States of America! He served a series of other congregations in his thirty-three year career — three congregations in the New York City area, Spring Street Presbyterian Church (Lower Manhattan), South Salem Presbyterian Church (Lewisboro), and First Presbyterian Church of Stapleton (Edgewater, Staten Island), the Middletown (Ohio) Presbyterian Church north of Cincinnati, and finally the Millvale Presbyterian Church near Pittsburgh. The Rev. George M. McCampbell retired in Pittsburgh and died on December 15, 1918.

Rev. Dr. William Alfred McAtee

Born 1838 - died 1902, Served First Presbyterian Church as Minister 1870-72

William Alfred McAtee was born on June 25, 1838 in Smithsburg, Maryland, a small market town serving the local agricultural community about 10 miles east of Hagerstown. The earliest information known about his formative years pertains to academics — he attended Princeton College in New Jersey and received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in 1859. Following graduation, he pursued theological studies at Danville Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian seminary then affiliated with Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he left Kentucky and returned to Princeton College, where he earned a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in 1862, and then entered divinity studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. He remained in Princeton through the end of the war, receiving his divinity degree in 1862 and serving as a tutor (teaching assistant) at Princeton College (1861-65). He took his first pulpit at Seventh Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which he filled as a supply pastor for three years (1865-68), and then served the Schellsburg Presbyterian Church in nearby Bedford, Pennsylvania for a year (1868-69).

In November 1869, just about a year after the Meeting House lost the Rev. George McCampbell, the Presbytery of Potomac authorized the Meeting House to engage the services of the Rev. McAtee for six months. Five months after his arrival, in May 1870, the congregation voted unanimously to call him as its sixth installed minister. For reasons that remain unclear — perhaps difficulties associated with reunification of the Old and New Sides of the Presbyterian Church into a single northern Presbyterian denomination in May 1870, which resulted in the merger of two of this area's three presbyteries, or because of confusion created by the formal end of Reconstruction and military governance in the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia's readmission to the Union that same year — the Rev. McAtee was not formally installed as minister of the Meeting House until May 1871, although he served the congregation throughout the intervening period. The Rev. Samuel S. Mitchell, of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in the District of Columbia, presided at the joint ordination and installation services, which were conducted at the Meeting House on May 10, 1871.

Following his formal installation, the Rev. William A. McAtee served the Meeting House congregation for only one year, during which time he also supplied pulpits for five other Presbyterian congregations in Northern Virginia that remained part of the northern denomination during this unsettled post-Civil War period. He left the Meeting House at the end of June 1872, traveled in Europe and the Middle East for over a year, and then served a series of congregations

into the 1890s — the Presbyterian Church in Hagerstown, Maryland, Grove Presbyterian Church in Danville, Pennsylvania, Fifth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, First Presbyterian Church in Madison, Wisconsin (since renamed Christ Presbyterian Church), and finally returning to the Grove Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania.

While minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Madison, Wisconsin, several of his sermons-discourses were published and remain with us today. They addressed topics such as just wages for skilled manual labor, delivered on Thanksgiving Day 1886 following the Haymarket Riots in Chicago, the sale of intoxicating beverages on Sunday, and the state of Wisconsin's judicial prohibition against reading the Bible in public facilities.

A 1915 history of Montour County, Pennsylvania, where the Rev. McAtee served the Grove Presbyterian Church in Danville, described him as “every inch a man; on all questions of public interest he always took a stand, and everyone knew where to find him. He took a lively interest in everything pertaining to the public welfare, and was always a safe and correct adviser. Strict, he was always charitable; positive, he was always kind; learned, he was always humble; looked up to in the community, he was always affable.” He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1888. The Rev. McAtee died suddenly in a New York City hospital following complications from surgery on May 30, 1902.

Rev. Dr. Joseph James Bullock

Born 1812 - died 1892, Served Union Presbyterian Church as Minister 1874-80

Joseph James Bullock, referred to throughout his professional life as “J. J. Bullock”, was born to Walter and Maria (Chester Burch) Bullock near Lexington, Kentucky on December 23, 1812. He received his early schooling at a classical academy in Middletown, Kentucky and then attended Presbyterian-affiliated Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in 1832 and Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in 1835. He attended Princeton Theological Seminary for one academic year (1835-36) and was ordained by the Presbytery of West Lexington in 1837. He married twice, first to Caroline Frances Breckinridge of Danville Kentucky, in 1832, died in 1867. He married again, to Elizabeth Towson Odell Lavender (1833-1914) in 1869, who survived him.

During the first quarter century of his career, the Rev. Bullock served in a variety of positions in his native Kentucky. He was the minister of three congregations — Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church near Lexington, the Presbyterian Church in Frankfort, and Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville. At Walnut Creek, he also served as principal of the local Female Seminary, as moderator of the Synod of Kentucky, and as representative of the Presbytery of West Lexington on a Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (New School) committee that led to the creation of Danville Theological Seminary as that denomination's ‘Seminary of the West’ (later merged into today's Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary). While with the Presbyterian Church in Frankfort, he also served as the Commonwealth of Kentucky's first Superintendent of Public [School] Instruction and delivered the prayer at the reinterment of Daniel Boone in Frankfort in 1845. Centre College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) in 1850.

In 1861, the Rev. Bullock moved to Baltimore, Maryland to serve that city's large and well-known Franklin Street Presbyterian Church. He remained there through the Civil War. A history of Franklin Street Church notes that “Dr. Bullock could not bring himself to repent for being a Southerner. Henceforth, the Franklin Street congregation became the leading northern outpost of the Southern Presbyterian Church.” In 1866, he declared — “In the name of religion and liberty we protest against the unnatural and monstrous union of Church and State. We plead for entire

separation between things spiritual and ecclesiastical, and things political and civil.” He denounced the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (Old School) and created the independent Presbytery of Patapsco. It became part of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (southern denomination) the following year, becoming the first presbytery located outside of the former Confederate States of America to join the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Franklin Street Presbyterian Church hosted the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1868.

In 1870, the Rev. Bullock was called to serve Alexandria’s Second Presbyterian Church, and “energetically began to build up the work of the church to a level comparable with the activity carried on prior to the [Civil] War”. Following disagreements with influential members of the congregation, he resigned Second Presbyterian’s pulpit in 1874 and was invited to preach at the Meeting House “on a Sabbath before he left Alexandria.” He did so, and within a few months arrangements were made to form a quasi-independent Union Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Bullock served as minister and moderator of a session comprised of elders who had transferred from both First (Meeting House) and Second congregations to form the new governing body. Worship services were conducted in the Meeting House. About a quarter of the members of Second Presbyterian Church joined together with members of the Meeting House to form a congregation composed of somewhat more than 100 communicant members.

The existing session of the Meeting House expressed the view that it entered the union-congregation experiment “looking for a union of the whole Presbyterian family North & South by 1880 at least and they earnestly desire the cooperation of the Union Church and its Pastor in bringing it about.” Reunion attempts between the entire northern and southern Presbyterian denominations during the decades immediately following the war proceeded disastrously and produced absolutely no progress. Nonetheless, some significant progress toward reunification of Presbyterians had been made otherwise, e.g., northern Old and New School denominations of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. were reunited in 1869 and the first General Council of the ‘Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System’ convened in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1879, a body that evolved into today’s World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Some Alexandrians possessed the courage to conduct their own experiment at moving beyond divisions, which locally dated from 1817. The new arrangement met with the approval of the local northern presbytery, the Presbytery of Washington City, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., a member of which the Meeting House would remain through its closure in 1899. Alexandria’s Second Presbyterian Church continued to function as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (southern denomination).

This early unification experiment under the Rev. Bullock’s leadership appears to have gone smoothly, so much so that the session of the Meeting House no longer felt the need to function independently and joined together with elders who left Second Presbyterian to form the new session. The Meeting House was renovated and the Erben organ was “overhauled and made more powerful.” As for the Rev. Bullock, he continued his active membership in the Presbytery of Chesapeake, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., serving on its Committee on Foreign Missions and playing an active role in establishing Biddle University, now Johnson C. Smith University, in Charlotte, North Carolina under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. His speaking engagements included addresses to students at both Princeton Theological Seminary, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Presbyterian Church in the U.S. He also served as pastor of the U.S. Senate during the latter part of this period.

When the Union Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Bullock as minister and moderator of session reached the scheduled end of its experimental period in 1880, the trustees of the Meeting House, still a congregation in the Presbytery of Washington City, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., offered to make its arrangement with the Rev. Bullock permanent. This required, however, Rev. Bullock to transfer his affiliation to the Presbytery of Washington City (northern denomination), which he refused to do. The local experiment in North-South unity was terminated. It would take more than a century before the southern and northern Presbyterian denominations would reunite (1983).

With closure of Alexandria's Union Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Bullock, now 68 years of age, moved to a residence on Riggs Street, in the District of Columbia. He retained his membership with the Presbytery of Baltimore, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., for the rest of his life, and continued as chaplain of the U.S. Senate to 1884, but was otherwise without ministerial call during his remaining years. He remained active preaching in the District of Columbia and Baltimore, and was actively engaged for many years on the Board of Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, then located at Hampden-Sydney College near Farmville, Virginia, which he served as president in 1885. He served as moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., in 1888, when it met for the second time at Franklin Street Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. Directly following that General Assembly meeting, he headed the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. delegation to the joint North-South centennial celebration of the first General Assembly, which convened directly thereafter in Philadelphia. The Rev. Dr. J. J. Bullock died at eighty years of age on November 9, 1892, while visiting relatives in Lexington, Kentucky.

Rev. James Michael Nourse

Born 1840 - Died 1922, Served First Presbyterian Church as Minister 1885-89

James Michael Nourse was born to James and Sarah (North Harvey) Nourse on May 14, 1840 in Milroy, Pennsylvania, a small market town in the heart of the state. The immediate Nourse family included ten children, three boys and seven girls, and among his relatives were many who served as clergy and elders in the Presbyterian Church including some in the Washington, D.C. area. He attended Lafayette College, in Easton, Pennsylvania, receiving his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in 1862. Immediately upon graduating, he initiated divinity studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, and continued there through the hostilities of the Civil War. He married Sarah Frances Blackman (1844-1914) in the spring of 1865, and received his divinity degree in 1866.

The Rev. Nourse was ordained as an evangelist by the Presbytery of Parkersburg, West Virginia, in the fall of 1866. During the first two decades of his career, he served a number of small congregations first in West Virginia — Mill Creek, Bethel, Sistersville, Hughes River, and Pennsboro, and then in southeastern Ohio — Athens, home of Ohio University, and Middleport, on the Ohio River. In 1881, he moved to the Washington area and was received by the Presbytery of Washington City to serve the Darnestown Presbyterian Church in rural Montgomery County and to head the nearby Andrew Small Academy.

In April 1885, the Meeting House congregation extended a call to the Rev. Nourse “without a dissenting vote” to serve as its seventh installed minister. When the Rev. Nourse and his family arrived in Alexandria, he was 45 years old and had two decades of experience serving in congregational ministry. He had been married for twenty years to Frances Blackman Nourse and their family included four daughters and two sons. Several of their children established local

connections. Their firstborn, daughter Hattie Foster Nourse, married Albert D. Brockett, who served on Alexandria's City Council. He was the grandson of Robert Brockett, a member of the congregation and local brick manufacturer who had built Flounder House. A son, Clarence Doughty Nourse, purchased an interest in the local Curtin and Butts foundry, which he enlarged into the Alexandria Iron Works, Inc. before eventually moving to Atlantic City, New Jersey. The family lived at 518 Duke Street, a residence still standing on the southeast corner of Duke and St. Asaph streets.

The Rev. Nourse was installed as minister of the Meeting House on the afternoon of June 3, 1885. The Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Bittinger of Westminster Presbyterian Church in the District of Columbia, presided at the service, which included eight other ministers representing the Presbytery of Washington City. During his Meeting House ministry, the number of communicant members increased from 66 to 80; two women's groups, Home Missions Society and Light Bearer, actively engaged in raising funds for home missions; and the Sabbath-Day/Sunday School was also very active. Its classes were led by 14 teachers and weekly attendance averaged 75 students. For eight months during 1888-89, the congregation of Second Presbyterian Church joined with the Meeting House for worship services while their place of worship at St. Asaph and Prince streets was renovated and expanded from its original Greek Revival style structure to its present appearance. Rev. Nourse served actively on at least three committees of the Presbytery of Washington City — Education, Publication, and Sunday School Work — and served several times as its moderator and clerk.

Following the election of Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, to his first term as President of the United States (1885-89), several members who were Republicans and apparently large contributors to the congregation's operating budget, were removed from federal service appointments and judgeships. With sharply reduced operating funds — annual contributions for all purposes dropped thirty percent between 1888 and 1889 — and perhaps other reasons, the Rev. Nourse requested that his pastoral relation with our congregation be dissolved on July 21, 1889. The Meeting House would have to wait over a half-century, until the arrival of the Rev. Dr. Kenneth G. Phifer's in 1950, to once again enjoy an established relationship with an installed minister.

The Rev. Nourse was released from the Presbytery of Washington City in July 1889, when he was called to the pulpit of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He served that congregation three years (1890-93), and then returned to this area to serve Manassas Presbyterian Church (1895-98) and Vienna Presbyterian Church (1907-14). Vienna Presbyterian's church building during Rev. Nourse's tenure there continues in use today as a chapel. For several years the Rev. Nourse also served as dean and acting president of New Windsor College (1898-1902), located near Westminster, Maryland, which was then affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. It has since closed and its facilities incorporated into a Church of the Brethren service and conference center. He remained active in the affairs of the Presbytery of Washington City, including supplying Lewinsville Presbyterian Church (1914-17), and was honorably retired in 1917. The Rev. James M. Nourse died November 23, 1922.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Galloway Phifer

Born 1915 - Died 1985, Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Minister 1950-59

Kenneth Galloway Phifer was born to the Rev. William Everette and Blanche (Galloway Wyatt) Phifer on December 21, 1915. His mother died while he was still young, and his father then married Mary (Jim Hudson Ramey) Phifer. The family included three sons and two daughters. The Phifers relocated numerous times as the father served a series of Presbyterian congregations from Mississippi to New York in the former northern and southern denominations of the Presbyterian Church and in the Reformed Church in America.

Kenneth was born while the family lived in Lewisburg, Tennessee, located in the heart of Middle Tennessee about 50 miles south of Nashville. By the time he left the family home for college, he had lived in Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, Delaware, and New York. His oldest sibling, William Everette Phifer, Jr., also became a minister in the Presbyterian Church — William received two degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary, and much like his father served congregations in the former northern and southern Presbyterian denominations. He was the founding minister of First Presbyterian Church in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The other brother, Sam, became a medical doctor.

Following graduation from high school in New York, Kenneth headed west to attend Centre College in Danville, Kentucky in 1935. Centre College, a small liberal arts school, was established by Presbyterians in 1819. Graduating in 1939, he headed directly to study for the ministry at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, then still located in downtown Louisville. Louisville Seminary was unique among Presbyterian seminaries as it was supported by both the former southern and northern Presbyterian denominations. He completed his studies at Louisville in the spring of 1942.

While a student at Louisville Seminary, he married Mary Agnes Penney (July 1941). She was born in Harrodsburg, Kentucky and had graduated from the University of Kentucky. Their life together came to include a family of two boys and two girls — Kenneth Galloway Jr., William Riker, Anne Penney (Mrs. James W. Carneal, Jr.), and Lynn Cameron. Their first son, Kenneth Galloway Phifer Jr., was killed by an automobile when he was two.

The 27-year old Rev. Phifer was installed by the Presbytery of Nashville on July 12, 1942 as minister of First Franklin Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, just south of Nashville. During his four years at Franklin Presbyterian Church (1942-45), he continued his formal education at Vanderbilt University, receiving a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in 1944. In 1945, the Rev. Phifer was called to serve the Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, a small college town in the northern part of the state not far from Charlotte, North Carolina. Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church sits adjacent to the campus of Winthrop University, at that time an all-female college. It was from this congregation that the Rev. Phifer was called to serve the Meeting House as its first installed minister following creation of the current congregation in 1950.

The service installing the Rev. Kenneth Phifer as the Meeting House's eighth minister was conducted on November 5, 1950. It included commissioners from the local presbytery, Presbytery of Potomac, as one would expect, but also commissioners representing the southern and northern denominations of the Presbyterian church — Rev. Dr. Benjamin R. Lacy, Jr., president of Union Theological Seminary and moderator of that year's (southern) General Assembly, representing the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and Rev. Dr. Ralph K. Merker, general presbyter and stated clerk of the Presbytery of Washington City, representing the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Many of the Rev. Phifer's contributions during his nine years of re-establishing a congregation at the Meeting House produced lasting effects. One, we may hope, will remain singular — the transformation of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House from a structure that served primarily as a shrine to celebrate Alexandria's colonial-era heritage into a place of worship for a living congregation of Christians grappling with the challenges that the daily lifeworld presents to all who would be followers of Christ. Leading our newly-formed congregation on that path presented unique challenges that, on one hand were quite similar to those facing many other newly created congregations during the immediate post-World War II era, while on the other hand were entirely singular to this congregation, the result of our own rich heritage, which dates from prior to the creation of the United States, and the fact that the congregation had decided to continue to utilize facilities at an inner-city location when so many other people and institutions were relocating (escaping) to the suburbs.

Rev. Phifer not only delivered hundreds of sermons in weekly worship services, many of which remain with us, but he guided us through the time-consuming process of discovering and responding to this particular congregation's needs, hopes, and desires. Numerous programs that are now taken for granted were launched during his nine years with us — Vacation Bible School was started; our first missionaries were supported; a congregational newsletter was created; and a new denominational Sunday School curriculum was implemented; and dramatic transformations of the physical plant were undertaken, including the restoration and modernization of the Meeting House to include forced air heat; the restoration and extension of the Flounder House to create a fully serviceable facility for offices and classrooms; erection of the Education Building; the churchyard landscaped; and structures in the 400-block of South Royal Street purchased and demolished to create a parking lot. He also engaged in inter-denominational exchanges on local radio and television programs, and even presented a series of nine sermons on the nationally broadcast radio program, *The Protestant Hour*, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

Continuing to address the reconciliation theme established at his installation, Rev. Phifer led the session to host the first presbytery meeting of all of this area's Presbyterians since the break caused by the Civil War — a joint-meeting at the Meeting House of the two local presbyteries, one from each of the former southern and northern denominations. He led the session to issue a statement supportive of the reunification of the southern and northern denominations a year prior to the first vote on reunion by the three major Presbyterian denominations — Presbyterian Church in the U.S., Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and United Presbyterian Church of North America. The resolution pre-dated reunification of the former southern and northern denominations by three decades. Rev. Phifer also led the session to support two overtures to the General Assembly regarding the creation of parochial schools by Presbyterians to avoid racially integrating public schools. He addressed the larger community explicitly on the issue of race relations as well — leading the Alexandria Ministerial Association to support a statement initially issued by ministers in Richmond regarding the governor of Virginia's "inept handling of the state's racial problem"; serving as vice-chair of Alexandria's Committee for Public Schools; and having his remarks on the racial integration of public schools published in local newspapers.

Through all of this, and while several other Presbyterian congregations were established in the Alexandria and Mount Vernon areas, the Meeting House congregation grew from 200 to just over 700 members. Second Presbyterian Church, Alexandria's other established inner-city (Old Town) Presbyterian congregation, followed the more general trend among inner-city congregations during the period — its membership declined and it sought to relocate to the suburbs. In recognition of Rev. Phifer's capacities as a "scholarly minister, lucid interpreter of

the Scriptures [and for his] energy and vision in preserving an ancient landmark, and in reviving a great Church,” he received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity (D.D.) degree from Hampden-Sydney College in 1957.

Rev. Phifer left the Meeting House in 1959 to return to the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, this joining its faculty as Professor of Homiletics (Preaching), taking over this responsibility from Frank Hill Caldwell, who had served in that capacity since 1930. His six years at Louisville (1959-65) took place at a time when the established liturgy for Presbyterian worship services was being called into question, as were many other aspects of life in the United States during the 1960s. One might expect a Reformed Christianity professor of homiletics to be little concerned with those aspects of worship that might detract from the sermon, but Professor Phifer, both in the classroom and in his book, *A Protestant Case for Liturgical Renewal* (1965), emphasized that the traditional place of the sermon in Presbyterian worship services appealed only to the intellect, and that Christian faith required forms of worship that called forth the totality of each human being. It was therefore reasonable to explore other liturgical traditions for the contributions they might offer to Presbyterians, including those of Roman Catholicism — the Second Vatican Council convened during this period, 1962-65 — and the modern ecumenical movement. His course offerings included Christian Worship, The Theory of Preaching, Preaching, Practice Preaching, The History of Preaching, Homiletical Values in Contemporary Literature, and Preaching on Contemporary Issues among others. While serving at Louisville Seminary he received a second honorary doctorate (Litt.D.), this one from his alma mater, Centre College, in Danville, Kentucky, which he would also serve as a trustee.

In 1965, the Rev. Phifer left Louisville Seminary to return to congregational ministry, this time at St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, Louisiana. During his eighteen years serving the St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian congregation, he also led theological discussion groups at Tulane University and was endorsed by the Presbytery of South Louisiana to stand for election as moderator of the 114th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Louisville 1974, an election won by the Rev. Dr. Lawrence W. Bottoms, the first African-American to serve as moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.). He was honorably retired in 1983, but remained quite active in what would turn out to be a short retirement, first returning to Louisville Seminary as a Visiting Professor of Homiletics for the 1984-85 academic year, and then serving as Theologian in Residence at the Government Street Presbyterian Church in Mobile, Alabama, where he died of a heart attack on November 1, 1985, one month short of his 70th birthday.

His written and spoken words are preserved in five books, several sound recordings of sermons and lectures, and dozens of printed sermons, some 200 of which are preserved in the Meeting House Archive. He is buried in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, home town of his wife Mary Agnes, and the place where their firstborn child had previously been buried.

INSTALLED CLERGY WHO ARE LIVING

Rev. Lawrence W. Avent

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Associate Minister 1957-58 and as Interim Minister 1958-59

Rev. Dr. William Randolph Sengel

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Minister 1960-86; Continues to serve as Pastor Emeritus, 1986 to present

Rev. Samuel Lee McCoy

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Assistant Minister 1970-71

Rev. David Michael Milbourn

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Associate Minister 1971-74

Rev. Ronald E. Minnich

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Assistant Minister 1978-80

Rev. Dr. Thomas Keith Farmer

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Minister 1987-91

Rev. Dr. Edna Jacobs Banes

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Associate Minister 1988-2003

Rev. Dr. Gary Wayne Charles

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Minister 1993-2004

Rev. Lisa Kenkeremath

Served Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Associate Minister 2001-06

Rev. Ann Herlin

Serves Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Associate Minister 2001-present

Rev. Dr. Robert Randall Laha, Jr.

Serves Old Presbyterian Meeting House as Minister 2006-present

Prepared by Dr. Donald C. Dahmann, History and Archives Committee, Old Presbyterian Meeting House, Alexandria Virginia, 703-549-6670, history@opmh.org, 2009.
