

The Link

A Record of The Old Chatham Cemetery, 1873 - 1983



Sponsor

William Pitt Chapter
National Society Daughters of the
American Revolution
Chatham, Virginia

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Blanche Overbey Crews
Martha Viccellio Dickerson
Gertrude Wilson Jones
Frances Whitehead Meyer
Nilla Bennett Tredway

TEXT

Frances Whitehead Meyer

ILLUSTRATIONS

Alice Meyer-Wallace

1984
First Printing

CONTENTS

Preface	2
Biographical Sketches of Founders	5
History	12
Map	Center
Catalogue	22
Index	84

Preface

The memory of man is short. In time even the names of people buried in the old Chatham Cemetery will be forgotten.

With this in mind, in 1981 the William Pitt Chapter, DAR assumed the task of printing a book recording the history of the old Chatham Cemetery.

This is not a Revolutionary War cemetery, but the founders were children or grandchildren of parents of that era. The cemetery is still in use as family members are brought back to the family plots for burial. We offer the book, as the title indicates, as a link between the past and the present.

When the cemetery began it was the custom to cover each grave with a mound of earth. This was partly to compensate for sinking ground, it also marked the location of a grave. In recent years and the coming of the power mower, all graves have been leveled and only those with tombstones can be identified.

However, records of interments have been kept over the years and are in the Chatham Town Hall. Names found only in these records have been included in the book. They are marked with an asterisk.

The cemetery is rich in monuments, from neatly placed, unmarked, native

rocks to tall obelisks, arched double stones and elaborately carved headstones extolling the virtues of the deceased and lamenting their loss. Granite, marble and sandstone have weathered the years. Some are signed "Danville Marble Works," "Gaudess Lynchburg," and one, "T.C. Keatts".

Mistakes appear, such as J's made backward and in spelling, such as "Coalmand" for Coleman D. and one delightful phonetic "Jani Coll" for Jane Cole.

Some stones give the birthplace of the deceased, Troy, New York or Litchfield (no State), Providence, Rhode Island, Banister Ford, Virginia, and James A. Ross, a silver smith from Midlothian County, Scotland, and others.

The records give us a glimpse of the treatment of the mentally ill. A woman, marked "insane, died in jail" was buried in the pauper's square. Here also is revealed the bitterness resulting from the war in a curt entry "Baby of a Northern Woman". They buried it, but they gave neither the baby nor the mother a name.

An inscription on a stone gives one food for thought. It says "Killed" and the date. It says nothing about how the man was killed. Was it accidental or deliberate? His wife was buried beside him twenty years later. She, too, is unknown.

Every person buried in the cemetery has been listed according to the number of the burial lot and an alphabetical listing has been added to help in the search for individuals.

Many people have given us information as we compiled this book and we are grateful to every one, but we want to acknowledge the continual assistance of:

Judge Langhorne Jones-member of the Chatham Cemetery Company, Inc.

Virginia Saunders-Secretary to the Town Manager.

The late Maud Carter Clement-for her wise preservation of the past in her writings, which we used as a reference.

Elizabeth Kearfott Giles, Elizabeth Wilson Whitehead, Jane Monroe Reynolds and Alice Meyer Wallace are chapter members who helped with the cemetery catalogue. We thank them.

They and the other members of the William Pitt Chapter join us in the hope that this little book will be of interest to people who know they have family connections with this cemetery and of service to those looking for a link with the past.

COMMITTEE

Nilla Bennett Tredway
Martha Viccellio Dickerson
Gertrude Wilson Jones
Blanche Overbey Crews
Frances Whitehead Meyer