12. BENJAMIN MOORE (~1821)
He was a bookseller who founded the bi-weekly Washington Gazette to earn a living and “amuse and inform” his readers. The cost: $4 per year. By 1797, he ceased publication, informing his readers he would not continue unless there would be some profit to him.
R25/S39

13. WILLIAM BENNING (1771–1831)
A river pirate who bought 330 acres of land, he built the first bridge spanning the north half of the Anacostia River, collecting tolls to pay for it. Maps dated 1861 show that the Benning’s Bridge and Benning’s Road provided an important eastern route out of the city.
R34/S68

14. GEORGE WATTERSTON (1782–1854)
He was the first full-time Librarian of Congress from 1815–1829. Prior to then, the Clerk of the House was responsible for maintaining the library. When the library was burned in 1814 during the war, the job of librarian became a separate position. Watterston replenished the Library by purchasing the collection of former President Thomas Jefferson and organized it on Jefferson’s classification scheme. After he opposed Andrew Jackson for President, the latter fired him in 1829. Watterston spent the remainder of his life trying to get his job back.
R32/S201

15. WILLIAM W. SEATON (1785–1866)
He joined his brother-in-law, Joseph Gales, in 1812 to own and operate the National Intelligencer, considered the leading national paper of its day. Respected for his high journalistic standards, it was heavily political with no room for entertainment. Seaton was also influential as a mayor of Washington. In 1845, he reorganized the school system. He abolished all fees and provided funding from property taxes. He established a goal of education for all (white) children in the city. Two-room schoolhouses were built in each of the four newly formed school districts of the city. The schools began in 1845 with 500 students and four teachers; by 1860, there were 4,500 students and 54 teachers.
R3/S68

A WORD OF CAUTION: The centuries have made many grave markers and sites unstable. Please be careful near grave markers and watch where you step: depressions and sink holes lie hidden in grass, and footstones and corner markers can trip the unwary.

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established in 1979. The Association succeeded in having Congressional Cemetery listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It became a National Historic Landmark in 2011. Please join the Association or make a donation and help in the third century of service to the Nation’s Capital.

Join us!

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1. ANDREW MCCORMICK (1761–1841)
A native of Ireland, he emigrated to America in 1795. He was among the first to open a classical school and the very first to establish an Episcopal church in Washington. Thomas Jefferson attended services at McCormick’s chapel. He was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Eastern Free School, which was established by the Corporation of Washington. McCormick was a classical scholar, had great simplicity of heart, and was kind, unoffending, and gentle.

2. PONTIUS STELLE (1763–1826)
He opened a hotel on the site now occupied by the Supreme Court. Stelle catered mostly to congressmen. Due to housing shortages his rates were high, as much as $23 a week; $15 for room and board, $5 for a servant and $3 for wood and candles. No expenses were spared at this hotel known for its extravagance. Social gatherings and entertainments were featured activities.

3. DANIEL RAPINE (1768–1826)
He was a printer and bookseller when President Madison established as the Seat of their Government, after the Year 1800. Published by T-Red L-England and C-Smith 1795.

4. THOMAS TINGEY (1750–1829)
He was highly respected and known to be a genial social lion. As an indefatigable worker and meticulously exacting administrator, he served in that capacity for 28 of his 49 years in the Navy. An erect hydrants. He also served as Postmaster of the House of Representatives in the 1820s until his death.

5. WILLIAM PROUT (1753–1823)
He bought a 500-acre plantation that included much of what would become Capitol Hill and southeast Washington. In order to meet the needs of the new federal city, he met with President Washington to negotiate selling land to the government. He was one of 19 original landowners who signed a March 31, 1791 agreement to convey land for government uses. He also donated land to establish the Navy Yard and Christ Church. He was part of the vestry of Christ Church and was a founder of Congressional Cemetery.

6. GEORGE BLAGDEN (~1826)
A native of Attercliffe, Yorkshire, in England, Blagden was one of the first settlers in Washington, having been present since its foundation stone was laid. For many years up until his death, he was Superintendent of the Masons building the Capitol, an Alderman of the City, and a Director of the Bank of Washington. Blagden was superintendent of stonework and quarrying. A skilled mechanic with Old World training, he held the confidence and respect of all officials and associates, and his advice was sought on many occasions. During his tenure in Washington, he managed to accumulate a fortune. He, too, was a founder of this Cemetery.

7. GRIFFITH COOMBE (1765–1845)
A successful businessman and one of the best-known men in the early days of Washington’s history, Coombe was intimately connected—socially and otherwise—with the prominent and wealthy men of Capitol Hill and other parts of the city. Coombe’s residence at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Third Street Southeast, was one of the first houses in Washington. It was built before the seat of government was moved from Philadelphia, and was for many years an abode of wealth, elegance, and culture, a place where the Presidents often dined. Coombe was on the vestry of Christ Church and was also a founder of Congressional Cemetery.

8. JAMES GREENLEAF (1765–1843)
He was one of Washington’s first land speculators. Greenleaf married a Dutch baroness and soon made a fortune of more than one million dollars (an enormous sum in that era). He expected to repeat this feat by investing in property in the new city. In 1795, at the age of 28, he travelled to Washington to witness the ceremonial cornerstone laying of the U.S. Capitol. As a land speculator he was not the only one to be involved in unscrupulous dealing. He eventually owned 6,000 lots and promised to build at least ten houses per year. Some of them became the most famous in the city.

9. SAMUEL SMALLWOOD (1772–1824)
Born to a family that had settled in Maryland in the early 1600s, he was the fifth and seventh mayor of the District of Columbia. Earning $15 a month, his first position in Washington was as overseer of slaves at the Capitol construction site. At his death, he was a leading dealer in lumber and building supplies and owned one of the main wharves of the City. Smallwood entered politics in 1818 when he was elected Alderman to the City Council. In 1820, he was the first mayor to be elected by popular vote. He was again elected in 1824 but died soon after taking office. Smallwood was one of the founders of Congressional Cemetery, and signed the article incorporating it on April 4, 1807.

10. BENJAMIN GRAYSON ORR (1753–1822)
He owned a store selling groceries and liquor in Georgetown, which was at the time a separate entity from Washington. Orr moved into the city of Washington in 1812 and was elected an alderman but resigned a year later to become a supplier to U.S. Army brigades in Ohio and Michigan. While he was Mayor of Washington (the fourth) he devoted his time to public improvements such as grading streets, establishing the city’s first volunteer fire companies, and appropriations of $1,000 for buying four bells and other apparatus. He also authorized a lottery to raise funds to build a city hall and penitentiary. He was known as humane, kind and hospitable, and was well-respected.

11. RICHARD BLAND LEE (1761–1827)
The location of the new capital city was the subject of considerable disagreement in the first Congress. Lee’s vote was one of two that decided its current site. Richard Bland Lee, a member of the famous Lee family and an uncle to General Robert E. Lee, held a variety of governmental offices including being a member of the State House of Delegates and Virginia’s first congressman. He was appointed by President Madison in 1816 as Commissioner to adjudicate claims arising out of the destruction of property during the War of 1812. In 1819, he was appointed by President Monroe as judge of the Orphans Court of the District of Columbia, a post he served in until his death.

The mall area of Washington DC and surrounding buildings, ca. 1879. Far left shows the Washington Monument under construction with the Agriculture Department at left. Second and third panels show the Constitution Avenue (then B Street) side of the mall. Fourth panel shows the Baltimore and Potomac railroad station and tracks, and the far right shows the U.S. Capitol and Independence Avenue area of the Hill by Francis Hackett.