

OLD PINE STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEMETERY
(Third, Scots and Mariners Presbyterian Church)
(Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia)
412 Pine Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HALS PA-15
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Washington, DC 20240-0001

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Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia)

HALS NO. PA-15

Location: 412 Pine Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania
Society Hill Historic District
Latitude: 39.9435123 Longitude: -75.1493604 (Church, Google Earth, Simple
Cylindrical Projection, WGS84)

Significance: Old Pine Street church is the only Colonial Presbyterian church in Philadelphia still on its original foundation. Many of the founding church members played a significant role in the establishment of the country, and notable pastors and church Elders were active patriots during the Revolutionary War. During the war, the church was occupied by the British, as a hospital and then a horse stable. The British demolished the church interior, using wood as a fuel source.

Notable early pastors and members include:

The Rev. John Blair Smith (1791), also President of Union College of Schenectady, NY, was one of the first victims of the 1799 Yellow Fever epidemic.

Rev. George Duffield, 2nd pastor after Rev. Samuel Aiken (chaplain to the continental Congress), was an active patriot during the Revolutionary war. Duffield provided leadership during the Revolution during the stamp Act and against the king's unconstitutional taxation; Duffield proclaimed "to arms, to arms" and argued for liberty.

John Adams (2nd President, Signer of the Declaration of Independence) and other patriots of the First congress attended Old Pine under Rev. Duffield.

By 1905, there were 158 Colonial Presbyterian churches remaining in Pennsylvania. The church cemetery remains as one of the only remaining colonial churchyards in Philadelphia and New York City (Gibbons, 1905).

Description: The current church building is a Greek Temple style form with a front porch with Corinthian columns, with a stucco exterior (from an 1857 exterior renovation), facing Pine Street. The congregation increased during the decades of the 1960's and 1970's as urban renewal was in process in Society Hill. The church is currently an active congregation, and the Friends of Old Pine help to raise funds for church maintenance and for major restoration projects.

The churchyard is divided into two sections – east and west sides of the church building, with connection to a community center to the rear. The cemetery is

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undergoing a fundraising effort for restoration by the Friends of Old Pine group to document and restore the headstones and for restoration of church grounds landscaping. Brick walkways provide access on the grounds, and an iron fence encloses the churchyard, with churchyard entries from Pine and Fourth Streets. Landscaping comprises mature sycamore and ornamental trees as well as planting beds along entries from the perimeter streets, walls with burial vaults, and a parking lot entrance.

The church is serviced with a small parking lot, with vehicle access off of 5th Street. The parking lot is shared with the Presbyterian Historical Society. A community center, a contemporary structure opened in 1977, servicing the surrounding neighborhoods and church, is located on the southeast corner at Fourth and Lombard Streets and was constructed in cooperation by Old Pine Street Church, Friends of Old Pine, and St. Peter's School for community programs. The churchyard is bounded on its southwest corner by The Presbyterian Historical Society.

History: Old Pine Street Church was originally organized in 1762, as an alliance with the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia (founded in 1698) until 1771. The church had applied to Thomas and Richard Penn for a donation of a lot within the Society Hill for a new church and burial yard in 1764 at the intersection of Fourth and Pine Street (which was later enlarged). The church lot formerly was the site of the Hill Meeting House (small frame structure). The initial church structure was erected between 1766 and 1768, and opened for worship on June 12, 1768. Old Pine Street Church was considered to be one of the finest collegiate churches in Philadelphia. The first architect was Robert Smith, and funds for the building were raised by lottery and subscription.

Presbyterians described themselves as Puritans, and they were part of the Puritan movement from Europe to escape persecution in the Old World. Prior to the founding of Old Pine, Presbyterians first appeared in the "Virginia Company", in 1610, and founded the first church in 1614.

In 1690, it was recorded that a group of Puritans and Baptists gathered at 2nd & Chestnut in the city. The establishment of the First Presbyterian church in 1790 took place at 2nd & Market, followed by a Second Presbyterian Church in 1743 (established by George Whitfield). The Third Presbyterian Church (Old Pine Street Church) was founded in 1761 in an area of Philadelphia that was considered to be "suburban" with open spaces and commons and sand roads surrounded by heavily wooded lots (such as Pine Street). The Third Presbyterian church was one of thirteen churches in the city during a time of continuous migration.

When the church was occupied by the British during the Revolutionary War, as a hospital and then a horse stable, the church across the street, St. Peter's, which

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belonged to the Church of England, was left intact. Pews were torn out for fuel as well as the pulpit and windows. During an excavation for installation of an iron fence along Pine Street in 1835, remains of British soldiers were discovered. Sketches show the colonial church structure oriented towards Fourth Street with a central path leading to the entry from that street. When the church was remodeled in 1837 and 1857, the entry was re-oriented to Pine Street.

The church building was remodeled in 1837, with the transformation of the colonial style structure into a “beautiful and classic temple”. In 1857, the church exterior was altered into a Greek Temple style. The front porch, with Corinthian columns, was added. In 1903, a new iron fence on a granite base was constructed along 4th Street to match the fence along Pine Street. A new, larger roof was built over the old roof.

The church owned another cemetery at 5th & Carpenter Streets, and also licensed another lot on Water Street for the internment of the congregation poor. The church went through several mergers throughout the years, with the latest being a merger with the Mariner’s Church in 1959, with the name of Third, Scots and Mariners Church (with the 1953 Holland-Scots Church into the Third and Scots Church).

The first internments in the cemetery occurred in 1766, prior to the building construction. During the Revolutionary War, no tombstones were erected since stone cutters were scarce. Cemetery recordation resumed in 1780 and continued until the Civil War. In 1868, remains were transferred from the Carpenter Street Burial Grounds, some families transferred long-time members for internments from other cities, and a gradual closing of the church yard was then in process. Church members and other people during times of plagues were not granted burial in the city after the city passed an ordinance not allowing burial for those with contagious diseases. Families then purchased lots in cemeteries and church lots outside of the city limits. A church lot was secured in the Mount Moriah Cemetery (at Cobb’s Creek, southwest Philadelphia, established in 1855) for an estimated 1100 graves. At that time, land increased in value, and churchyards were considered a threat to the public health and were replaced by cemeteries. Within the cemetery, it is estimated that at least two internments per grave exist, and some family lots are enclosed with iron fences. According to a 1905 document, an internment roster was initiated in 1846, with prior listings on gravestones – the year that gravestones were being restored through recutting and resetting.

The rear wall of the church cemetery (west side), contains burial vaults as well, with stones that were brought from the Market Street churchyard, with some markers dating from 1740. The stones and vaults within the cemetery are of a large variety of styles both in ground and raised (some as tables or slabs stabilized on four legs). There are some shaft monuments of polished marble

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and other stone. A collection of memorial tablets are within the church sanctuary in center aisles, front hallway wall, and within exterior pavement. Hessian soldiers were buried in a long ditch during the British occupation of Philadelphia. A church yard endowment fund was established in 1827 and remains as part of the church endowment fund.

By 1905, six cemeteries in Philadelphia remained from colonial times including the cemetery of Old Pine Street Church (other churches included Old Swede's, Christ Church, Saint Paul's Basilica, and St. Peter's Church).

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White, William P, and William H Scott, "Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, A Camera and Pen Sketch of Each Presbyterian Church and Institution in the City," Philadelphia: Allen Lane & Scott, 1895.

Oral Interview with Ronn Shaffer, Old Pine Street Elder, Friends of Old Pine Street Church, Ronn and Ellen Shaffer, 214 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, 215-413-1250 (p), Interview date, May 24, 2011.

Presbyterian Historical Society, National Archives of PC(USA), 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147, Archival Documents, including:

McQuade file – "A Report on Old Pine Street Church", 1954-1956, "Plan of Historical Marker";

Hammonds, Kenneth A., "Historical Directory of Presbyterian Churches and Presbyteries of Greater Philadelphia, Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church (USA), Philadelphia, PA, Publication Number 32;

Calvin Catalogue, VM 146, P54, 102 V, Upper Vault, Building Committee Minutes, 1837-1838, Inscriptions in Old Pine Street Church Yard, Hebert Adams Gibbons, 1906, additions & indices, 1935

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Old Pine Street Church – front façade on Pine Street (Susan M. Mattison, 2008).

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Old Pine Street Church Cemetery – photo by Susan M Mattison 2008