

Self-Guided Tour of Carlisle's Old Public Graveyard

Please use caution while taking your tour.

For your safety and the preservation of the grave markers please do not step on, lean on, or sit on any markers. Stay on the paths.

There are also many groundhogs in the cemetery, so please watch your step.

1 Historic Carlisle, Inc.

Wayside Marker at the E. South St. entrance.

2 Weeping Willow Corner

Behind the grave marker of Chief Justice of the PA Supreme Court Hugh Brackenridge (1749-1816) are markers with the weeping willow design. Popular in the early 1800s, weeping willows were a perfect fit for the American Federalist Period—a classical look that was light and airy.

Note the H.J. Kelley carver signature on the Brackenridge marker and the Hoffer signature on some of the willow grave markers.

3 Iron Marker

Most markers in South Central PA are made from fieldstone, slate, sandstone, limestone, marble or granite. Unusual is this iron headstone and footstone, but not unexpected with the active iron manufacturing on North and South Mountains.

Note grave markers to the left with military flag holders. Erected to honor U.S. veterans, the flag holders indicate the war in which the veteran fought. There are some 750 veterans buried in this graveyard.

4 General John Armstrong (1714-1793)

Victorious commander of the Kittanning Expedition during the French and Indian Wars, Armstrong's grave marker is a "ledger." Ledgers were a typical 1700s European tradition for the more prominent and wealthy.

5 Dr. Charles Nesbit (1736-1793)

Nesbit was the first President of Dickinson College (1785-1804). Surmounting his grave marker is the "lamp of learning." It represents his connection with education; as does the inscription—written in Latin.

6 Oldest Marker

The curvy top of the 1757 Robb marker is reminiscent of the European Baroque period.

7 Ribbon Symbol

Based on the 1495 engraving by Durer entitled The Conversion of St. Paul, words in a ribbon in a dove's mouth symbolizes a message from god. Used on grave markers, the short sayings are a reassurance to the living: "rest in Peace" or "gone Home."

8 John Bannister Gibson (1780-1853)

Gibson was Chief Justice of the PA Supreme Court for 24 years (1827-1851). He also played the violin and made his own dentures!

The fence enclosure is attributed to Robert Wood. Wood was the premier designer and manufacturer on the east coast in the mid to late 1800s for decorative cast iron Victorian ironwork.

9 Civil War Calling Card

During the clash between Confederate and Union soldiers in Carlisle June/July of 1863, a bullet pierced the slate marker just inside the fence. (Don't stick your finger in the hole—wasps make it their home!)

10 Molly Pitcher Statue

The statue of Revolutionary War Heroine "Molly Pitcher" was erected in 1916 by the State of Pennsylvania. J. Otto Schweizer, a prominent monument sculptor from Philadelphia was commissioned to design the statue. His signature is on the side. Molly's likeness is based on a composite of features from her female descendents. Molly Pitcher's actual grave is behind the monument marked with an 1876 grave marker. Her real name: Mary Hays McCauley.

11 Revolutionary War Monument

In 1930, the DAR Chapter of Cumberland County, the Borough and the State of Pennsylvania erected this monument to Revolutionary War soldiers buried in the Old Graveyard. Although only 53 are listed, research now indicates about 95 Revolutionary War veterans are buried in the Old Graveyard.

12 Judge Frederick Watts (1801-1889)
Watts is a reminder that Carlisle citizens made contributions locally, state-wide and nationally. Among his accomplishments: President of the Cumberland Valley Railroad, U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture under President Grant, President PA Agricultural Society, and instrumental in the founding of Penn State.

13 Fraternal Symbol
On the broken marker at the top is the fraternal symbol of the Masons.

14 Mausoleums
Mausoleums were popular from the end of the 1800s and declined in the early 1900s about the same time as the income tax was enacted. There is only one mausoleum in the Old Graveyard. The door hinges are a classical symbol of funeral iconography. They are torches: up for life; down for death.

15 Esther Groome (1857-1926)
Groome was a prominent artist of the Pennsylvania Impressionist movement in the early 1900s.

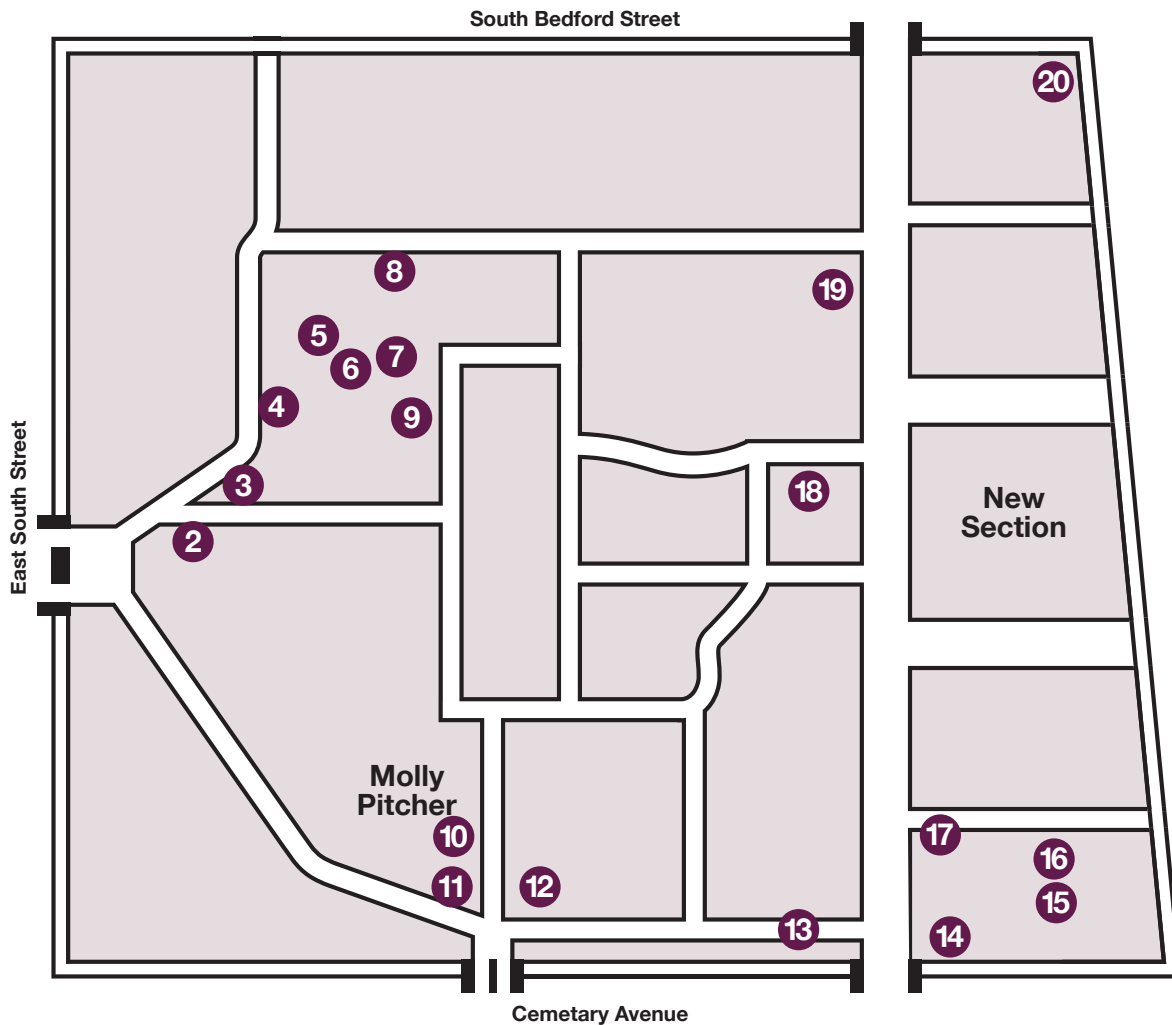
16 Robert Young Stuart
As Chief Forester of the U.S., Stuart was responsible for the first comprehensive assessment of U.S. Forests (Copeland Report).

17 White Bronzes
Neither white nor bronze, "White Bronzes" were made of zinc that turned blue during a casting process. An American invention in the 1870s, cast sections were bolted inside, making these grave markers hollow. (Give it a tap.) They look just as they did over 100 years ago! There are only about a dozen in the country prior to 1900.

18 Judge John Reed (1786-1850)
Reed started the first law program in Pennsylvania. It evolved into Dickinson School of Law.

19 Civil War Drummer Boy

20 Lutheran Monument
In 1891 bodies from the Lutheran graveyard on S. Hanover & Chestnut Ave. were re-interred on the SE corner plot of graveyard.



Map not drawn to scale.