

http://www.oldchesterpa.com/cemeteries_st_martin_walk_dedication.htm

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In September of 1999, [Helen M. Imburgia](#), local Genealogist/Historian, presented a project proposal to replace the grave markers of war veterans buried at old St. Martin's Church Cemetery to the Board of Directors of the Marcus Hook Community Development Corporation. The research conducted by her, confirmed the veterans were from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, and the Spanish-American War.

The plan was to create a "Soldiers Walk Memorial" to appropriately identify and recognize the war veterans. Many of the existing headstones have eroded with years of weathering, leaving them illegible or toppled over. Headstones of many of the veterans noted their service in American wars.

The Soldier and Sailor Walk Memorial consists of standard government gravestones furnished by the O.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Memorial Program Service. Each light gray granite marker is 23 inches long, 12 inches wide, 4 inches thick and weights 130 pounds. To obtain a grave marker, a copy of the deceased veterans discharge certificate or a copy of other official documents pertaining to military service had to be produced along with cemetery records. Records were required to show that the deceased veteran was honorably discharged from military service.

BOROUGH OF MARCUS HOOK

The Borough of Marcus Hook is located in the extreme southeastern corner of Pennsylvania in Delaware County. Marcus Hook is located 18 miles from downtown Philadelphia and 11 miles from Wilmington, Delaware. Four interchanges with I-95 or I-495 lie just outside Marcus Hook. Philadelphia International Airport is 12 miles and 15 minutes away.

St. Martin's Church and Cemetery are located at 225 Church Street in the Borough of Marcus Hook. The 1.622 acre property is located within 500 feet of the Delaware River.

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH and CEMETERY

St. Martin's is one of the earliest as well as the last remaining river front churches in the Commonwealth. [The current 1845 Greek Revival church building](#) replaced 1702 and 1745 structures built consecutively on the same site. Located 500 feet from the Delaware River and just off the historical Market Square area (circa 1701), this church has welcomed and acculturated successive waves of immigrants from 18th century English farmers to 20th century Slavic mill workers.

St. Martin's was founded in 1699 (and opened for worship in 1702) by a bequest of local resident Walter Martin to provide an alternative place of worship and burial for non-Quakers. The church built in 1702 was connected with St. Paul's of Chester and St. John's of Concord. Missionaries were sent from Philadelphia to preach to a scattered congregation. Problems arose with the distance for the preachers from Philadelphia and a minister from the Swedish Church of Wilmington presided. By 1725 an English minister was sent and settled at the church. In June 1760, the people of the mission decided upon the name of St. Martin's Church instead of the Chapel of Chichester. The new name was in memory of its first benefactor.

The church and its congregation have been centrally involved in the development of Marcus Hook from an early market town to prominent 18th and 19th century seaport, to 20th century mill town and refinery port. The church has not only been an important place of worship for the river front settlements, but also its successive structures have housed the town's corporate and political

meetings from 1750 till the recent past and served as a non-denominational school from 1745 to the construction of public schools in the 1850's. Members such as William Trainer and John Larkin, Jr., donated money and land to the church. John Larkin, Jr., a Marcus Hook businessman and industrialist who spurred the economic development of the community in the 1870's.

St. Martin's parishioners outgrew the church and built a new place of worship in Boothwyn, PA in 1967. In 1985 the Marcus Hook Community Development Corporation obtained the church and cemetery, and immediately began a comprehensive historic restoration program. The restoration work which followed was based on historically accurate architectural analysis and detailing. Within recent years the church has been leased to different church congregations. The current tenant is the Bible Presbyterian Church.

The cemetery located on the grounds is most notable. Records show many graves dating back to the 1700's. Burial plots have been researched, identified and mapped. The cemetery plot map and burial lists obtained from old church records and a WPA study of the cemetery do not match in all instances. Over 500 plots have been located with over 300 plots identified as being onsite but unmarked.

St. Martin's remains the pride and focal point of Marcus Hook. It was designated a Local Historic Landmark by Borough Council in 1979. It is one of the last survivors of the river-oriented society, and a continuing symbol of Penn's religious tolerance.

Sufficient historical information was assembled to document 73 veterans buried in the cemetery and to procure gravestones noting the veterans name, year of birth and death, war, rank, company and regiment.

[Revolutionary War 27](#)

[War of 1812 7](#)

[Mexican War 1](#)

[Civil War 37](#)

[Spanish-American War 1](#)

In October 2001, the Marcus Hook Community Development Corporation chose the design firm of DePallo Design & Planning to prepare a site development plan depicting a design scheme for displaying the grave markers in a creative and sensitive manner. The charge was to prepare a plan with sufficient detailing allowing the project to proceed to construction. The master plan involved a study of the site to determine an appropriate location for the memorial. The memorial was not to conflict with the serenity of the church and cemetery site. It was to be a place for reflection, a place to give tribute to the men of our armed forces who served their country. The selected site on the church property was determined to be compatible for the proposed use. The location chosen for the memorial does not conflict with any existing grave markers or known burial locations.

The final design plan was delivered to the Marcus Hook Community Development Corporation in December 2001. The concept of the memorial walk depicts a patriotic theme that salutes those individuals who served their country in times of strife. The symbols of the eagle and the memorial bronze plaque reinforces the patriotic theme and creates an interpretive monument describing the historic and cultural memorial.

Work on the memorial began in October 2002 and was essentially completed in November 2002. Some corrected replacement markers were added this year and the plaque was installed in the center of the memorial. The wording on the plaque reads as follows:

The Soldier and Sailor Walk Memorial

Dedicated to the men buried at Saint Martin's Church Cemetery (1699)

who bravely served their country in the following wars.

Revolutionary War 1775 - 1783

War of 1812 1812 - 1815

Mexican War 1846 - 1848

Civil War 1861 - 1865

Spanish-American War 1898

May your names not just lie on dusty pages, in history books and on worn gravestones, but be engraved deep in our hearts for all eternity.

Dedicated: May 24, 2003