

Benjamin Burns (Sr.)

(1778 - 8 Feb 1850)

Burns. On Friday evening, the 8th instant, Benjamin Burns, Senior, in the 71st year of his age. His friends are invited to attend his funeral tomorrow (Sunday) at 3 o'clock from his late residence on B between 10th and 11th streets, immediately opposite the Smithsonian Institution.

From Allison Childs, 2004

Was born circa 1778 in or near Sunbury, Northumberland Co., PA.

- married LINNEY PARKER on 2 Oct 1808 in Washington, DC
- married ELLEN THOMAS, daughter of BENJAMIN THOMAS, circa 1815 Washington, DC
- married MARGARET GIBSON 8 Mar 1833 Prince George Co, MD
- married ANN CROSS 28 Jul 1836 Washington, DC

He died 8 Feb 1850 Washington, DC and was buried 11 Feb 1850 in Congressional Cemetery, Washington, DC.

He was "of Sunbury, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania" according to the inscription on his tombstone in Congressional Cemetery. There were a number of Burns in Northumberland County from the earliest colonial times. A Herman Born warranted 150 acres of land there in 1772. A Peter Burns was listed in the "Annals of Buffalo Valley" as an inhabitant in 1775. On 3 June 1809 Benjamin sold land in Mahontago Twp., Pa., "late property of Herman Burns, Dec." suggesting that his father was named Herman. The naming of Benjamin's son Harmon would seem to reinforce this.

He moved to Washington City at just about the same time as it became officially the nation's Capitol in 1800. During the War of 1812 he was a member of the DC militia for two periods, first from May through July of 1813 he was a member of Captain Caldwell's Troop of Tayloe's 2nd Regimental Cavalry, and from August through October of 1814 he was with Captain Hugh's Company of Brent's 2nd Regiment. It was during this later period that the British occupied and burned the Capitol. In 1855 and 1857, as a result of this service, his widow received two warrants for 120 and 40 acres of land which she promptly sold. In 1815 he subscribed to shares to build a building on Capitol hill to serve as a temporary Capitol. The structure known as the "brick capitol" was located on the present site of the Supreme Court Building. He was a Mason, having attained the third degree level in Federal Lodge #1 on 20 April 1811. The "National Intelligencer" for the period from 1811 to 1850 carries many items attesting to his activity as a merchant tailor on or near Capitol Hill or Pennsylvania Avenue.