



Newsletter

California Monument Association Spring-Summer Newsletter 2026, Vol 16

California Monument Association Fall Meeting

Oxford Suites Paso Robles

800 4th Street, Paso Robles, CA, 93446

October 23-24, 2026



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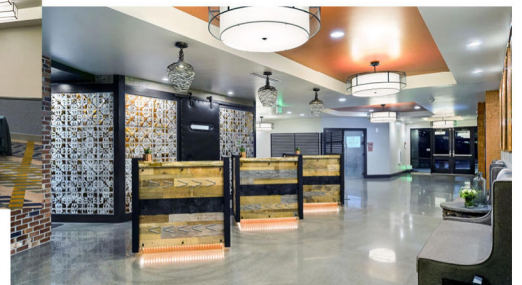
For room reservations: call 805-237-0305 and mention CMA

CMA's Fall Meeting

CMA's Fall Meeting will be in beautiful Paso Robles, CA., known for its wineries and olive groves. Northeast of the city, the Estrella Warbird Museum displays military planes, weapons and memorabilia. Paso Robles Pioneer Museum features historical relics like farming tools, a 19th-century schoolhouse and a reconstructed jail. Surrounded by hills, Barney Schwartz Park has a lake and picnic spots. Ravine Water Park has slides and a wave pool. All in all, a good place to visit, relax and do a little CMA business! There is no charge for this meeting, we just need your RSVP.

We will gather on Friday evening for a welcome reception; Saturday will begin with a Board and Membership meeting, followed by lunch and education.

Please make your plans now to join with us this Fall in Paso Robles!



Thank You to Our Supplier Members

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Resting Rebellions: The Surprising Stories Behind Five Founding Fathers' Graves

The men who built the United States are often remembered on a monumental scale—marble statues in Washington D.C., portraits on paper currency, and many chapters in history books. Yet, their final acts of self-expression weren't written in legislation, but carved in stone.

Where and how a Founding Father chose to be buried tells us about how they viewed their own legacy. From subterranean crypts to stone obelisks, the final resting places of these five iconic figures offer a fascinating glimpse into early American history.

1. George Washington: The Battle for the General's Body



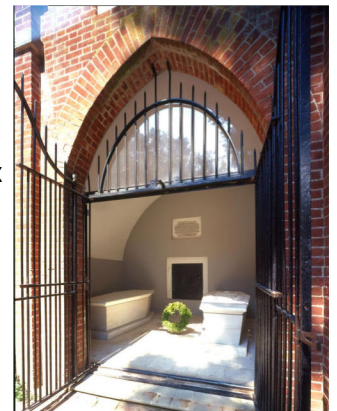
Location: Mount Vernon Estate, Fairfax County, Virginia

When George Washington died in 1799, his will was crystal clear: he wanted to be buried on his beloved Mount Vernon estate in a simple, newly constructed brick tomb, replacing an older, deteriorating family vault.

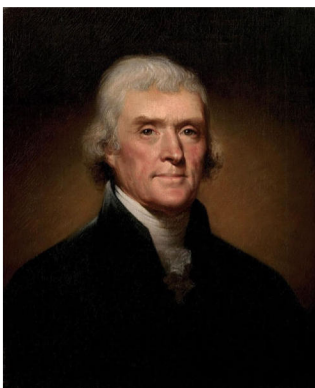
Congress, however, had grander plans. Infatuated with the idea of a national pantheon, the government desperately petitioned Martha Washington to let them move his body to a purpose-built crypt directly underneath the U.S.

Capitol Rotunda. Martha reluctantly agreed, but political bickering and construction delays dragged on for three decades.

The issue was forced to a head in 1830 by a bizarre security breach. A disgruntled ex-estate gardener broke into the old family vault with the intent of stealing Washington's skull. He mistakenly walked away with the skull of a relative instead, but the shock of the incident prompted the family to reject Congress entirely. They immediately built the secure, unpretentious brick enclosure Washington had originally requested, where he still rests today in a plain marble sarcophagus.



2. Thomas Jefferson: Curating a Legacy from the Grave



Location: Monticello Cemetery, Charlottesville, Virginia

Thomas Jefferson was a meticulous designer, including plans for his own mortality. Before his death on July 4, 1826, he left handwritten instructions specifying the exact shape of his monument—a coarse stone obelisk—and the precise words to be inscribed upon it.

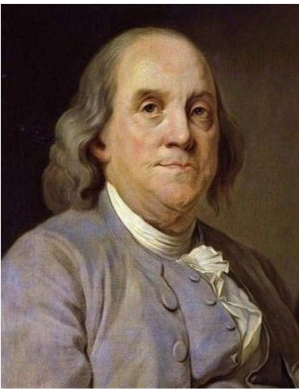
Jefferson wrote that he wished to be remembered for three things: authoring the Declaration of Independence, writing the Virginia Statute for (next page)

Religious Freedom, and founding the University of Virginia. He explicitly commanded that "not a word more" be added. In doing so, he completely erased his tenure as the third President of the United States, suggesting he valued his intellectual contributions to liberty far more than his execution of executive power.

The monument visitors see today at Monticello is actually a replacement. Throughout the 19th century, eager souvenir hunters armed with chisels chipped away at the original gray granite marker until it was completely disfigured, forcing the government to erect a replica in the late 1800s.



3. Benjamin Franklin: A Maxim of Humility and Pennies



Location: Christ Church Burial Ground, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

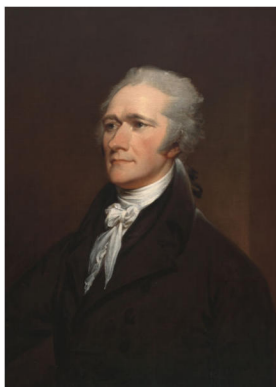
Despite achieving massive international fame as a scientist, diplomat, and philosopher, Benjamin Franklin chose a final resting place defined by absolute simplicity. He rejected the towering obelisks of his peers, resting instead beneath a massive, flat marble ledger stone alongside his wife, Deborah. It reads without embellishment: "Benjamin and Deborah Franklin: 1790."

As a young printer, Franklin had playfully penned a famous epitaph for himself, comparing his aging body to "the cover of an old book, its contents torn out." But in old age, he abandoned the clever prose for unadorned civic humility.

Yet, the public has transformed the site into an interactive monument. Because the grave sits right against the iron perimeter fence on a bustling Philadelphia street corner, passersby routinely toss copper pennies onto the slab. The tradition honors Poor Richard's famous maxim, "A penny saved is a penny earned." The local historic preservation team collects thousands of dollars in pennies from the stone annually, using the coins to fund the upkeep of the historic cemetery.



4. Alexander Hamilton: A Monument at the Financial Center



Location: Trinity Churchyard, New York City, New York

Alexander Hamilton's final resting place serves as a dramatic exclamation point to his volatile life. Shot down in the infamous 1804 duel with Vice President Aaron Burr, Hamilton's sudden death ground New York City to a halt, prompting a massive public funeral.

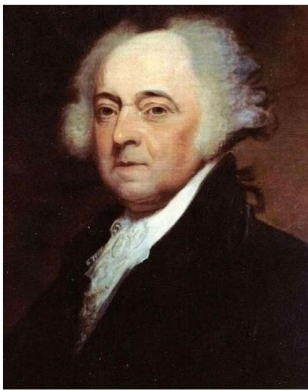
He was laid to rest in Trinity Churchyard, positioned precisely at the intersection of Wall Street and Broadway. It is a highly symbolic piece of geography; the architect of the American financial system rests permanently at the epicenter of (next page)

world commerce.

His monument matches his larger-than-life persona: a grand, brilliant white marble pyramid resting on a pedestal, flanked by four urn-topped pillars. Adding a poignant emotional layer to the site is the simple marker at the base of the pyramid belonging to his wife, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, who survived the duel by 50 years and dedicated her remaining half-century to preserving his chaotic historical legacy.



5. John Adams: Subterranean Solitude



Location: United First Parish Church, Quincy, Massachusetts

John Adams shares one of history's most poetic endings. He passed away on July 4, 1826—the exact same day as his close friend and fierce political rival, Thomas Jefferson. Their simultaneous deaths occurred on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Architecturally, Adams' resting place is a stark departure from the pastoral estates of Virginia or the open-air churchyards of Manhattan. He, alongside his son John Quincy Adams and their respective first ladies, is

buried in a subterranean granite crypt directly beneath the floorboards of the United First Parish Church in Quincy.

To visit the Adamses, one must descend a narrow set of stairs into a cool, quiet, basement chamber. The four massive granite tombs sit side-by-side in the shadows, perfectly mirroring the reserved, deeply community-oriented Puritan heritage that guided the Adams family for generations.



View our updated CMA Website

CMA's website—www.californiamonument.org—has been completed updated with a fresh look, separate listings for our Retail and Supplier Members, information about CMA and Upcoming events. There are also links to two industry podcasts.

Please take a look at our new website, double check your listing and stay current with CMA.

Humor



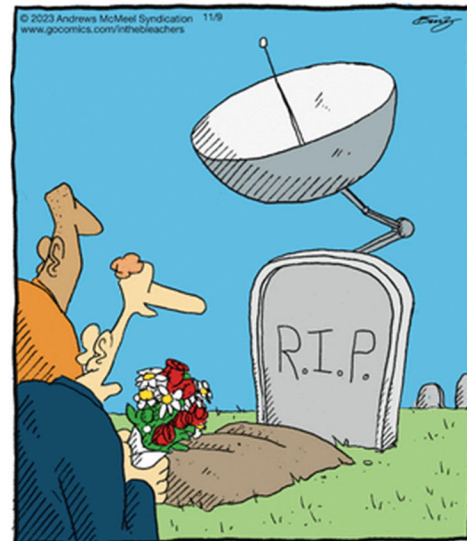
"I told you it was a mistake to leave your body to science."



"No, I didn't know him, but he created a job opening for me."



At the Comedians' Cemetery



"He didn't want to miss the playoffs."



"You were the best P.R. man we ever had."

