

St. Peter's/St. Mary's Burial Registers

In May of 2012, the transcription of St. Peter's/St. Mary's Church Cemetery burial records from 1784 to 1842 came to a conclusion. St. Peter's/St. Mary's Cemetery was located on the corner of Spring Garden Road and Grafton Street, including what is **now St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica** and the former St. Mary's Girls' School on Grafton St. (1893 – 1975). This initiative to produce a readable, searchable database, was completed through the efforts of Dr. Gordon Pollock, PhD, and Mrs. Sharon Riel (Archivist with the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth)

The information contained in these records paints a fascinating picture of the lives of Catholics in 18th and early 19th Century Halifax. Useful for genealogy, this material could also be a resource for historical novels, as we see whole families wiped out from disease, immigrants die from diseases contracted during their voyage here, and husbands devastated by the loss of their wives and infants in childbirth, sometimes more than once in a lifetime! We can also trace the maturation of the Halifax community as we start to see the burials of persons who were born here, and glimpse their lives as they intermarry, work, have families, and spend their last days in the city.

The deaths themselves, coupled with the comments and notes, will be of interest to a wide range of academic disciplines, including the history of medicine, (particularly in the areas of epidemiology and maternal and infant mortality) immigration patterns and conditions, poverty, addiction, homelessness, occupations and their associated hazards, race relations, law enforcement or military history. The tone and content of the notes also tell us something of the pastoral manner of the clergy serving the community.

It was a great pleasure and a fascinating project to transcribe these records, and we are pleased to be able to make this resource available to researchers.

Please find links below to the preamble written by Dr. Pollock and Mrs. Riel to accompany the database, and the database itself, sorted alphabetically by surname, and by date.