

The Dr. Nathaniel Bedford Monument  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

*Allegheny Co.*

HABS No. PA 44

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. PA 4

*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Charles M. Stotz, District Officer  
818 Bessemer Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa.

1780

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## THE DR. NATHANIEL BEDFORD MONUMENT

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Owner (Custodian) Trinity Cathedral, (Episcopal), Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh.

Date of Erection 1818 (approximate).

Architect Not known.

Builder Not known.

Present Condition Very poor, weathering badly, stone surface peeling off at all points. Removed from original location on South Side (of Pittsburgh) to present site in 1909.

Materials Soft sandstone.

Other Existing Records None.

Additional Data: The Monument is now standing in the Churchyard of Trinity Cathedral, Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania - having been moved in 1909 from its original location in the grounds of the former home of Dr. Bedford, in what was then known as Birmingham Borough.

Dr. Bedford was one of the prominent citizens of the early days of Pittsburgh, having come to the city from Birmingham, England. He was the first physician of record to practice medicine in the city, and was Surgeon at Fort Pitt, as evidenced by his resignation from one of the English regiments in 1770. He had his early residence in the square bounded by Tenth Street, Liberty Avenue, Barker Alley and Penn Avenue, and according to an early chronicle, "lived like an English nobleman, with a retinue of servants and a string of horses and hunting dogs." He was also one of the original Trustees of Trinity Church under the William Penn Grant of 1787; an incorporator of Pittsburgh Academy, 1787, (now University of Pittsburgh); and Burgess of Pittsburgh in 1808.

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Dr. Bedford laid out the borough of Birmingham on the South Side of the Monongahela River, and located there in 1814, where he died March 21, 1818. His house was on the hillside above the head of South 12th Street, and the monument, erected by his widow, stood in the adjacent grounds. When the house was demolished in 1909, it was removed to the Churchyard of Trinity Cathedral, largely through the efforts of Mr. Oliver Ormsby Page of Pittsburgh, and a bronze tablet recording the fact, together with the original Masonic inscription, was placed on it by the Pittsburgh Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Dr. Bedford was a Mason, and instituted the first Masonic Lodge west of the Allegheny Mountains, to which the insignia carved on the panel of the pedestal bears witness.

The foregoing data obtained largely from "Pittsburgh of Today", by Frank C. Harper; The American Historical Society, N. Y. 1931.

The Monument, made of a soft yellowish sandstone, consists of a square pedestal, surmounted by a turned urn-like finial. Three sides of the pedestal are paneled, one panel being plain, one having had an inscription, (now bearing a bronze tablet on which the inscription and other data is given), and the third ornamented with Masonic insignia. The fourth side, apparently not having been exposed in its original location, is not paneled. The finial is ornamented with carving. The stone, being very soft, has suffered considerably from weathering, and the monument is somewhat badly defaced from this and other causes, as well as its having been moved from its original to its present location - and in due course of time it will no doubt be a total ruin, there apparently being no means of preserving it under present circumstances.

The inscription on the bronze tablet referred to is given on the following page.

## DR. NATHANIEL BEDFORD

Died March 21, 1818 Aged 63  
 Surgeon At Fort Pitt  
 Trustee Under Penn Grant  
 To Trinity Church 1787  
 Incorporator of Pittsburgh Academy  
 Now University of Pittsburgh 1787  
 Burgess of Pittsburgh 1806.

"The Mystic Band of Masons Bright  
 Mourn the Deceased a Son of Light  
 Whose Soul Dissolved at Misery's Grief  
 Promptly offered Sweet Relief.  
 A Widowed Spouse Records His Name,  
 Of Purest Honor, Upright Fame:  
 A Husbands Faith, A Parents Care  
 Claim Memory's Tributary Tear."

Record With Original Masonic Inscription  
 Placed By The Pittsburgh Chapter  
 Daughter's Of The American Revolution

- 1909 -

*Louis Stevens*

Louis Stevens - Author.

Approved

*Charles M. Stotz*

Charles M. Stotz  
 District Officer PA 4

Date Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> 1935

*Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.*