

Cemetery Office

1000 Victory Drive • Columbus, Georgia 31901
706.653.4579

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Information

The Dales Society membership
contributions, memorials, honorariums
building rental details
contact:

Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation
Post Office Box 5128 • Columbus, Georgia 31906
706.653.4579
www.riverdaleporterdale.org

Mission Statement

To sustain and enhance the beauty and dignity
of Riverdale, Porterdale and East Porterdale Cemeteries



To emphasize the shared heritage of the region while
embracing the cultural and ethnic diversity of the
families represented here



To promote educational efforts highlighting the
historical significance of those buried here



A GUIDE TO
OUR LEGACY

EAST PORTERDALE
PORTERDALE
RIVERDALE

Reflecting the rich tapestry of the lives of individuals buried in the cemeteries, symbols of religions, fraternal orders, family ties, military service or other associations can be found on many graves, markers and head stones.

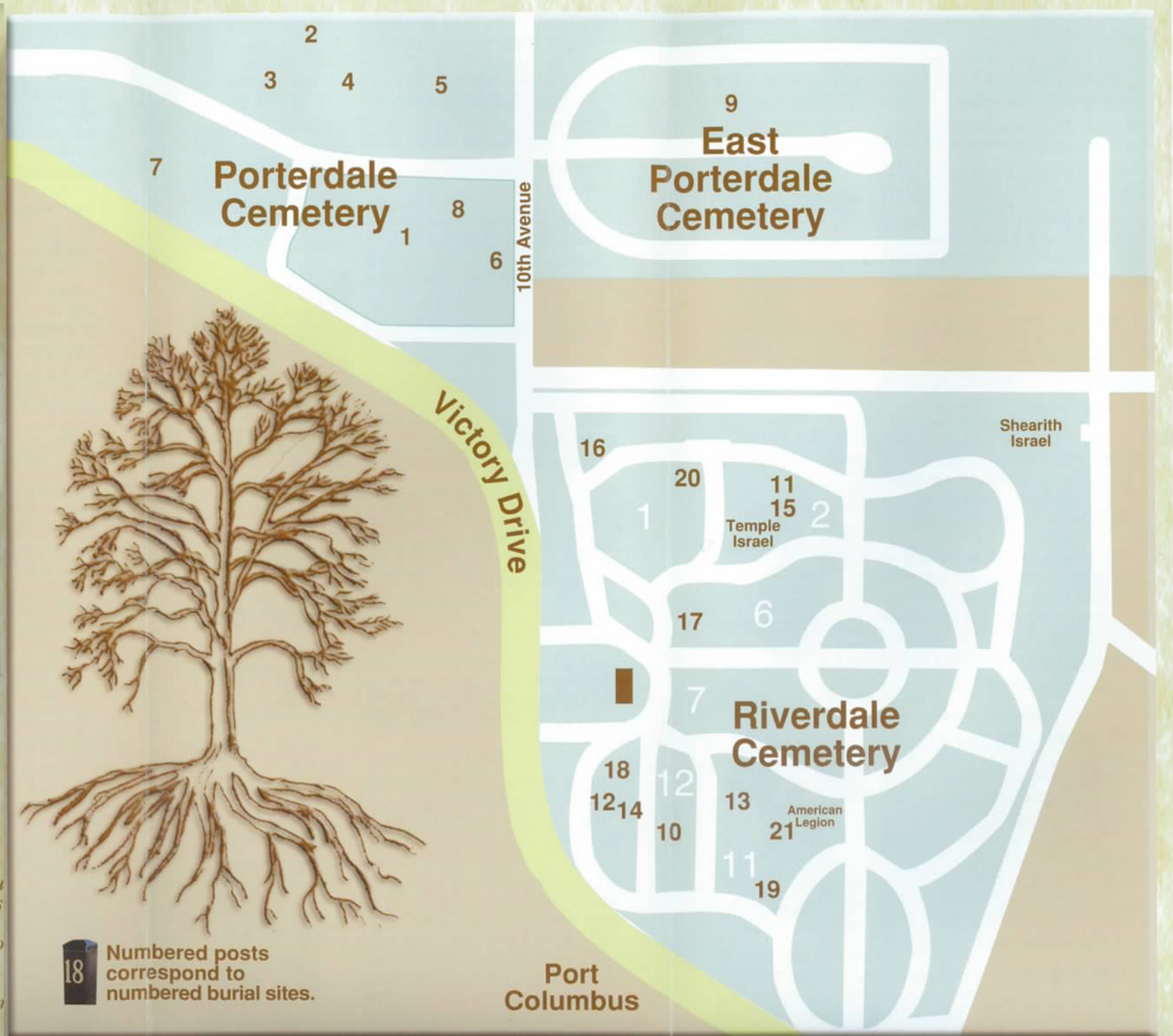


The cemeteries are fortunate to have wonderful old trees of several varieties, stately symbols of beauty, dignity and shelter...of traditions rooted in the past, now reaching outward to future generations.

New trees are being added continuously in an effort to enhance the landscapes and to demonstrate the value of renewal and endurance.



18 Numbered posts correspond to numbered burial sites.



Port Columbus

RIVERDALE

RIVERDALE CEMETERY was established in 1890. The brick building near the entrance, erected in 1915, originally included a chapel, housing for the City Sexton and a bell tower atop an arched passageway for funeral processions. Through the years, special sections of the cemetery have been marked: by Shearith Israel and Temple Israel for members of those congregations, and by the American Legion for veterans of the armed forces. The office maintains records for all city-owned cemeteries.



James Joseph Walton Biggers (1893 - 1992) A descendant of an original settler of this area, Mr. Biggers graduated from Columbus Industrial High School in 1911 and from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1915. He worked with noted Atlanta architect Neal Reid before being hired to assist in planning Fort Benning in 1917. He was awarded a Fellowship in the American

Institute of Architects in 1964. Mr. Biggers practiced architecture in Columbus for sixty years, designing churches, office buildings, libraries, schools and residences. More than thirty homes in the Hilton Heights and Peacock Woods areas continue to reflect his sense of proportion and style.

#10 Riverdale – Section 12, Lot 224



Aaron Cohn (1916-2012), beloved Juvenile Court Judge, was truly a champion of children, never losing faith in them, though their troubles brought them to his court. During more than four decades, he touched and changed countless lives. He was a man of many interests and talents, excelling in all – in leadership positions of service to his profession, to his city and state, to his

alma mater, the University of Georgia, to Temple Israel, and service to his country. A veteran of WWII, he served under Gen. George S. Patton and was among the liberators of the Ebensee concentration camp. Approaching terrified Jewish survivors, he held out his hands and declared simply, "I am a Jew." What more fitting time for this generous and patriotic man's life to end than in its 96th year on the Fourth of July. #11 Riverdale – Section 2, Temple Israel



Roland Bird Daniel (1866-1955) was Superintendent of the Columbus School District for 31 years, and also served as President of the Georgia Association of Educators. Daniel Middle School was named in his honor. During his tenure in local education, Columbus was noted as a model for the introduction of industrial-vocational training into the public school system, and he was recognized world-wide as an authority on the subject.

#12 Riverdale – Section 12, Lot 86



Tom Darby (d. 1971) and **Jimmy Tarleton** (d. 1979) were two folksingers who toured the country during the 1920's and 1930's making music – Darby on rhythm guitar and Tarleton on slide guitar; together they made 84 recordings. Their lives were full of sour notes, but in November of 1927 music brought them together for one harmonious moment: recording "Columbus Stockade Blues" in an Atlanta studio. In the ensuing years, scores of artists have wailed the familiar refrain: "Way down, in Columbus, Georgia. Wish I was back in Tennessee." Darby: #13 Riverdale – Section 11 American Legion, Lot 14; Tarleton: #14 Riverdale – Section 12, Lot 126



Rabbi Alfred Goodman (1918-1986) led Temple Israel from 1950 until his retirement in 1983. He was president of the Columbus Ministerial Alliance, the Community Planning Council and the Council on Human Relations. He spoke out for human rights, urging his congregation and the community to consider if they were willing to practice the religion they professed. His sermons and his life demonstrated love, justice and kindness.

#15 Riverdale – Section 2, Temple Israel



George S. Hamer (1922 – 1992) became a sensational golfer during the mid-1940s. Nicknamed the "Georgia Pine," he had been taught by the legendary golf pro Fred Haskins. Hamer achieved the "Triple Crown" title in 1946 by winning the National Intercollegiate, Southern Amateur and All-American Amateur Golf Tournaments. Later accomplishments included the Georgia State Amateur

Champion, U.S. Walker Cup Team, participation in the Master's Tournament, Southeastern Amateur Champion twice, and inclusion in the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame.

#16 Riverdale – Section 42, Lot 186



Claud Adkins Hatcher (1876-1933) had a keen interest in experimenting with flavors and making refreshing soft drinks for his Hatcher Grocery Co. customers. He produced a cream soda, ginger ale and a cola drink he named Chero-Cola. He formed a new bottling works named Chero-Cola Co., which in later years became Nehi Corp. and finally Royal Crown Cola Co. Hatcher

was also vitally interested in the welfare of his fellow man, especially concerning the education of young people. By his Will, a trust fund was created for making tuition loans to qualifying students, and it continues as a private foundation. #17 Riverdale – Section 6, Lot 53



#18 Riverdale – Section 12, Lot 91

Fred Schomburg, Sr. (1881-1974) learned the art of engraving and watchmaking from his father, a German immigrant. The family business first located on Broadway in 1906; the Schomburg clock on the sidewalk has been a Columbus landmark for more than a century. Schomburg's Jewelers is the oldest business in the city still run by the same family and still practicing the same trade.



#19 Riverdale – Section 11, Row D, Lot 4

Albert Thompson (1922-2004) was a constant voice and admirable model for fairness and opportunity, and attained many "firsts" in his career: first black lawyer in Columbus when he returned to practice in 1951; first black man to win elected office in Muscogee County in the 20th century (elected to seven terms in the Georgia House of Representatives, beginning in 1966); first black legislator named chairman of a standing committee; and the city's first black Superior Court judge.



#20 Riverdale – Section 1, Lot 60

Kennedy Circus Train A tragic accident in 1915, a few miles east of Columbus, involved a circus train from the Con T. Kennedy Shows and a Central of Georgia passenger train. Both engines were badly damaged in the head-on collision; six members of the circus troupe were killed and at least twelve others were reported missing. A monument, placed by the Kennedy Circus, resembles a circus tent, and

was made of Georgia marble. #21 Riverdale – Section 11

American Legion A section for Veterans was established by American Legion Post 35. It has a separate area for Spanish-American War veterans, including a monument to the *U.S.S. Maine*. Another area of the cemetery was dedicated to Confederate States of America; and many other veterans are buried in family plots throughout the cemetery.

PORTERDALE

PORTERDALE CEMETERY is one of the three areas designated for burials on the original survey of acreage when Columbus was established in 1828, and is the location of countless marked and unmarked graves, the oldest known dated 1836. Many of the community's best known African-American leaders and personalities are interred here.



Alfonso Biggs (1904-2003) taught school and worked in cotton mills before becoming a master cook. In a 65-year catering career, he cooked for five Ft. Benning generals and three United States presidents – Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. He was well known and admired as a keeper of black history in the oral tradition, and was generous in sharing his vast knowledge with all

who would listen. #1 Porterdale



Elizabeth Frances Cantey (1875 – 1948) was born in Ft. Mitchell, AL, but moved to Columbus and attended local public schools; she was among the first graduates of Tuskegee Institute. Miss Cantey became a teacher and made the school system her life and her love for more than fifty years. Her devotion to youth, especially those less fortunate than others, made her a role model and an important

influence for children throughout the community. She was an active member of St. John A.M.E. Church as well as an inspirational participant in many social, civic and welfare movements. The Housing Authority of Columbus honored her memory in 1950 by naming a new housing development The Elizabeth F. Canty Homes.

#2 Porterdale



Samuel Charleston (1904-1999) was an icon of education during his 42-year career in the Columbus-Muscogee County School system; he was Principal of Spencer High, Clafin Elementary and Spencer Junior High Schools before becoming the first Principal of Carver High School. He also helped organize the nonpartisan Voters League, and was the first black person to sit on a federal

jury in Columbus. In 1970, he was a member of the grand jury which elected James Grant as the first black member of the School Board. #3 Porterdale



Lyda H. Hannan (1909-2000) spent her entire career in education. She was named Principal of Pou Street Elementary School in 1945, where she remained until her retirement in 1968. Mrs. Hannan was also very active in her church, St. James A.M.E., and throughout the community, volunteering countless hours with the League of Women Voters, Muscogee County Department of Family and Children

Services and Board of Registrars, Valley Rescue Mission, A.J. McClung YMCA and the Medical Center Auxiliary. Her years of dedication and exemplary service to education were honored by the Muscogee County School District in 1990 with a new facility bearing her name on the site of the old Pou Street School. #4 Porterdale



Lizzie Mae Lunsford (1889 – 1966) and her husband Watson T. Lunsford operated a grocery store in “The Bottoms,” a section of town located at the foot of Wynn’s Hill and near what is now Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard. Quietly successful in their business affairs, she and her husband were generous in their support of the community. When the community needed money for a USO for black

soldiers, she wrote a check. When people were needed to stand up in court so black people would be allowed to vote, she was there. When the Tuskegee-Morehouse football game was in financial trouble, she stood behind it. When there was a shortage of housing for blacks during World War II, she used her family savings and built apartments. Principles were her family’s trademark.

#5 Porterdale



Fredye Marshall (1911-1998) was born in Columbus and educated in the local school system. At an early age, she began to nurture her musical talent in neighborhood, school and church groups, and later studied voice in New York. This training led to memorable roles on Broadway, opera and concert stages in renowned venues on every continent, including several command performances for royalty. Miss Marshall

returned home in 1961; she became the first African-American inducted into “Gracious Ladies of Georgia.”

#6 Porterdale



Gertrude Pridgett “Ma” Rainey (1886-1939), known as the Mother of the Blues, made her stage debut at the age of 14 at the Springer Opera House in “Bunch of Blackberries”. During 30 years, she performed and recorded with such significant musicians as Louie Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson and Thomas A. Dorsey. After coming home to Columbus in 1935, she frequently entertained friends in her home with

her musical talent. She joined Friendship Baptist Church where she served as pianist.

#7 Porterdale



William H. Spencer (1857-1925) served the community as an elementary school teacher, as Principal of the former Fifth Avenue School and finally as Superintendent of Colored Schools. His greatest goal was to have an accredited high school for people of color in Columbus. Mr. Spencer faced strong opposition, but his persistence triumphed five years after his death

when Spencer High School was created and named in his honor.

#8 Porterdale

EAST PORTERDALE

EAST PORTERDALE CEMETERY was opened in 1946; many African-American families purchased lots, sometimes several together, to form family plots which are still being used. The pauper section of Porterdale Cemetery was extended to East Porterdale in 1993.



Reverend Primus King (1900-1986) was Pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and a man who “wanted to give Negroes the tree of life in Georgia”. After being refused the right to vote in the all-white Georgia primary on Independence Day, 1944, King filed a lawsuit which resulted two years later in the ruling giving all citizens the right to register and vote.

#9 East Porterdale – Row L, Lot 48

The majority of the information and images were taken from the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer publication 100 People to Remember, with credit to Richard Hyatt, Beth Stanton and artist Don Coker.