



RIVERDALE ~ PORTERDALE
CEMETERY FOUNDATION, INC

www.riverdaleporterdale.org

Fall 2019



USS Maine Memorial Riverdale Cemetery

The battleship USS Maine was dispatched to Havana Harbor in early 1898 in response to rising tensions between Cuba and Spain. When it sank on February 15 of that year, initial reports concluded that it had been attacked by a Spanish naval mine. This sparked a wave of outrage in the United States, pushing the nation toward entering the conflict. "Remember the Maine" became the rallying cry for the Spanish-American War. As time passed, some came to believe that the explosion was actually caused by a coal dust fire and the reason remains contested. Of the 355 officers and sailors aboard, 260 died as a result of the explosion.

On November 12, 1954, the local Winfield S. Schley* Camp 13, Spanish-American War Veterans, dedicated a memorial to the USS Maine in **Riverdale Cemetery** as part of local Veteran's Day activities. The Camp, which had 11 members, raised funds to pay for the memorial, including holding a carnation sale on May 1, 1954 to coincide with the 56th anniversary of the decisive American victory at the Battle of Manila Bay.

The USS Maine memorial is a stone marker, about five feet tall and featuring a bronze plaque made from metal salvaged from the sunken ship. It is located in the American Legion section of Riverdale. This area is also the final resting place of more than 20 veterans of the Spanish-American War, as well as hundreds more who served our country, including many who fought in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We encourage you to visit this unique and historic tribute, and to honor all the Veterans buried in this special place.

The American Legion section is located in Section 11 at Riverdale Cemetery. If you need more help finding the site, visit www.riverdaleporterdale.org and look for numbered burial site 21 on our cemetery map.

***Winfield Scott Schley (1839-1911)**, namesake of the local veteran's group, was a Vice-Admiral on a different ship, the USS Brooklyn, during the Spanish-American War. He was belatedly credited with the American victory in the Battle of Santiago Bay and his later career included daring exploits in the area of the South Pole. Among his descendants are members of the Schley family, who have been prominent in Columbus history and continue to be leaders in the community.



Dales Society Memberships

New and Renewals -- 03-16-19 through 08-31-19

Mrs. Deborah J. Abraham
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Mr. W. D. Blau
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Contributions

03-16-19 through 08-31-19

In Memory of D. Hal Averett

Mrs. Helen J. Burgin
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Ms. Rosanna Hand
Ms. Diane P. Hett

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In Kind or Other Donations

Ms. Joy Hamilton
Hutchinson Traylor Insurance Co.
Mr. John Page
Dr. Richard S. Robbins

In Memory of Marjorie Sykes Search King

Ms. Leslie C. Search

Please Keep Us in Mind When Making Your Year-End Donations.

The Foundation depends on memberships and donations to help further our mission of improving, enhancing and promoting the 3 historic cemeteries we support.

As you consider your year-end charitable donations, we hope you will include us in your plans. Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, so your donation is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. **Donations of any amount are appreciated.**

Checks can be made payable to the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. and mailed to P.O. Box 5128, Columbus, Georgia 31906. Please include your mailing address (if different from your check), phone number and email address. **Thank you!**

Cemetery Symbols

BOOK. A book on a gravestone can symbolize the good deeds of the departed, as recorded in the Book of Life. It can also represent the scriptures, as a sign of faith.

Books may also indicate that a scholar or teacher is buried at the gravesite. An open book can signify an early death for someone whose life story was not yet fully written.



In Memory of Educators Who Made a Difference

With students back in school, we are reminded of the many selfless educators who dedicated their lives to establishing and sustaining our local schools and improving education for all students. Riverdale, Porterdale and East Porterdale Cemeteries are the final resting place for many educators, including some who were pioneers in the Columbus-Muscogee County schools. We pay tribute to all educators and honor the following leaders who are in our care.

➤ **William H. Spencer (1857-1925), Porterdale Cemetery**

Mr. Spencer served the community as a teacher, a Principal 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 was rewarded five years after his death when Spencer High School was created and named in his honor.

➤ **Roland Bird Daniel (1866-1955), Riverdale Cemetery**

Mr. Daniel served as Superintendent of the Columbus School District for 31 years, and also 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 the authority on the subject.



Roland Bird Daniel

➤ **Elizabeth Frances Cantey (1875-1948), Porterdale Cemetery**

Ms. Cantey was among the first graduates of Tuskegee Institute and was devoted to the Columbus school district for more than fifty years. Her commitment to youth, especially those less fortunate, made her a role model and an important influence for children throughout the community. She was active in her church and 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.



Samuel Charleston

➤ **Samuel Charleston (1904-1999), Porterdale Cemetery**

Mr. Charleston was an icon of education during his 42-year career in the Columbus-Muscogee County School system. He was Principal of Spencer High, Claflin Elementary and Spencer Junior High Schools before becoming the first Principal of Carver High School. He also helped organize the nonpartisan Voters League; was the first black person to sit on a federal jury in Columbus; and in 1970, he was a member of the grand jury that elected James Grant as the first black member of the School Board.

➤ **Lyda H. Hannan (1909-2000), Porterdale Cemetery**

Mrs. Hannan spent her entire career in education. She was named Principal of Pou Street Elementary School in 1945, and remained there until her retirement in 1968. She was active in her church and volunteered countless hours throughout the community. Her years of dedication and exemplary service to education were honored in 1990 when the new facility built on the site of the old Pou Street School was named Hannan Elementary in her honor.



Lyda H. Hannan



P.O. Box 5128
Columbus, Georgia 31906

Thank you for supporting the
Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Do you have a little free time and an
interest in preserving local history?**

The Foundation needs volunteers for a variety of areas including gardening and landscaping; cemetery preservation and upkeep; grant writing and fundraising; social media and website management; graphic design; research; office support; and special events.

If you are interested in being a Foundation volunteer, go to www.riverdaleporterdale.org and use the "Contact Us" page to let us know; or email us at margzl40@gmail.com. Thanks!

