

RIVERVIEW CEMETERY CANTON

Origins and Association Development

Riverview Cemetery began with a donation of property for a public cemetery prior to the first known burial, which occurred in 1844, by Judge Joseph Donaldson of Canton. The cemetery was known as Canton Cemetery. This property was located behind and east of the former Canton Methodist Church building (the church being situated on land also donated by Judge Donaldson, and currently serving as the Cherokee Arts Center) and extended north from the former church to the bluff overlooking the Etowah River. Although on adjacent land, there is no record or claim of the cemetery having any known connection or involvement with the church itself. Additional property for cemetery expansion was later added to include the hilltop behind and west of the church, as well as additional land along the river bluff.

Additional adjoining property further to the west of the original cemetery was procured by W. L. (Will) Blackwell, a Canton realtor, who created a River View Cemetery development plan in 1923 and sold family plots for individual family development and upkeep. The proposed plan was never fully developed relative to drives and infrastructure, although all available land was utilized for plot sales. No known records from these sales have been discovered beyond deeds that have been retained by family members. There was no known perpetual care agreement in association with the plot sales, and no known attempt to formally integrate the new and old cemetery areas. Following the gradual conclusion of plot sales and the death of Mr. Blackwell the entire cemetery was left without oversight or management and began to be recognized as a homogenous public cemetery.

Seeing the need for maintaining the ensuing, and by then neglected cemetery, along with the need to establish a record of families and burial locations, local citizens with ancestry ties to the cemetery began researching burial data and the means for funding minimal overall property maintenance. The current Riverview Cemetery Association was begun following an organizational meeting at the home of Marjorie and Elizabeth Johnston where the following association officers were elected: William G. (Bill) Hasty, Sr., President; J. O. Garrett, Vice President; Jeanette Bobo Williams, Secretary; and William A. (Bill) Teasley, Treasurer. The Association became a non-profit cemetery corporation of the State of Georgia in 1989 and obtained tax-exempt 501 (c)(13) approval in 1990. Bylaws were developed, amended and approved in 1991. The first Directory appears to have been published in 1995. The association functioned for many recent years under the almost sole leadership of Bill Teasley, Bill Hasty Sr. and (later) Billy Hasty, Jr.

Please contact Riverview Cemetery Association members relative to corrections or additions.

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