

③ Methodist Cemetery

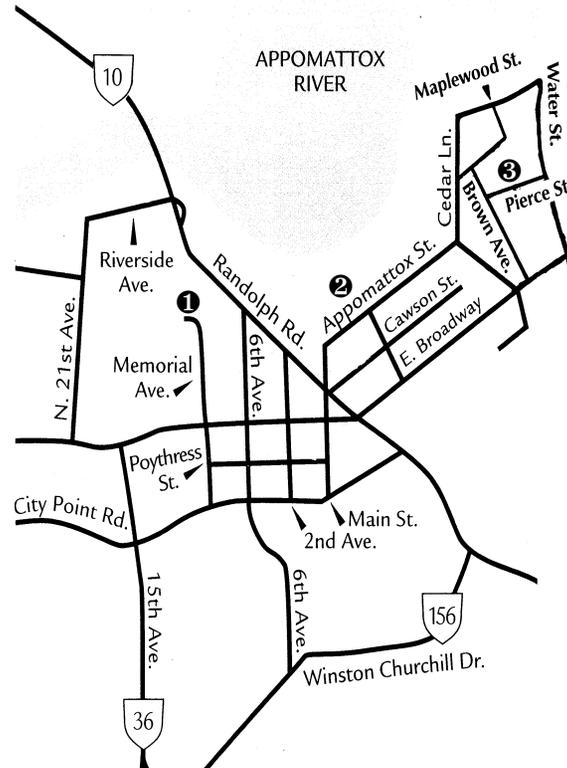
The Methodist Cemetery is home to some of the oldest existing burials in the City Point/Hopewell area. Trinity Methodist Church, built circa 1750 at the head of Main Street relocated to Pierce Street in 1835 where it remained until it's destruction by fire in 1937.

Several prominent families in the area have members interred in the cemetery, among them the Cook and Wiseman families. Samuel Cook, river boat captain and builder of the Cook house rests in the cemetery. However, unfortunately, there are also a number of unmarked graves. Evidence indicates that no burials took place after 1937.

The headstones are remarkable examples of funerary art. From the nautical designs for the river boat captains to the delicate heart shaped stone for a young child's grave, the markers reflect the quality of work produced by the Monuments Works of Petersburg, Virginia. The cemetery is not only a genealogist's treasure, it is also a reminder of City Point's storied past.



This photo is of the old Trinity Church believed to have been built in 1835. When it burned in 1937 the congregation accepted an invitation to join the First Methodist. The Trinity Church building was first located where the Patrick Copeland School used to be. Trinity later moved to a site on Pierce Street in City Point



Our Storied Past

Historic Cemeteries of Hopewell, VA

① City Point National Cemetery

In 1862, Congress passed legislation authorizing President Lincoln to purchase “cemetery grounds” for use as national cemeteries “for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country”

Later, Congress created the U.S. Burial Commission which remained in existence from 1866-1869. By this time, most of the evidence of the Union Army’s occupancy had disappeared. Left behind, however, were the bodies of thousands of Union soldiers. Many had, at their death, been buried in an area set aside for that purpose near the City Point hospitals. Additional bodies were found as former battlefields were cleared, and were interred in the temporary cemetery. By an act of Congress, in 1868 this burial ground was designated the City Point Military Cemetery. Approximately 5200 Union soldiers and more that 100 Confederate soldiers are buried here. Over the years they have been joined by veterans from all the ensuing wars of our nation.

The obelisk shaped monument in the cemetery was erected in 1865 under the direction of General B.F. Butler, Commanding the Army of the James, Colonel George Suckley, U.S. Surgeon & Medical Director, H. B. Fowler, Surgeon in charge of Point of Rocks Hospital as well as George Jones, Hospital Chaplain. This information is inscribed on one side of the monument. On the opposite side is inscribed the following: “Sacred to the Lamented Dead of the Army of the James.” The cemetery was laid out in the same year and over the years has been beautified by the addition of many trees and shrubs.



City Point National Cemetery



Soldier’s Graves at City Point, probably taken in the spring of 1865

② First Baptist Church City Point Cemetery

Located in the 200 block of Appomattox Street is the cemetery for the First Baptist Church of City Point. Believed to be much older than its founding date of 1867, the Church has had six different locations. The founding members were largely former slaves and free born citizens of City Point.

The land for the cemetery was purchased from John P. Branch for the sum of \$50.00. The deed indicates that the acreage was already “ in use as a colored cemetery”. The map of the site places it directly in the center of John P. Branch’s holdings as well as occupying valuable river frontage. This, combined with the significant number of unmarked and sunken graves, seems to indicate that the site had been in use as an African American burial ground for some time prior to the purchase.

While a diamond in the rough, the cemetery has a serene, ethereal feeling that invites the visitor to linger. The headstones run the gamut from those with hand painted names to ones that are engraved. In some cases the older headstones have sunken into the soft earth leaving only the tip of the stone showing.

Much more research is needed to determine the age of the cemetery as well as who rests within the unmarked graves. At one point the cemetery fell into a state of neglect. Through the efforts of the Reverend Rudolph Dunbar, current pastor of the First Baptist Church of City Point, the cemetery was cleaned and repaired and will continue to be maintained. Preserved for future generations, the cemetery provides valuable genealogical information as well as insights into African American burial practices.
