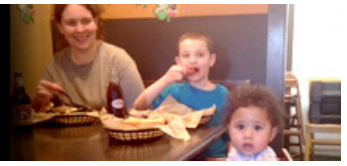




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## The Town of Barton Heights

Barton Heights began as a real estate development project in the fall of 1880s, one of several contemporary efforts to create new suburban towns just outside the Richmond city limits in Henrico County.

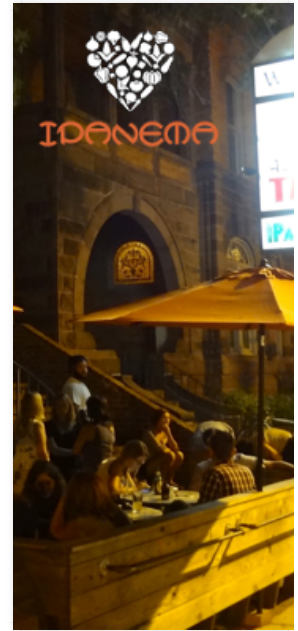
### The Barton Heights Historic District

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### Introduction

Barton Heights is a turn-of-the-twentieth-century residential quarter of the city of Richmond, Virginia. The first of a number of private and speculative developments outlying the city's Northside, it was touted as a haven for the renter class of managers and clerks, for whom easy terms would finance first houses and electric rail service would give quick access to the city center. The town of Barton Heights was a rapid success, surviving the panic and flight of its founder James H. Barton in 1896 to produce a tight-knit community that welcomed annexation in 1914 and prospered as a middle-class neighborhood through the mid-century.

*Annexed in 1914 by the city of Richmond*



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The Barton Heights Historic District is among the earliest of several turn-of-the-century streetcar suburbs in north Richmond. Spacious wood frame houses, most built in the first quarter of the twentieth-century, are sited on fw-foot-wide lots plotted on the neighborhood's gentle hills. The primary impetus for the development was the 1890 construction of the First Street Viaduct, a steel frame structure built by the developers at a cost of \$35,000'. This essential Viaduct linked Richmond's downtown to the district's "heights," by bridging the industrial area at the foot of the Bacon Quarter Branch ravine.

An industrial area lines the historic district's southern boundary. The eastern boundary is the Richmond-Henrico Turnpike. The Brookland Park and Battery Court Historic Districts abut the Barton Heights Historic District along its northern edge at Graham and Lancaster Roads. Cemeteries, modern apartments and a modern school shape the western boundary. The typical Barton Heights house was built in the Queen Anne or Colonial Revival style. The houses are similar in scale, materials, massing, and setbacks. Most were built speculatively for tradesmen and middle-class professionals. As a rule, Barton Heights' properties are larger and more fanciful in their architectural detailing than those found in the adjacent historic districts.

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## Early History

The land that later became Barton Heights was first laid out north of "Duval's & Coutts' Addition" in 1806, when Major William Duval speculated that the new capital of Virginia would grow north and west of the new statehouse. Duval, grandson of French Huguenots, had petitioned the General Assembly in 1804 to extend the western boundary of the city to the junction of Brook Road and Westham Road on the west end of Richmond. Duval's land lay east and north of Brook Road. Major Duval was a Richmond attorney who served as mayor of the city (1804) and later as a delegate in the General Assembly representing the city. Patrick Coutts (d. ante 1795) was a merchant in the city whose property joined Duval's.

In 1813 William Mitchell laid out his 102 acres in the grid that is identifiable today as the historic corporation of Barton Heights. Already Barton, Lamb and Monteiro Avenues drive north, although their names originally honored

species of trees rather than land speculators: Pine Street, Oak and Poplar. The cross streets were numbered in the Henrico survey of 1813. First Street is today's Wellford or School Street, Second is Minor Street and Poe Street was Third Street. The later site of James H. Barton's mansion house on Monteiro at Vale can be discerned in the shift of the lot line of lots 38&44 in Mitchell's survey. Mitchell's Springs, which would become the source of Barton Heights water supply nearly a century later, was a well-known gathering spot in the years between Mitchell's failure and Barton's success.

Bacon Quarter Branch ravine, however proved to be too great a geographical barrier to the hopes of Mitchell. Further, the development of "Postletown" immediately to the south (so-called from the streets: St Peter, St Paul, St John and St James, all intersecting Charity Street) set a community of free black artisans and contractors between the social center of the city and the calculations of land speculators.

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## James H. Barton and the Speculative Suburb

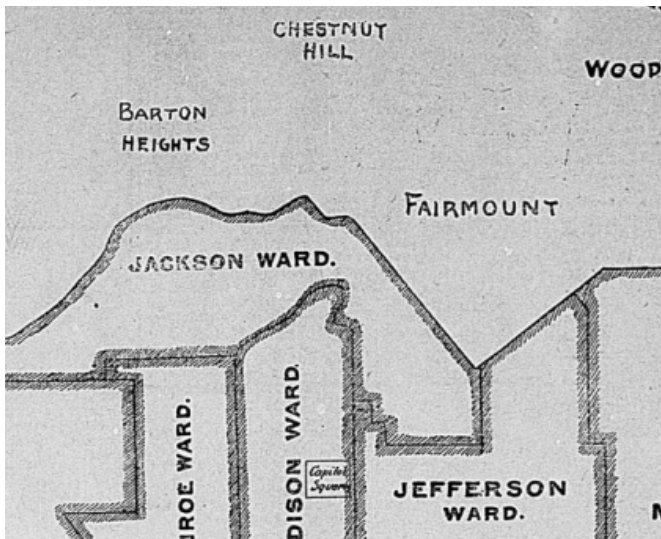
Born in 1837 in Pennsylvania, James H. Barton arrived in Arkansas after the Civil War with the Union troops. He had been secretary to Powell Clayton who was a Brigadier General in the Union Army and later Governor of his adopted state and its U.S. senator. Barton was enterprising and soon became a co-owner of a Little Rock newspaper, the Republican.

By the time he came to Richmond in 1889 his immediate past experience had been in land development in Little Rock and Memphis, Tennessee. According to reports he had developed "hundreds" of new houses in the two cities. Barton purchased twenty acres north of Duval's Addition, an impressive height at the conjunction of two ravines. His notion was to present a wholesome site to a newly rising class of clerks and professional people, offering as inducements easy terms on the land and buildings, what might be called renting to own: "Parties wishing a house at once can select their lots, make a reasonable cash payment, have a house erected, and when it is completed can make small monthly payments for all the unpaid money due for the house and lots. Lots are for sale at \$15 a front foot, upon a payment of \$25 cash and \$5 a month, with 6 percent interest."

In addition he promoted the construction of a viaduct across Bacon Quarter Branch, connecting the Heights to First Street and providing easy access to the center city. By 1894 a streetcar line (operated by the Richmond Railway and Electric Company) was ferrying his new landowners to and from the new suburb, technology unheard of in 1889. Cars first ran along Monteiro Avenue to Poe and west to a terminal (a prominent cedar tree) at North Avenue and Kersting Street (later Cedar Tree and still later Graham).

In time, service expanded to accommodate growth of the neighborhood and cars ran to Brookland Park Boulevard, Chamberlayne Avenue and eventually out to Lakeside. This new mode of transportation continued to spur growth beyond Barton Heights. Barton was a tireless promoter, taking advantage of the Letters to the Editor columns to pitch growth in Richmond. Barton was so successful that in less than six years (1896) Barton Heights had been incorporated a town in Henrico County.

*1901 Richmond Dispatch map indicating Henrico towns outside of Richmond (including [Chestnut Hill](#) and [Fairmount](#))*



James H. Barton made his own home in the development and his frame house, “Corner Minor,” figured prominently in the brochures and pamphlets that advertised the neighborhood throughout the town’s first two decades. W. P. Veitch, a granolithic paving contractor, was the owner of Barton’s mansion on Monteiro throughout the 1900s and 1910s, after which the property became a sanitarium. Still standing at the intersection of Monteiro and Vale, the now stuccoed house sits in the same large park that housed the town’s water supply at Mitchell’s Springs. Unfortunately he was less effective as a bookkeeper and fled the city under cover of darkness to avoid his creditors when bad practices and a depressed economy disgraced this “genial” newcomer that same year. In later years the judgment on him was not so harsh, his failures attributed to “fickle fate.”

*James H. Barton’ Corner Minor*



A 1906 brochure promoting the virtues of this early suburb includes this glowing description:

Barton Heights is a model residence town. It has no saloons, no slaughter houses, no manufactories, no dirt-breeding or disease-breeding nuisances of any sort.... Its citizens are interested in a variety of important enterprises, but these are conducted in the main in the big city to which the town is immediately joined, and from whose noise and heat and dust and turmoil these toilers gladly escape to the quiet, peaceful and beautiful homes they have built or bought on the “Heights”.

Reorganized, the town continued to grow and in 1907 Henrico County ceded the lands to the town north of the original development, bounded by Roberts on the south and Graham Road on the north. Fendall still provided the western limit and the lot lines behind Lamb Street were the eastern boundary.

*2000 Barton Avenue*



Other citizens of the new town included a number of Barton's early associates. In 1907, H. Lee Lorraine, president of the Brookland Railway & Improvement Company (which leased track to the streetcar companies) lived at 400 Barton Avenue. His son H. Lee Lorraine Jr. lived at 912 (now 2308) Barton Avenue. He is listed as a clerk with the American Locomotive Company. The Raglands were a family of contractors and W.Lauman Ragland, sometime mayor of the town, was the principal builder for Barton. He lived at 500 (now 2000) Barton Avenue at the corner of Poe Street, and the family firm's engineer Beaufort S. Ragland was living there in 1950. John E. Rose, a plumbing and steam fittings' contractor and mayor of the town in 1906, lived at 702 (2202) Barton Avenue. Ignatius Bluford, proprietor of a new and used machinery concern lived at 2000 (500) Monteiro Avenue, which is sited prominently at the corner of Poe Street. Thomas W. Gardner, an attorney with Gardner & Lightfoot lived at the corner of Lamb and Graham (then Kersting).

*2000 Monteiro Avenue*



Members of the Barton Heights Baptist Church were among the most prominent of the neighborhood. The Baptists moved to the corner of Virginia (Rose) and Wickham in 1892, to a building designed by Barton's building superintendent John H. Rogers, also a member of the congregation. The Rev. Robert Healy Pitt was pastor of the Barton Heights Baptist Church from 1892

to 1897. He lived at 2118 (718) Lamb Avenue into the 1930s while he was editor of *The Religious Herald*, the principal Baptist publication in the state. An outspoken critic of attempts to outlaw the teaching of evolution in public schools, he was credited with defeating such legislation before the Virginia General Assembly”.

*2020 Barton Avenue*



Other members included Olivia (Mrs. S.A.) Hazelgrove whose house at 610 (2020) Barton Avenue continued as the residence of her son, L. Conway Hazelgrove, a lawyer, in 1940. Jesse H. Binford, later superintendent of schools for the city lived at 2114 (714) North Avenue, before moving across Brookland Park Boulevard in 1922 to 3031 Noble Avenue”. William M. Luck sometime treasurer of the church lived at 2201 (801) North Avenue. H. Lee Lorraine, already mentioned as president of the Brookland Railway & Improvement Company, was a congregant, as were Frank B. Traylor, who owned lands north of town (later part of the Norwood subdivision in Brookland Park) and George Knox Crutchfield, a miller who lived at 2107 Lamb.

*Detail from 1923 City of Richmond Public Works map illustrating “location of colored population”*



Throughout the first half of the century, the neighborhood was a middle-class white community, enforced by rental covenants and property values. The proximity however, of Postletown to the south (St James Street becomes North Avenue; St John, Rose Ave; and St Peter is today Miller Ave) influenced a steady pressure from African-American populations to look for housing in the district. As early as 1906, the Barton Heights Grammar School at 410 (1800) Miller Avenue near School Street, just outside the corporation lines of the town, was designated “colored.” In later years the name was changed to Valley View

School. The school was closed by 1940.

*North Richmond Journal (September 1925)*



The Barton Heights Public School (1906), which Richmond architect Albert Huntt designed, is also emblematic of the compositional change in the neighborhood. Located on the north side of Wickham Avenue between Miller and Greenwood on the site of Confederate fortifications, it was renamed George Thorpe School in 1922, after an early colonist. Later (1950) it was designated the Albert V. Norrell Elementary School to honor a Richmond educator of African-American background, when the school became a black school in response to the changing complexion of the neighborhood. By that date (1950) most residents south of Roberts Street were African-American. Today a modern annex to the Norrell School occupies the site on Wickham Avenue, and a new school has been erected on Fendall Avenue.

*Aerial view of Barton Heights (1953)*



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## Architectural Analysis

Large Queen Anne style homes have dominated the neighborhood since its earliest years, though Colonial Revival style houses became increasingly popular as the neighborhood reached maturity in the 1920s. Several Colonial Revival style apartment buildings are found in the district, with clusters on

Monteiro Street near the Viaduct, and on Wellford and Minor Streets.

*Apartment buildings along Monteiro Street*



The few commercial buildings in the Barton Heights Historic District are small-scale masonry buildings found on North Avenue and on Roberts Street at North. The neighborhood's churches and schools were demolished and replaced in the 1920s and 30s with larger masonry structures in the Battery Park and Brookland Park neighborhoods.

The town enjoyed fresh water from wells and a reservoir located at "Corner Minor," originally James Barton's estate. The original well, known as Mitchell's Spring, was established as a local gathering place prior to the development of Barton Heights. The first Barton Heights fire department, now demolished, shared space with other town offices at 2215 Lamb Avenue. The town had electrical service from its inception. A box-like, brick 1920s transformer building remains on Lamb at Fells Street.

*Transformer Building*



Barton Heights' primary streets, Barton, Lamb, Rose and Miller, named for prominent figures in the neighborhood's early development, reinforce its north-south axis. That axis is most powerfully asserted by North Avenue, a roadway shared with Richmond's first electric streetcar. In the southern part of the historic district some houses and apartment buildings front on the shorter east-west oriented streets such as Poe, Wellford, and Minor Streets. In Barton Heights most roadways are lined with mature trees, and a grass strip buffers concrete sidewalks from automobile traffic. Alleyways bisecting neighborhood blocks provide access to one-story frame garages and service sheds.



Though most of district's earliest houses are Queen Anne in style, a few examples of Italianate and Late Victorian houses remain.

Later buildings tend to be either large-scale Colonial Revival houses, bungalows, or American Foursquares, whose porch columns, balustrades and window types reflect the variety of styles and motifs popular in the first quarter of the twentieth-century. Although there are several brick buildings in the district, the vast majority of structures are frame with wood siding or coarse-surfaced gunnite. Gunnite is a cementitious finish frequently applied to exterior walls of American Foursquare houses.

#### *Queen Anne (1890s-1920s)*

As initially developed, the streets of Barton Heights were lined with wood frame houses with complex roof forms, angled bays, and wrap-around porches with turrets, spindle friezes and neoclassical columns.

Outstanding examples of the Queen Anne style can be found on each of the neighborhood's major streets, with the greatest concentration on Monteiro, Barton, and Lamb Avenues. The Hazelgrove House at 2020 Barton Avenue is among the best-preserved examples of this style. It is a large hipped-roof single-family dwelling whose salient features include a three-story hexagonal tower and a turreted wrap-around porch with spindle frieze, and turned columns and balusters. Typical of the picturesque Queen Anne style the house presents asymmetrical massing with a variety of window sizes, material textures and colors. Polychrome floral designs are centered on the slate roofs.

"Corner Minor" (at 2112 Monteiro) and the Bluford house (at 2000 Monteiro) may be the most prominent houses in the neighborhood. Both are frame structures, parged with stucco, and, like the Hazelgrove house, they have towers, turrets, and multi-sided bays. "Corner Minor," the only neighborhood dwelling to boast ornamental-block entry posts and a porte cochere, was built on the neighborhood's largest lot for the original developer, James H. Barton.

#### *2118 Lamb Avenue*



The Pitt House (at 2118 Lamb Avenue) represents a large, but less flamboyant, Queen Anne style house. This house is distinguished by the symmetrical massing of its facade and by the arched and recessed third-story porch. 2210 Barton Avenue and 201 Poe Street are Queen Anne style houses whose two-story porches feature distinctive friezes and balustrades.

#### *2210 Barton Avenue*



*201 Poe Street*



*Late Victorian 1890s-1900s*

The Late Victorian style buildings in Barton Heights are typically wood frame, detached, single family houses with steep pitched gable roofs covered with standing-seam metal. In contrast to Barton Heights' Queen Anne style houses, these are more vertically oriented, with less exuberant decoration. Their one-story porches span the facade rather than wrapping around one or two sides. Some have a false mansard roof on the facade only. In Barton Heights two rows of Late Victorian style houses are combined with a few isolated examples. A group of small-scale, L-shaped, circa 1890 Late Victorian houses is found in the 1600 block of Sewell Street.

The circa 1900 houses at 203, 205, 207, and 209 Wellford feature false mansard roofs with floral designs in polychrome slate. The roof cornices have molded metal cornices. The one-story hipped porch roofs once had spindle friezes and sawn brackets; these elements remain intact at 209 Wellford.

*Italianate (1890s)*

The Italianate style dominated Richmond's urban architecture in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, although this style is not well represented in Barton Heights Houses. Typical Italianate houses tended to have a vertical emphasis with a parapeted facade shallow-pitched shed roofs, bracketed cornices, and a paneled frieze. The two examples of Barton Heights' Italianate buildings at 1613 Monteiro and at 1602 Sewell are small-scale framehouses near the historic district's southern edge. Nearly identical in appearance, both are shed-roofed two-story houses sided in weatherboard, with a one-story,

three-bay front porch and a traditional Italianate cornice and frieze.

*1613 Monteiro*



*Colonial Revival (1900s-1950s)*

Houses of simpler massing and generic details, recalling American Colonial architecture are also prevalent in Barton Heights, as in all of suburban Richmond. Typically those in Barton Heights are weatherboarded, rendered in stucco, or surfaced with gunnite. Several prominent examples are constructed in brick or molded concrete block. In Barton Heights the Colonial Revival style is expressed in rectangular massing, simple molded casings, box cornices, and symmetrical window openings. Most of the roofs are hipped with cross gables, and are less complex than the Queen Anne style houses. The more high-style Colonial Revival examples have pedimented doors or entryways, dentils or modillions, and patterned upper window sashes.

Prominently sited at the Dove Street end of the Barton Avenue axis, 2009 Lamb Avenue (ca. 1920s) is a massive, hip-roofed house with a one-story wrap-around porch. Alternating courses of smooth and rough-faced ornamental cast block add visual interest, as do the red-brown tones of the sills and lintels.

*2009 Lamb Avenue*



Barton Heights commercial buildings at 2208 North Avenue and at 3 E. Roberts Street are also brick structures in the Colonial Revival style. 2208 North Avenue was originally constructed for Barney and Louis Briel, long time neighborhood grocers whose Colonial Revival house still stands in the Battery Park Historic District. Like the commercial building at 3 E. Roberts, the Briels' grocery store presents a simple storefront with transoms and box cornices at

the storefront and the roof. Both examples have apartments on the second floor.

More than thirty examples of the Bungalow style are found in the Barton Heights Historic District. They represent builder-designed houses constructed as the neighborhood attained full build-out. Most are American Foursquare houses surfaced with stucco or gunnite. These Bungalow style houses are wood frame with hipped roofs and raised, one-story, two-bay front porches with prominent piers. The roof rafters are often exposed within deep eaves, as in the examples at 2111 and 2113 Barton Avenue, and the roof is further accentuated with a centered dormer. The gunnite-surfaced houses at 1604 and 1606 Monteiro Avenue are very good examples of the Bungalow style interpreted in an American Foursquare type house. As is typical throughout the district this pair of very similar houses incorporates subtle differentiation. 1604 has terra cotta tile roofing while 1606 has a slate roof. The center porch pier at 1604 is truncated and topped with a planter while the center porch pier at 1606 is complete. Both houses feature paired double-hung wood windows, which are typical in American Foursquares.

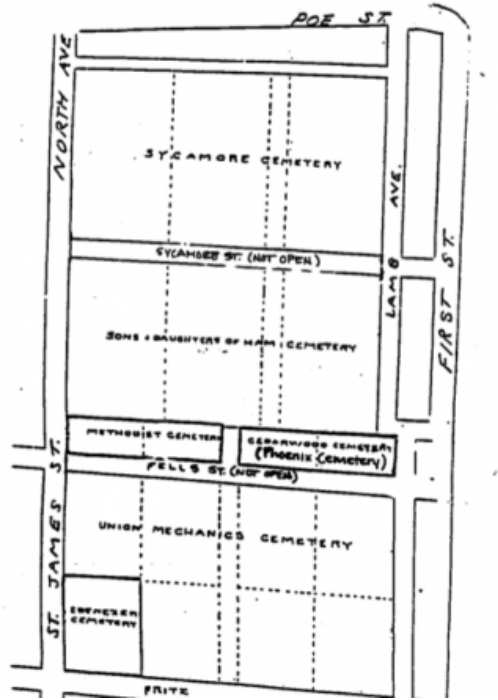
The ca. 1910s duplex at 2409 North Avenue is the largest scale Bungalow style building in the historic district. It is set back from street. It has a massive, slate, hipped roof, exposed rafters and deep eaves. The symmetrical massing of this stuccoed house features one-story entry porches on each end which frame the two-story projecting center bays. The first floor windows are paired within recessed, blind arches.

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## Barton Heights Cemeteries

The Barton Heights Cemeteries in Richmond, Virginia are composed of six contiguous and originally separate burial grounds that appear today as one large cemetery. Although the boundary markers that once delineated the burial grounds have disappeared, the individual cemeteries were originally known as Cedarwood (formerly Phoenix Cemetery), Union Mechanics (formerly Union Burial Ground), Methodist, Sycamore, Ebenezer, and Sons and Daughters of Ham. The cemeteries were established between ca. 1815 and ca. 1865. Black churches, fraternal orders, and benevolent organizations were plot owners and their names and insignias are visible on some of the headstones. The cemeteries contain the graves of a number of Richmond's prominent African Americans, including ministers, doctors, barbers, city councilmen, tradesmen, craftsmen, undertakers, and their families. Many of the records of the Barton Heights Cemeteries have been lost or destroyed and today, the cemeteries themselves are no longer in use. They are owned and maintained by the Cemeteries Division of the City of Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

*Map of the Barton Heights Cemeteries*



As early as 1814, black Richmonders began to be concerned about the lack of places for burying their dead. By 1816, the City had established a public burying ground with “one acre for the free people of color, and one for the slaves in the City. ...contiguous to the Poor-House.” In January of 1815, the Burying Ground Society of the Free People of Color of the City of Richmond was established and purchased several lots for a cemetery on Academy Hill in Duval’s Addition, just outside the City in Henrico County. This society and similar organizations established later acquired land for a burial ground and sold cemetery plots to individual subscribers who paid from \$5 to \$20. The cemetery became known as the Phoenix Burying Ground.

At least one piece of property for that cemetery was acquired from Christopher McPherson. who also owned a lot in the cemetery. McPherson was born a slave in Louisa County. Having received a few years of formal education, he became a clerk and an accountant in Fluvanna County for David Ross, a prominent man of commerce in late 18th-century Virginia. Most of the lot owners in the cemetery belonged to the free black elite of Richmond, including a number of free black barbers whose professions brought them into close and regular association with white society.

In the late 1840s, a second burying ground – the Union Burial Ground – was established on Academy Hill by the trustees of the Union Burial Ground Society. Land bought from free blacks Margaret and Peter Roper was laid off and numbered in sections of 14’ by 14’. Any free person could purchase a section for the cost of \$10. Members of the society held a certificate and interest of \$50.00 in the bank for upkeep and repair of the graves.

Included among Union’s membership of twenty was Gilbert Hunt, a free black blacksmith who had rescued a dozen or more patrons when the Richmond Theater caught fire in December of 1811. The trustees laid out a constitution for the burial society proclaiming the members’ “deep interest in the welfare of our race and the importance of advancing in morality” and their belief that “the formation of a society for the interment of the dead will exert its due weight of influence.” The stones in the oldest section of the Union Burial Ground suggest

that the individuals buried there represent a broader range of economic classes than do the early markers in the Phoenix Burying Ground.

Only a few monuments survive in these early burial grounds. The 1850s monument to barber John E. Ferguson (d. 1859 at age 49) and his wife Harriet (d. 1854 at age 42) who were buried in the Phoenix Burying Ground contains this inscription for Harriet Ferguson: "None knew her but loved her."

*Southwest across Union Mechanics Cemetery*



Ebenezer Cemetery was established before the Civil War near the Union Burial Ground. Land was purchased ca. 1858 for a burying ground for the membership at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Little is known about the graves in Ebenezer Cemetery and today many of the stones have fallen or have sunk from view.

Markers in Ebenezer Cemetery include an obelisk erected for Rebecca Bowser, wife of Lemuel Bowser. The monument features a lamb within an oval design. Amanda Cousins (1810- 1860), a free black seamstress in antebellum Richmond, is another of those buried in Ebenezer. Explorations in 1988 in Ebenezer Cemetery revealed stones erected by white Richmonders for their slaves.

Another burial ground, the Methodist Cemetery, was located just north of the Union Burial Ground. While the Methodist Cemetery is shown on maps, no burial records for this cemetery have been found. The cemetery contains a headstone for Richard Forrester (1823- 1891), one of the first black members of the city's Common Council, serving for eleven years between 1871 and 1882. Forrester was a dairy farmer and was the first of five generations of Forresters in Richmond, a well known and influential family. Forester served on the Richmond school board and was instrumental in hiring black teachers and improving black schools.

In 1864, the Union Burial Ground Society bought four contiguous lots, more than doubling the size of the cemetery. During Reconstruction, the burial ground societies were reorganized to deal with the disorder. The members of the Burying Ground Society of the Free People of Color of the City of Richmond wanted to improve the Phoenix Burying Ground and to "devise ways and means to make it a fitting 'city of the dead.'" Reorganization also resulted in a new name, Cedarwood. The Richmond Dispatch approved, calling it "a very appropriate and pretty name."

Cedarwood Cemetery is the burial place of black minister, Rev. Richard Wells (1870- 1901). Also buried in Cedarwood Cemetery are Gilbert Hunt, hero in the 1811 Richmond Theater fire, and Joseph E. Farrar (1830-1892), who served on the Richmond Common Council during Reconstruction. A contractor, Farrar was president of the Virginia Home Building Fund & Loan

Association in 1877.

The Union Burial Ground Society was also reorganized during Reconstruction and its cemetery was renamed the Mechanics Cemetery. On maps of the time, the cemetery is designated as the Union Mechanics Cemetery. Trustees for Union Mechanics included Benjamin Harris and John H. Adarns. Union Mechanics Cemetery contains an impressive monument to Benjamin Harris (1818-1904) and his wife, Eliza. Other notables owning plots in the Union Mechanics Cemetery included Rev. R. J. Bass, Rev. Thomas H. Briggs, Rev. William Gray, and Rev. Martin Jenkins.

One of the best known of those interred at Union Mechanics was Rev. John Jasper, the dynamic black minister of Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in Jackson Ward. Jasper became nationally known for his sermon, "The Sun Do Move" in which he proposed that the earth was flat and stationary. At his funeral in 1901 thousands were in attendance and numerous ministers spoke of his life and faith. Jasper's remains were later reinterred at Woodland Cemetery, as were the remains of others originally buried in the Barton Heights Cemeteries. The headstone for James H. Bowser (1850- 1881) is located in Union Mechanics Cemetery. Bowser was one of the 1st black teachers employed in Richmond's public schools.

The cemetery of the Sons and Daughters of Ham, a black fraternal organization, was established north of Union Mechanics and Cedarwood cemeteries on Academy Hill. While it is not known when the cemetery was established, it was probably started after emancipation. Black fraternal, social and labor organizations combined ritual organization, community activism, and death benefits—a basic form of insurance. These fraternal groups were the forerunners of the national black organizations that were later based in Richmond, including the Independent Order of Saint Luke, organized by Maggie Lena Walker, and the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers, begun by William Washington Browne. These organizations and others like them offered facilities and services to their members such as banks, stores, publications and insurance.

*Captain Robert Austin Paul (1846-1902)*



Monuments at opposite ends of the Sons and Daughters of Ham Cemetery commemorate the lives of two Richmonders, Captain Robert Austin Paul and Daniel Webster Davis. Robert Austin Paul (1846-1902) was born to slave parents in Nelson County, Virginia in 1846. He mastered reading and writing and became involved in historical and legal work. Paul, like other developing black leaders, gained knowledge through participating in politics. His

presentations to local literary and scientific organizations demonstrated his grasp of politics and his ability as a public speaker. Paul entered politics in 1874 as a Republican candidate for Congress, but was defeated by former governor Gilbert C. Walker.

In the late 19th century, another cemetery was established on Academy Hill. It was known as Union Sycamore Cemetery or, simply, Sycamore Cemetery. It lay north of the earlier burial grounds and bordered the new white suburb of Barton Heights. There is little known about the origins of Sycamore Cemetery, but maps showing the names of lot owners include a number of Members of the city's common council including John H. Adams, Jr. (1849-1934), Josiah Crump (1838-1890), and Edinboro Archer. Archer was a councilman in the mid-1880s and worked as a wheelwright. The headstone of James W. Washington (1839-1884) is located in Sycamore Cemetery. Washington, a tobacco worker, was a corporal in the U.S. Colored Troops Battery B, 2nd Regiment Light Artillery

During the late 1880s "Negro Memorial Day" became a community-wide ritual centered on the cemeteries. Celebrated on April 3, the day was commemorated as the day when freedom came with the fall of Richmond to Union forces. Processions of church congregations, club members, youth groups, brass bands, and citizens made their way to the cemeteries to decorate the graves and to listen to speeches by local ministers.

In 1899 the cemeteries faced a legal challenge to their continued operation from the adjacent white former suburb, now town, of Barton Heights. Charges were lodged that old graves in the cemeteries were being reopened for new burials. The town attorney considered the cemeteries a public nuisance and a threat to public health and sought to have them closed. In reaction, the black community attempted to consolidate operation of the cemeteries by forming a Colored Burial Association, but the effort failed. The Virginia General Assembly gave the Town of Barton Heights authority to regulate activities in the cemeteries, even though they lay outside the town limits. In 1900 the Town passed an ordinance restricting burials in the cemeteries and outlining new regulations for burials, funerals and required record keeping. The cemeteries remained open and operated under the new rules.

In the early 1900s conditions at the Barton Heights Cemeteries declined. Many families, as a tribute to loved ones buried there, removed their remains to better-kept cemeteries. Woodland Cemetery, just to the east of the Barton Heights Cemeteries, opened in 1917. In 1918, the members of Sixth Mount Zion Church removed the remains of Rev. John Jasper from Union Mechanics Cemetery to Woodland Cemetery. In the same year, the body of William Washington Browne was also removed to Woodland Cemetery.

In 1934, the City of Richmond acquired the Barton Heights Cemeteries and in the next several years. Burials at the Barton Heights Cemeteries continued until the 1970s.

While closed and largely forgotten today, the Barton Heights Cemeteries are the tangible reminders of the work of the African American fraternal and benevolent organizations that established the cemeteries and made possible the burials in them of many prominent and working class black citizens.

*Barton Heights Cemeteries*

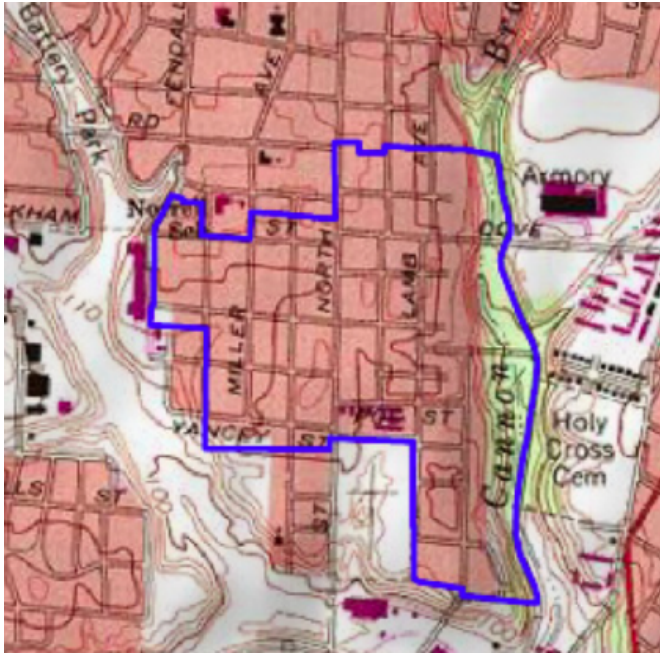




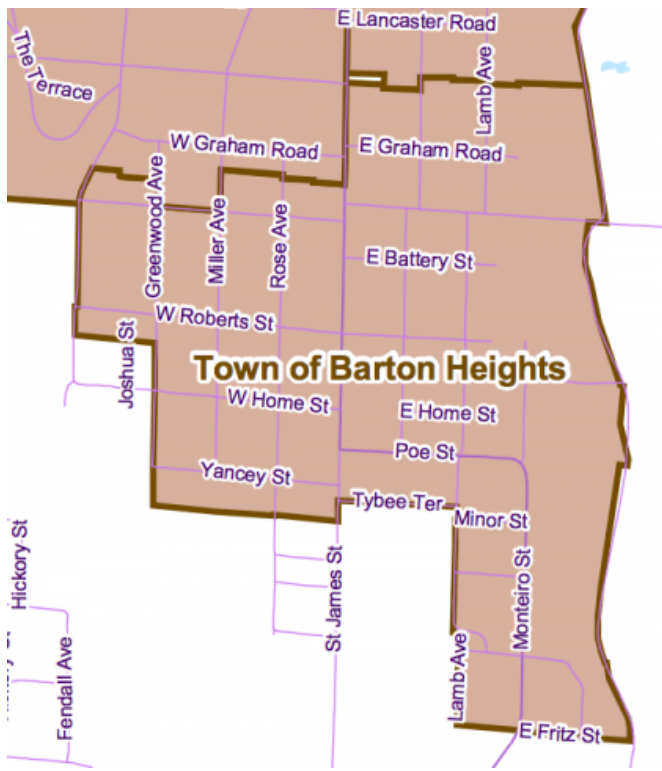
[top]

## Maps of Barton Heights

Barton Heights Historic District (DHR)



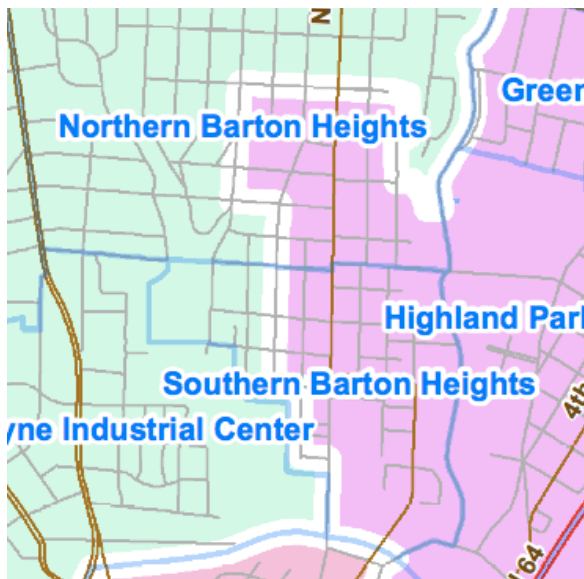
Barton Heights Historic District (via City of Richmond)



Barton Heights (1994 via City of Richmond's [Revitalization Plan for Southern Barton Heights](#))



Richmond neighborhoods ([\[via\]](#))



[top]

## Credit and Sources

The text above is almost entirely sourced from the [the registration forms from both the Barton Heights application to the National Register of Historic Places \(PDF\)](#) and the [application for Barton Heights Cemeteries](#) . The original document for the Town of Barton Heights, dated 2000/2003, was put together by Kim Chen, Mary Sadler, Peter Witt, and Jean McRae, and includes much more more than is shown here. The original document for the Barton Heights Cemeteries, dated 2000, was put together by Denise Lester and DHR staff, and also includes much more more than is shown here. Check out the original forms to learn more or [read up on any of the other sites in Richmond that are listed on the National Register](#).

All color photos are by John Murden. The black&white photo from the cemetery is from the [Department of Historic resources listing for the Barton Heights Cemetery](#).

*Previous neighborhood profiles in the series:*

- [The Oakwood-Chimborazo Historic District](#)
- [The Fairmount Historic District](#)
- [The Church Hill North Historic District](#)
- [The Highland Park Plaza Historic District](#)
- [A history of the Chestnut Hill/Plateau Historic District](#)
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*Fells Street 2005 (demolished)*



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Posted in [Etc](#)

Tagged [Barton Heights](#), [DHR](#), [Monteiro Street](#)

February 20, 2010 at 2:08 pm By [john m](#)

4

#### 4 COMMENTS

#1 • [Kami](#) • September 12, 2010 at 6:57 pm

The revitalization plan is illegible. Would you please post a clearer version? Thank you.

#2 • [john m](#) • September 12, 2010 at 8:12 pm

That's the best that I've got, [it's directly from the city](#).

#3 • [Eileen](#) • July 18, 2011 at 10:49 pm

Thank you for the very interesting and informative site.

#4 • [Joan Kalyan Curtis](#) • July 16, 2012 at 9:39 pm

Well done, you. Love this neighborhood and you've really told its story. Fabulous you know of Christopher McPherson, what a tale that is.

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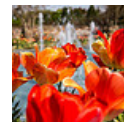
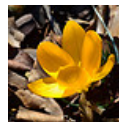
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#### FLICKR

#### VIEW



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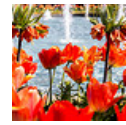
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We are in beta and ironing things out. [Let us know](#) if you have trouble.