

Riverside Cemetery ^[1]

Riverside Cemetery

by Zoe Rhine, 2006



Riverside Cemetery. Photos courtesy of North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Public Library, Asheville, North Carolina and City Development, Asheville via NPS.

^[2][Riverside Cemetery](#) ^[2], on rolling, tree-covered grounds in the historic [Montford District](#) ^[3] of [Asheville](#) ^[4], was established in 1885 by the Asheville Cemetery Company. The property overlooks the [French Broad River](#) ^[5] and contains 87 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds on five terraced levels with more than three miles of roads. The natural beauty of ancient and massive oaks, poplars, evergreens, dogwoods, mimosas, azaleas, rhododendrons, and laurels complement unusual monuments and mausoleums.

Riverside Cemetery contains the graves of many people important to the history of Asheville and western North Carolina,



(click to view larger) Grave of William Sydney Porter (O. Henry), b.1862, d.1910. Grave is in Riverside Cemetery, Asheville, NC. Photo taken 28 August 1954 by Dorothy Phillips. From the General Negative Collection, North Carolina State Archives, call #:

as well as other North Carolina notables. [N_54_8_4](#).

^[6]Some prominent North Carolinians buried there include authors [Thomas Wolfe](#) ^[7] and [William Sydney Porter](#) ^[8] (O. Henry); Confederate generals [Robert Brank Vance](#) ^[9] and [Thomas L. Clingman](#) ^[10]; North Carolina governors [Zebulon B. Vance](#) ^[11] and [Locke Craig](#) ^[12]; U.S. senator [Jeter C. Pritchard](#) ^[13]; [George T. Winston](#) ^[14], an educator and the president of the [University of North Carolina](#) ^[15]; [Lillian Exum Clement Stafford](#) ^[16], the first woman to serve in the North Carolina legislature; diplomat [Richmond Pearson](#) ^[17]; English-born botanist [John Lyon](#) ^[18]; architect [Richard Sharp Smith](#) ^[19]; and Japanese-born photographer [George Masa](#) ^[20]. Unique burial plots include the Beth Ha-Tephila Jewish cemetery, a plot for 18 German seamen who died while interned as aliens during [World War I](#) ^[21], a plot with more than 175 veterans of World War I and [World War II](#) ^[22] who died while patients in the [Oteen Veterans Administration Hospital](#) ^[23], and a stone monument to the graves of six English stonecutters who worked on the [Biltmore Estate](#) ^[24].

When the cemetery was established, graves were moved from earlier burial grounds, including three church cemeteries on Church Street. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Asheville Cemetery Company was having financial problems. In 1952 the cemetery was taken over by the city of Asheville, and it is still maintained by the [City Parks and Recreation Department](#) ^[25]. There are approximately 13,000 graves, and grave sites remain available. The cemetery is listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) ^[2].

Additional Resources:

Riverside Cemetary, National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/asheville/riv.htm> [2]

Riverside Cemetary, NC Highway Historical Marker P-3: <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=search&k=Markers&sv=P-3> [26]

Thomas Clingman, NC Highway Historical Marker M-4: <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=M-4%20-%20THOMAS%20L.%20CLINGMAN> [27]

Image Credit:

Riverside Cemetery. Photos courtesy of North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Public Library, Asheville, North Carolina and City Development, Asheville via NPS. Available from <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/asheville/riv.htm> [2] (accessed October 12, 2012).

Grave of William Sydney Porter (O. Henry), b.1862, d.1910. Grave is in Riverside Cemetery, Asheville, NC. Photo taken 28 August 1954 by Dorthy Phillips. From the General Negative Collection, North Carolina State Archives, call #: N_54_8_4. Available from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/2989492991/> [28] (accessed October 12, 2012).

Subjects:

[Gilded Age \(1876-1900\)](#) [29]

[Places](#) [30]

Authors:

[Rhine, Zoe](#) [31]

Origin - location:

[Buncombe County](#) [32]

[Asheville](#) [33]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) [34]

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Source URL: <https://www.ncpedia.org/riverside-cemetery>

Links

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