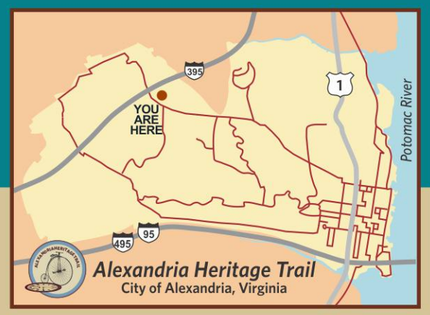
Jackson Cemetery



In 1884, James F. Jackson purchased the largest parcel in "The Fort," a post-Civil War African American community. He paid $300 for his 11.5 acres with the "western slope of a bank of Fort Ward." James and wife Catherine (Katie/Kittie), natives of Fauquier County, lived here over 40 years, making their living by farming, doing laundry, and working as a driver at the Episcopal High School. The Jacksons established a burial ground on the fort's slope (*glacis*). In 1926, speculators began purchasing most of the original Jackson land, which was incorporated later into the Eagle Crest development. The City of Alexandria acquired this land for the park in 1956.

Few names of those buried here are known, and none of the grave markers survived. James Jackson, who died in 1923, is probably buried here, as are other family members. Separate plots could also be purchased in this burial ground. William Carpenter bought a 22-by 30-foot plot; however, it is not known whether the Carpenters are buried here. Elizabeth Henry Douglas recalls that her brothers, Arthur (age 15) and Lee (age 3) Henry, were laid to rest in 1914 and 1915. Mrs. Douglas also remembers the last surviving gravestone with the name "Edna Page," a young girl. Archaeological investigations identified grave locations so new markers could be placed.

Courtesy Dorothy Hall Smith, daughter of Mary Wans(z)er Jackson Hall and David Hall.

By 1920, after 50 years of marriage, only three of James and Katie Jackson's 13 children were still living. Their son, Robert, and wife Mary Wans(z)er Jackson had several children. One of their sons, James Robert Jackson (third from left), and wife, Beatrice (left), are shown at "The Fort" with an unidentified couple prior to his death in 1941. Mary Jackson married David Hall after Robert's death, raised more children, and continued to live in the Jackson house for many years. Louise Jackson Ashby also resided at "The Fort" for decades.

"The disappearance of the Jackson Cemetery grave markers "made our hearts sad, and we never did know what happened to them."

Elizabeth Henry Douglas

Courtesy Dorothy Hall Smith, daughter of Mary Wans(z)er Jackson Hall and David Hall.

Elizabeth Henry Douglas recalls that "Uncle Jim" Jackson (right) dug graves with "Uncle Fred" Rust (center) and "Uncle Simon" Reed (left). Mr. Jackson died in 1923. His death certificate records burial at "Fort Ward Cemetery," which is probably this burial ground.

"The [Jackson] house was well taken care of, and it was really looked at as something special in the neighborhood. It stood out is what I'm trying to say. The house stood out!"

Dorothy Hall Smith, daughter of Mary Wans(z)er Jackson Hall and David Hall.

Courtesy Barbara Ashby Gordon and Donald Rankin.

Louise Jackson Ashby, the daughter of Kittie and James Jackson, married Samuel Ashby who lived nearby with his parents, Frank and Julia, and worked as a farm laborer. By 1898, they had bought land at "The Fort" where they built a home and raised their family. Louise worked as a laundress at home. After living briefly on the Virginia Theological Seminary grounds, the Ashbys returned to "The Fort" where they lived until Samuel's death in 1917. Louise died after 1940. "The Ashby House" became a family home for Samuel and Louise's children, grandchildren, and extended kin.

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