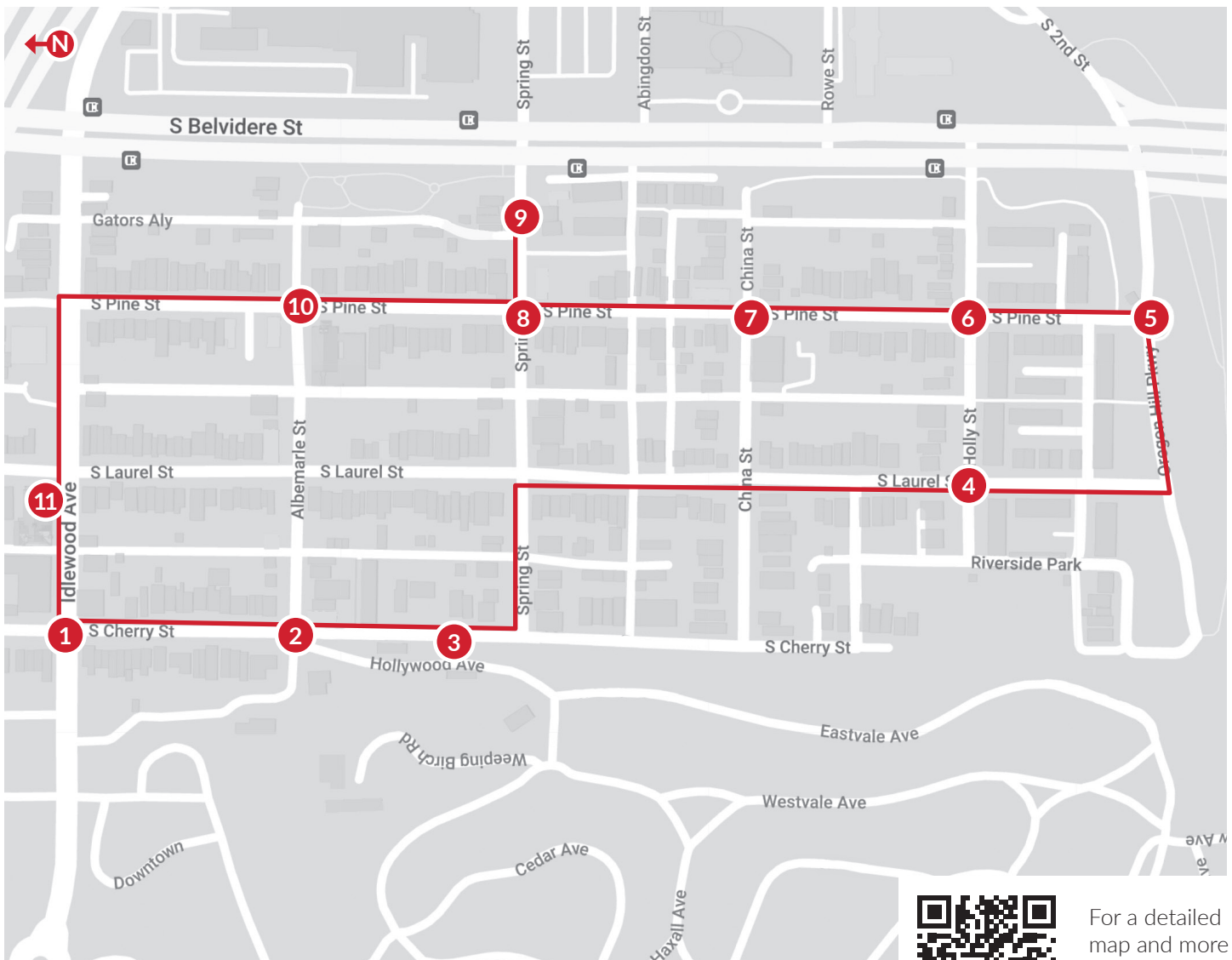
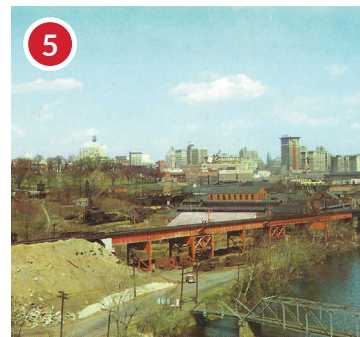
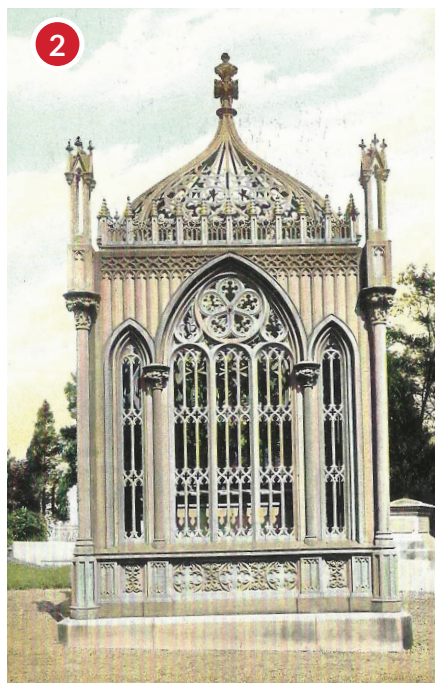
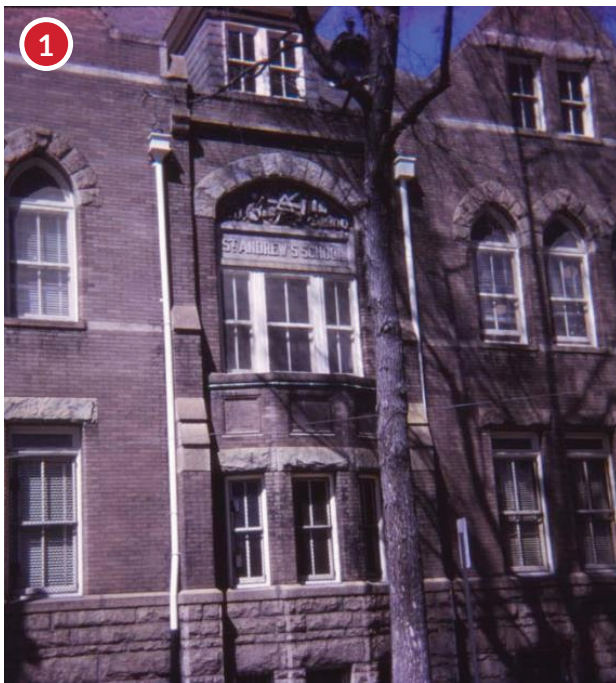


Welcome to Oregon Hill

The Oregon Hill Historic District extends from Cary Street to the James River and from Belvidere Street to Hollywood Cemetery and Linden Street. Oregon Hill's name is said to have originated in the late 1850s when a joke emerged that people who were moving into the area were so far from the center of Richmond that they might as well be moving to Oregon. By the mid-1900s, Oregon Hill was an insular neighborhood of white, blue-collar families and had a reputation as a rough area where outsiders and African-Americans, in particular, weren't welcome.



For a detailed
map and more
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use this
QR code.



From left to right: St. Andrew's School, 1972, Edith Shelton Collection, *The Valentine*; President James Monroe's Tomb, early 1900s postcard, collection of Tre Rockenbach; Richmond Skyline from the Lee Bridge, mid-1900s postcard, collection of Tre Rockenbach; Tredegar Iron Works, 1945, Edith Shelton Collection, *The Valentine*

1 St. Andrew's School

227 S. CHERRY STREET

St. Andrew's School was established in 1894 by Grace Arents. Symbols carved in stone over the school's name on the Idlewood Avenue side show the kinds of subjects that were taught, including sewing, painting, mechanical drawing and reading. Today, the school offers classes K-5.

Grace Arents (1848-1926) was the niece of Lewis Ginter, a wealthy businessman and philanthropist who gave Richmond some of its finest treasures, including the Jefferson Hotel and the Lakeside Wheel Club, which became Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. When Ginter died in 1897, he left most of his fortune to Arents. Like her uncle, Arents never married, and she devoted herself to improving the city. Her efforts on behalf of the neighborhood earned her the nickname "The Angel of Oregon Hill."

2 Hollywood Cemetery

412 S. CHERRY STREET

In the 1800s, as Richmond's population grew, burial space became scarce. In 1847, the Harvie family sold Harvie's Woods to William Haxall and Joshua Fry, who hired landscape architect John

Notman to design a public cemetery. Inspired by the English style, Notman's design emphasized the natural landscape, with hills, winding paths, and lush vegetation. Hollywood Cemetery was dedicated in 1849, named for its abundance of American Holly trees. It was also envisioned as a public green space for city residents. The cemetery is the final resting place of Presidents James Monroe and John Tyler, along with many prominent figures and Confederate leaders. A 90-foot granite pyramid memorializes over 18,000 Confederate soldiers. Hollywood Cemetery remains active, with about 200 burials annually.

3 415 S. Cherry St.

415 S. CHERRY STREET

Although some of the homes in Oregon Hill were built prior to the Civil War, many of them date from around 1880 to the early 1900s. Most of the structures are Italianate in style, made of wood, with flat roofs, deep overhangs, brackets and long, thin windows. Notice the ornamentation on this house at 415 S. Cherry St.

Oregon Hill residents are active in historic preservation efforts. The Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council (OHHIC) was organized in

1973, and has worked to improve the area and establish affordable housing by building new houses on empty lots and rehabilitating existing houses. These efforts have resulted in Oregon Hill being one of the best-preserved 19th-century neighborhoods in Richmond, and one of the best collections of working-class housing in the country.

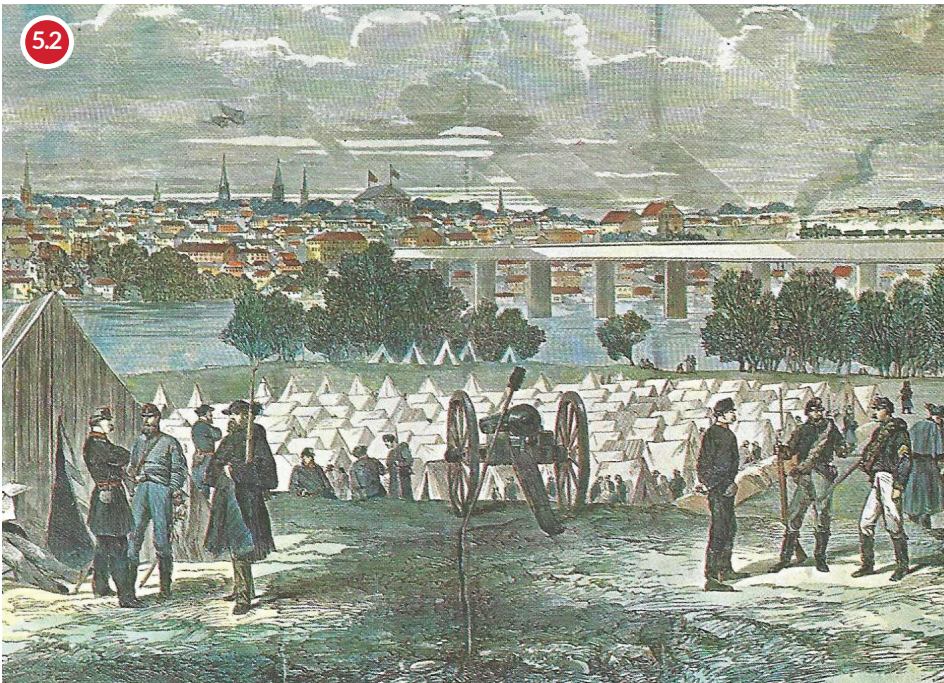
4 Holly Street Playground

819 HOLLY STREET

On your right, you'll see the Holly Street Playground, which is located on land donated by Grace Arents. It's one of the oldest public playgrounds in the city of Richmond.

5 Oregon Hill Overlook

Looking at the James River below, you can see why Richmond is located where it is. When Christopher Newport sailed up the James River in 1607, he encountered a seven-mile fall line – part of which lies below you – in which the river drops 105 feet in elevation. The English ships couldn't get past this part of the river, so they decided to establish an inland tobacco processing center here.



Left to right: Confederate Prison Camp on Belle Isle, 1865 postcard, collection of Tre Rockenbach; Virginia War Memorial ceremony, 1983, The Valentine



5.1 Tredegar Iron Works

Across Belvidere Street to your left, along the river, lies the site of Tredegar Iron Works. The neighborhood of Oregon Hill developed as workers from the Iron Works moved their families closer to work. By 1860, Tredegar was the third-largest iron manufacturer in the U.S., specializing in steam locomotives and rail stock. At the start of the Civil War, half of its 900 workers were enslaved African Americans. Tredegar produced cannons and munitions for the Confederacy and supplied iron plates for the CSS Virginia. After the war, the shift from iron to steel led to its decline, and it operated until the mid-20th century. Today, it houses the American Civil War Museum and the National Park Service's Visitor's Center.

5.2 Belle Isle

Directly across the river you can see Belle Isle, which can be accessed via a footbridge located across from Tredegar Iron Works and suspended beneath the Lee Bridge (Belvidere Street). From 1862-1865, the Confederacy used Belle Isle as a prisoner-of-war camp for Union enlisted men.

The Confederate cannons on the heights above the camp and the powerful James River current made

escape impossible. The prisoners were given only minimal shelter and provisions, leading to the deaths of more than 1,000 Union soldiers from exposure, sickness and starvation.

5.3 Riverside Park

Around 1889, the city acquired a parcel of land for the development of Riverside Park, which forms the southern boundary of Oregon Hill. This was around the same time that the city was establishing other hilltop parks with vistas, such as Libby Hill Park. The octagon-shaped building on your left at the corner of Oregon Hill Parkway and Pine Street dates from around 1900 and was a comfort station.

6 Virginia War Memorial 621 S. BELVIDERE STREET

The Virginia War Memorial stands on land that was originally part of Oregon Hill. The building combines Mid-Century Modern architecture with the look of a Greek temple, and includes sculptor Leo F. Friedlander's, *Memory*, a 22-foot-tall statue of a grieving woman.

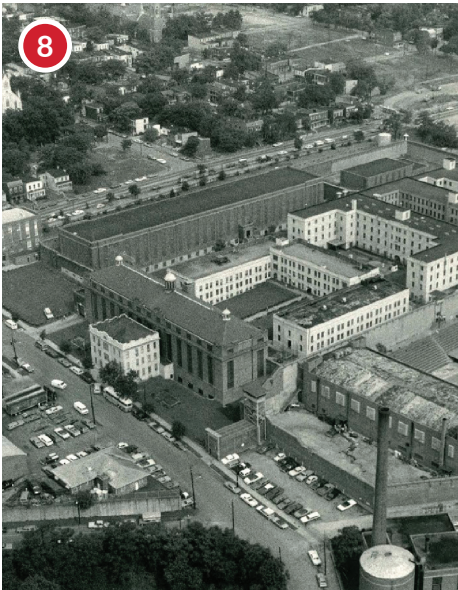
The General Assembly authorized construction of the memorial in 1950, as a way to commemorate the sacrifices of heroic Virginians during World War II. While the memorial was still being

designed, the Korean War broke out, so after the Memorial was completed in 1955, it was dedicated to veterans of both World War II and the Korean War. It now also honors Virginians killed in Vietnam, the Gulf War and 21st-century conflicts.

7 Belvidere 600 S. PINE STREET

In 1673, King Charles II granted a land patent for Richmond to William Byrd I. His son, William Byrd II, established the town in 1737 and named it Richmond, inspired by the view of the James River from Libby Hill, which reminded him of Richmond-upon-Thames in London. Byrd III, in 1755, built a summer house called Belvidere, meaning "Beautiful View," on land near present-day Pine, China, Belvidere, and Spring streets. The house featured a serpentine wall, likely the first of its kind in America. Due to financial troubles, Byrd III sold the property in 1768 through a land lottery. Belvidere later became a boarding house for Tredegar iron workers before it burned down in 1854. Bricks from the house were repurposed in nearby homes.

The school on your left, at 600 S. Pine St., was originally the Grace Arents Public School. It was built in 1911 using



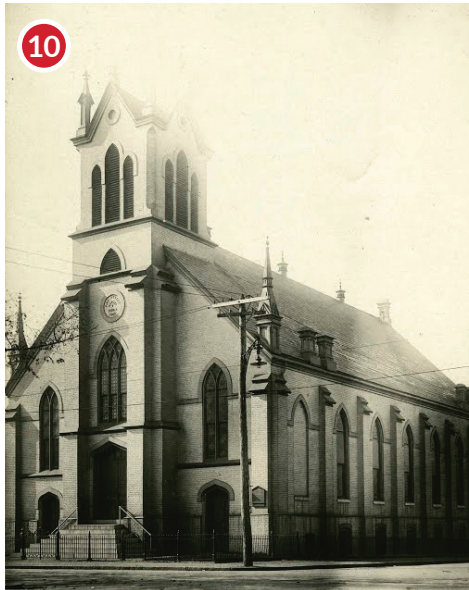
Left to right: Aerial view of Virginia State Penitentiary, Bill Lane, 1974, *The Valentine*; Pine Street Baptist Church, 1918, *The Valentine*

money and land donated by Grace Arents. It's now Open High School, which was established in 1972 as a way to help students learn independence and self-determination by developing their own learning programs and taking both high school and college-credit classes.

8 Virginia State Penitentiary

SPRING STREET AND S. 2ND STREET

If you look slightly to the left across Belvidere Street, you'll see a modern building marked with white criss-cross lines. This is where the Virginia State Penitentiary once stood. In 1796, the General Assembly passed legislation authorizing the construction of a penitentiary and providing details on its design and operation. The penitentiary opened in 1800 with 21 prisoners.



location here is within the serpentine wall that surrounded Belvidere.

10 Pine Street Baptist Church

400 S. PINE STREET

Pine Street Baptist Church, at 400 S. Pine St., is the oldest surviving church building in Oregon Hill, dating to 1886, with additions made in 1925. The church itself was founded in 1855 after members decided that there were so many people traveling from Oregon Hill to worship at Grace Baptist Church in Windsor Farms that they needed their own church.

Across Albemarle Street, the building on the left at 334 S. Pine St. operated as the Pine Street Pharmacy from 1882 until its last proprietor, "Doc" Malone, died in 1956. It then became the Pine Street Confectionery, which featured a soda fountain, pool table and game room and, oddly enough, also sold tools and hardware supplies. In 1998, Michael Gahan moved his Pine Street Barber Shop here. The shop continues to offer full salon services to men, women and children.

Architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe's design was architecturally impressive, but had some serious flaws, including a lack of heat, plumbing, good ventilation and a prison dining area. Latrobe's original structure was torn down in 1928 and replaced with a new prison on the same spot.

Beginning in 1908, all state executions occurred at the Virginia State Penitentiary, using the electric chair. The prison was closed in December 1990 and torn down in 1992.

9 Parsons House

601 SPRING STREET

To your right, this red-brick house was built in 1819 for Samuel Pleasants Parsons (1743-1842), a reform-minded Quaker who was a long-time superintendent of the Virginia State Penitentiary.

The Parsons House is the second-oldest house in Oregon Hill, and its

11 St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

236 S. LAUREL STREET

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, which began in 1873 as a Sunday school mission of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Richmond. The original church building, erected in 1875, was made of wood, but in 1901, it was replaced by this building. It is Gothic Revival in style, and the corner tower is 115 feet high. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Explore Richmond Stories

Richmond's City history museum, the Valentine has been collecting, preserving and interpreting Richmond's 400-year history for over a century. Located in the heart of historic downtown, the Valentine is a place for residents and tourists to discover the diverse stories that tell the broader history of this important region.



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