

The Powhatan Toney Cemetery has not been filled with information to be gained from tombstones. However, it has led into research about a black man who was born just after the Civil War (in 1867) and who died in the late 1930s or early 1940s. His life record shows that he was a fairly responsible man, being a trustee of churches and a member (or officer) of a black honorary society. He obviously had good legal advice in his numerous land transactions, probably as guided by Milton H. Lanier, a notable Huntsville attorney. Yet, he had several circuit court judgments against him, all apparently for debts. Oddly enough, there is no tombstone for Powhatan Toney or his wife in the cemetery that carries his name. Even the one tombstone found in the cemetery was for a name other than Toney. Yet, research has shown that it was indeed for a woman whose maiden name was Toney, so there was probably a close relationship to Powhatan.

While nothing definitive can be shown directly for the burials, other than for Millie (Toney) Horton, it is likely that the cemetery is filled with those who lived in the immediate area around Powhatan Toney, as shown in the census records. In particular, it is likely that many of the members of the Lowe and Spring Hill Methodist Episcopal Churches were buried in the cemetery, since Powhatan was a trustee of those churches. Similar logic would apply to the members of the "Brothers and Sisters of Honor" society. The cemetery could even have been considered more so a church cemetery than a private family cemetery. It is unfortunate that no tombstones were erected, or at least that none remain today, beyond that for Millie Horton. Still, it has been worthwhile to learn of this family headed by a man with an unusual first name. His life left its mark, whether he has a tombstone or not.

Prepared by John P. Rankin, April 6, 2003; revised September 18, 2005