



MARTHA JEFFERSON & LITTLE HIGH

NEIGHBORHOOD WALK

Historical Overview

Once part of a 19,000-acre land grant made to Nicholas Meriwether in 1735, these neighborhoods followed Charlottesville's typical development pattern wherein pre-Revolutionary land grants changed hands several times decreasing in size with each sale until we see the today's typical small residential lots.

"The Farm" and "Locust Grove" residences are the last major remnants of the area's plantation era - both were once part of Meriwether's land grant. Both plantations used enslaved labor to support operations.

These two neighborhoods marked some of the earliest organized residential development in the City. The majority of buildings were constructed between 1893 and 1950 and represent Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, Georgian Revival, Late Victorian, and Bungalow-Craftsman architectural styles.

The area's proximity to downtown Charlottesville made it appealing to affluent White residents. Around 1897, the Locust Grove Investment Company purchased land within today's Martha Jefferson neighborhood to subdivide into lots for residential sales. The deeds created for these parcels included some of the City's earliest racial redlining covenants preventing property sales to African Americans.

The Little High neighborhood developed between E. High St. and the railyard located to the south of E. Market Street. The neighborhood was working class from at least the 1940s into the 1990s. Many residents here worked manual labor jobs: some in the Woolen Mills, some in the clothing factory at IX, and others elsewhere.



1966 Aerial Photograph showing railyard, roundhouse, and turntable with Belmont Bridge to the left



Locust Grove house, completed in 1844



Etching of "The Farm" as depicted in a 1905 issue of the Baltimore Sun

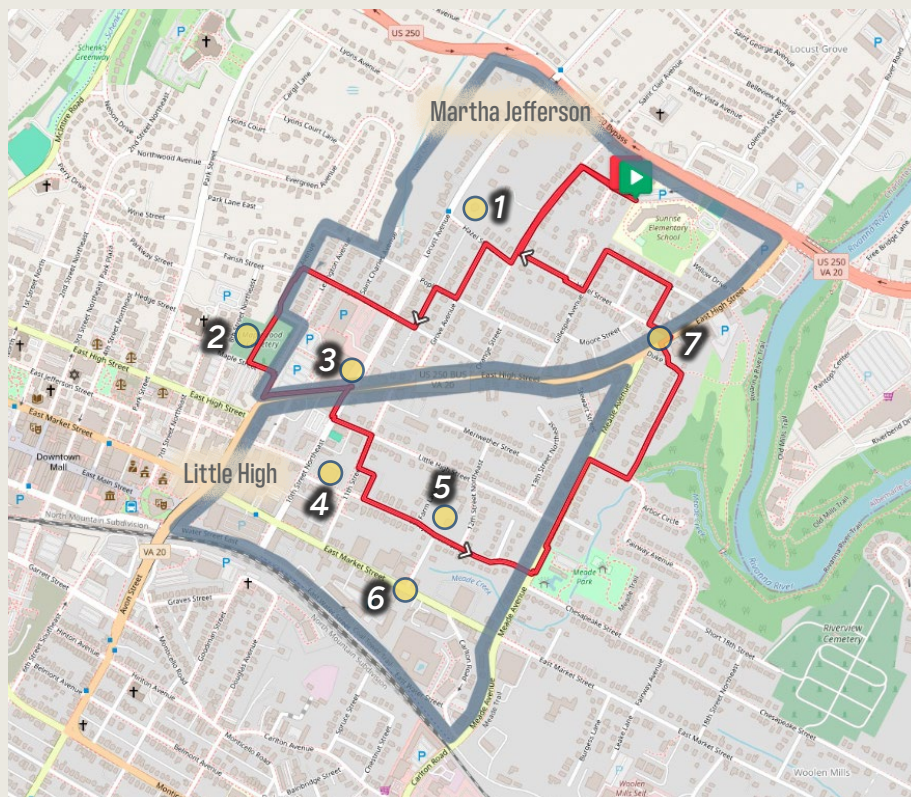


1929 View of the original Martha Jefferson Hospital (now CFA Institute)

- 1735:** The Farm acreage granted to Nicholas Meriwether
- 1827:** John A.G. Davis completes house at The Farm
- 1827:** Maplewood Cemetery opens
- 1837:** George Sinclair purchases Locust Grove parcel
- 1844:** Locust Grove main house completed
- 1863:** Emancipation Proclamation issued
- 1888:** Charlottesville incorporated as a City
- 1892:** Locust Grove Investment Co. subdivides portion of The Farm
- 1895:** Streetcar briefly extended to the area
- 1903:** Development begins along Locust Ave. and Hazel St.
- 1903:** Martha Jefferson Sanatorium constructed
- 1957:** Majority of neighborhood development complete
- 1972:** Several buildings demolished to make way for medical and commercial office buildings
- 1990:** Railyard, roundhouse, and turntable demolished
- 2008:** Martha Jefferson neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District
- 2011:** Martha Jefferson Hospital operations move to Pantops



1891 map showing land subdivided by the Locust Grove Land Investment Company



WALKING TOUR LEGEND

1 • **"Locust Grove"** was once a 534-acre plantation created by George Sinclair in 1839; a farmer, merchant, and mill owner. Research shows that in 1853 at least 20 people were enslaved here. Much of the property was sold to developers in 1876 after Sinclair's death. The parcel containing the main house has been owned privately by the same family since at least 1958.

2 • **Maplewood Cemetery** was established as the City's first public cemetery in 1827. The 3.6 acre cemetery contains gravesites of military veterans, athletes, politicians, free and enslaved African Americans, suffragists, and lawyers.

3 • **Martha Jefferson Hospital** was opened in 1903 as a sanatorium located nearby at 919 East High St. The hospital expanded in 1928 with construction of the Patterson Wing and grew again over the next decades. Hospital operations moved to the current Pantops medical campus in 2011. The 1928 building still stands as part of the CFA Institute complex.

4 • **Albemarle Female Institute** was built here in 1857. It would become the St. Anne's Episcopal (Girls) School in 1909 which would eventually become St. Anne's-Belfield after moving to Ivy Rd. in 1939.

5 • **"The Farm"** house was completed in 1827 by UVA law professor John A.G. Davis. Davis was killed by a UVA student in 1840 after which his widow sold the property in 1848 to William Farish. The land was further subdivided in 1948 leaving today's current parcel. The property was sold for \$3M in 2025 to a private real estate investment company.

6 • **E. Market Street** was in use by the 1800s. It was built by the Rivanna Rockfish Turnpike company as a toll road.

7 • **E. High St.** began as an 18th-century road linking Charlottesville to points eastward. It was once called Free Bridge Road, named after the bridge that carried the route over the Rivanna River.

