



# Buckhead Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER 2012

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## Mission:

Buckhead Heritage strives to sustain the quality of life in Buckhead by identifying, preserving, and promoting its historic resources.



## President's Letter

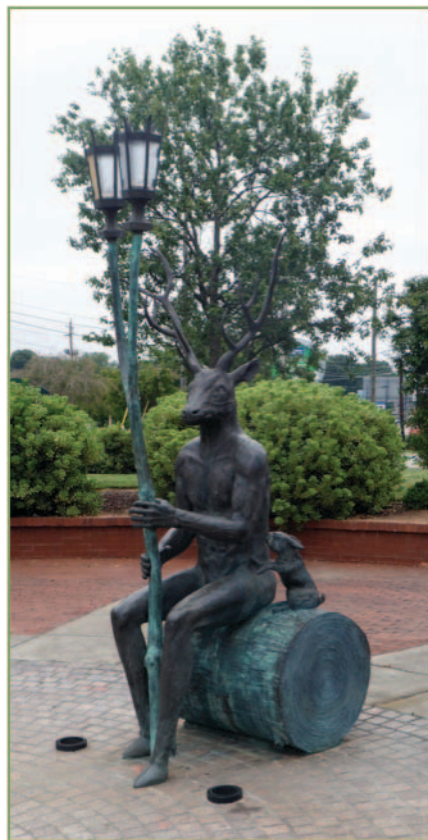
The more things change in Buckhead, the more they stay the same. Buckhead is known for its vibrant commercial core, but despite its rural origins, business has always been vitally important. In fact, Buckhead's founder, Henry Irby, was the consummate businessman. Irby set the stage for Buckhead's future business growth when he purchased Land Lot 99 on December 18, 1838 for \$650. Irby established a general store and "tavern" at the northwest intersection of Roswell and Peachtree Roads. In addition to running his store, Irby also farmed approximately half of his 202½ acres and owned mining concerns in North Georgia.

As we approach the 175th anniversary of Irby's fortuitous purchase, it is particularly appropriate, therefore, that we will be partnering with the Buckhead Business Association to celebrate this momentous occasion. The event, Buckhead's 175th Anniversary Gala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, will be held on March 1, 2013 at the Buckhead Theatre. Two of Buckhead's most well-known and respected businessmen, Sam Massell and Charlie Loudermilk, will serve as honorary co-chairs of the event; Caroline and Boyd Leake will serve as the event chairs; and Carter and Hampton Morris and Blain and Ivan Allen will head up the host committee. We are very excited about working with these dedicated Buckhead Heritage members and the Buckhead Business Association to make the Gala an enjoyable and educational evening!

Unfortunately, because of our limited staff size, we will not be able to present Party in the Pasture in 2012. While I know this is a disappointment to many of you, especially those with small children, we will be offering a family friendly event at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve on September 29, 2012. I hope those of you who have enjoyed Party in the Pasture in the past will attend the Blue Heron event and then leave the kids at home for an evening of "grown up" fun at the Buckhead Theatre on March 1st!

We will be back in touch with more details about the Gala in the coming months. In the meantime, I hope you will read up on our 2012 events and join us for some of the exciting programs we will be offering soon!

Wright Mitchell  
*President*



*The Storyteller*, a sculpture by Frank Fleming in Charlie Loudermilk Park, shares the story of the beginning of Buckhead.

# Events



## Tours of Harmony Grove Cemetery - March 10, 2012

Buckhead Heritage hosted tours of Harmony Grove Cemetery as part of the Atlanta Preservation Center's Phoenix Flies—A Citywide Celebration of Living Landmarks. Erica Danylchak, the Society's Executive Director, led guests through the cemetery where the first documented burial occurred in 1870. Buckhead Heritage began restoring this historically significant green space in 2006 and continues to act as its steward.

## Fifty Years Later: The Orly Air Crash Remembered - May 11, 2012

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Orly air crash, Buckhead Heritage welcomed guests and Orly descendants for a screening of the 2001 GPB documentary film, *The Day Atlanta Stood Still*. Ann Uhry Abrams, author of *Explosion at Orly: The Disaster that Transformed Atlanta*, and Chris Moser, the producer of the film, opened the evening with insightful remarks on the impact of the devastating event on the city of Atlanta and the Buckhead community.

## The Orly Tragedy Through the Eyes of Artists - May 12, 2012

Buckhead Heritage partnered with the Millennium Gate Georgia History Museum to present an art exhibit and auction featuring original works by nationally renowned artists that expressed



Artists Ben Jennings, Bonnie Beauchamp-Cooke, Hailey Lowe, Katherine Bell McClure, and Margaret Motley at the Millennium Gate in front of the memorial cenotaph dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Orly plane crash.

their unique interpretations of the event that both devastated and shaped Atlanta's art community. Curator Katherine Bell McClure brought together a range of artists, including Todd Murphy, Meg Aubrey, Bonnie Beauchamp-Cooke, Dennis Campay, Carolyn Carr, Deborah de Juan, Ben Jennings, Morgan Kendall, Hailey Lowe, Margaret Motley, Steve Penley, Peter Polites, Dawne Raulet, Rossin, Serge Ruffato, Tracy Sharp, Jill Steenhuis, Lou Steed, and Ken Bazzle, to evoke the complex emotions associated with the Orly disaster and the period in which it took place.

## A Walk Through Time in North Buckhead - June 9, 2012

Buckhead Heritage partnered with the Blue Heron Nature Preserve to present a walking tour through the cultural landscape of this public green space and its environs. For more information about this event, please see the facing page.

## Upcoming:

**Buckhead's Native American History - September 29, 2012**  
**10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**  
**at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 4055 Roswell Road, 30342**

Creek Indians roamed the land in the floodplain of Nancy Creek long before white settlers arrived in the early 1800s. On Saturday, September 29th, children will journey in the footsteps of Native Americans with outdoor activities while adults will be entertained with a program highlighting Creek Indian history by National Park Ranger Jerry Hightower. The event is jointly sponsored by Buckhead Heritage and the Blue Heron Nature Preserve.

For updated event information, please visit our website at:  
[www.buckheadheritage.com/events](http://www.buckheadheritage.com/events)



## Taking Inventory of Our History

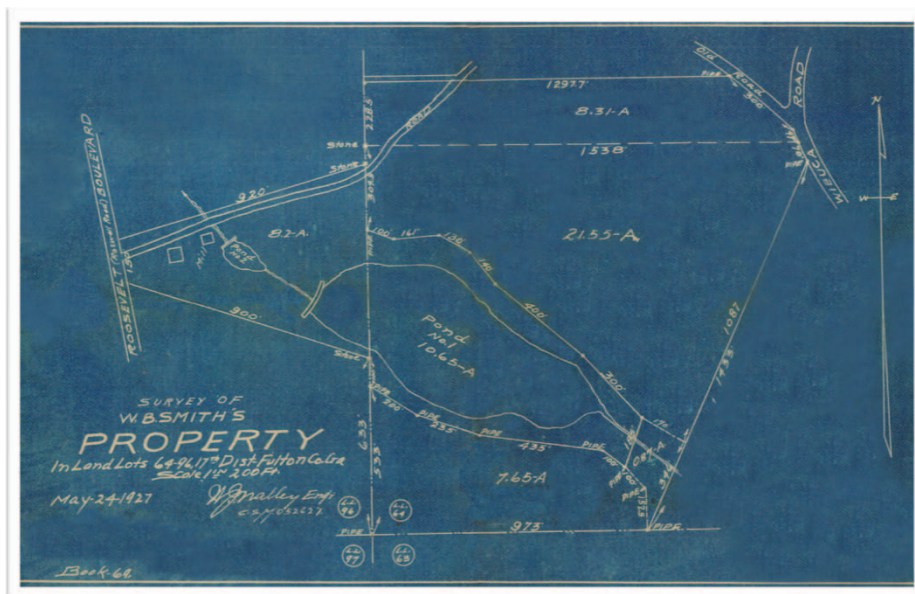
Last year, Buckhead Heritage committed to working with Livable Buckhead to make sure that the community's history is interwoven into the Buckhead Collection of existing and future parks, trails, and green spaces in the community. This year, we took the first step toward this ambitious effort by inventorying the historic resources we have and the stories they tell. To create our database of information, we used existing information from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, conducted research at the Atlanta History Center and State Historic Preservation Office, carried out a windshield survey, and began reaching out to neighborhood and civic groups to learn about historic buildings and sites that residents think are important. Buckhead Heritage will continue to reach out to our neighbors to uncover our collective story.

## A Walk Through Time in North Buckhead

*Our efforts to engage North Buckhead residents about the historic sites and stories interesting to them resulted in the revelation of significant historic homes, former mill sites, and a long-forgotten cemetery that tell fascinating stories about our community's rich history. Buckhead Heritage presented several of these stories during "A Walk Through Time in North Buckhead."*

The landscape along Roswell Road, where the Blue Heron Nature Preserve is today, changed dramatically in the early 20th century and foreshadowed future growth in this far-flung section of Fulton County. For much of the 19th century, farmers cultivated the land of North Buckhead. In 1877, John W. Williams purchased 250 acres hugging the eastern side of Roswell Road for \$2750. The 1880 Agricultural Census reveals a remarkably detailed account of what his land looked like and what his farm produced. Seventy-five acres of his land was tilled and used for the production of corn, oats, wheat, and cotton. Williams had 6 cows, 9 pigs, and 8 chickens. His farm produced 100 lbs. of butter and 200 dozen eggs in 1879. He also had 2 acres of apple orchards and 1 acre of peach orchards.

In the early 20th century, a grist mill was established near Roswell Road and a mill pond flooded the former farmland. A 1927 survey of the property indicates the presence of a house and mill along Lakemoore Drive as well as the mill pond and dam that remain today. A later survey reveals that Lakemoore Drive was once named Eidson Mill Road. The road was named for the mill's owner, William Jefferson Eidson. Part of a mill sluice, which would have regulated the flow of water for the mill operation, rests at the bottom of the tributary stream below the wooden bridge at the Preserve's entrance. *(continued on page 5)*



Survey of W. B. Smith's Property in 1927 showing the site of a mill and mill pond at the intersection of today's Roswell Road and Lakemoore Drive.

## Reminders of an African American Past



The Sanders Memorial Baptist Church on Clarendale Drive.

Enduring within a conspicuously wooded landscape along Pharr Road, a few modest headstones hint at a forgotten history. Standing amidst an affluent neighborhood, a small, wood-framed church begs exploring. Neglected beneath dense brush, encircled by townhome development, Buckhead's second largest cemetery lies largely forgotten. Squeezed between industrial buildings on Mayson Street, a modest church stands as a remnant of an earlier era. Within view of one of Atlanta's most prestigious private schools, an unassuming church clings to its dwindling congregation. These physical fragments of history suggest a more complex story. In the late 19th and early 20th century, these sacred spaces were part of larger African American neighborhoods dispersed across Buckhead's thinly populated landscape.

After the Civil War, former slaves established the Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church ca. 1870 on Pharr Road and settled in the area where Frankie Allen Park is today. A formal subdivision for the African Americans in the area was laid out in 1921 and was known formally as Macedonia Park. The community became known colloquially as Bagley Park, however, after the neighborhood's unofficial mayor, William Bagley, who was a shoemaker and builder. Meanwhile, Bagley's daughter Willie Mae Bagley and son-in-law Pete Butts owned a rib shack in the community. In a recent oral history interview their daughter, Elon Butts Osby, recalled that on Friday and

Saturday nights the rib shack "became like the juke joint because people came there and they played music and danced." In the early 20th century, three churches, two grocery stores, and two restaurants served the community. Mt. Olive Cemetery is all that remains of Macedonia Park.

In 1872, James H. Smith, a white Buckhead farmer and former slave owner, willed three acres of his property along Arden Road for use as a black church and school. The newly formed New Hope A.M.E. congregation built a tabernacle on the property shortly thereafter. The church drew its members from both the local New Hope community and the larger Buckhead area. In the early 1880s, the church held its first camp meeting where, according to a later *Atlanta Daily World* article, people came from "miles around in carts hauled by slow moving oxen, wagons pulled by mules or horse, or, perhaps their employer's horse and buggy." Many of Buckhead's African American residents at the time worked either as tenant farmers or served local prominent families. New Hope's fourth church building, which was completed in 1936, still stands along Arden Road and a two-acre cemetery hugs the opposite side of the street.

The Armour community formed around the Mayson Chapel Baptist Church which was organized in 1909 on Mayson Street. The church, which served neighboring residents on Plaster Street, Mayson Street and Armour Place was rebuilt in 1924 and remains, with a few alterations, today. The enclave of Piney Grove grew up around the Piney Grove Missionary Baptist Church, which was founded in 1876, near today's Canterbury Road. Piney Grove Cemetery, where the earliest known grave dates to 1888 and where at least 300 people rest, remains. Sandersville, also known as Savageville, formed around the Sanders Memorial Baptist Church on Clarendale Drive after a group splintered from the New Hope A.M.E. church. The church, which was built in 1940, remains along with several of the original homes in the community. Irby Alley, Oak Valley Road, and Peachtree-Dunwoody Road each had their own settlements, too, but no visual evidence survives to remind us of what was once there.

Buckhead Heritage is working to uncover records and memories to piece together the larger story of Buckhead's African American history. If you have information to share, please contact us at [info@buckheadheritage.com](mailto:info@buckheadheritage.com) or 404-467-9447.

(continued from page 3)

By the 1920s, these remote reaches of Fulton County began to attract affluent Atlantans who established country estates in the area. Herschel Herrington, the son of A.P. Herrington and a partner in the real estate firm A.P. Herrington & Son, built an estate on what is now Herrington Drive. Distinctive stone rubble covers much of the first story façade of the house, which was built sometime prior to 1925. Herschel Herrington's niece, Eunice Gleason, remembers visiting the home in the 1930s, and recently recalled that the estate included about 25 acres of land with a swimming pool, tennis court, and a fish pond. Ms. Gleason recalled that stacked stone pillars on Wieuca Road marked the entrance to the estate and the beginning of a long gravel drive that curved up to the home, which stood atop the highest part of Herrington's land. One of the entrance pillars, as well as parts of the stacked stone walls that once marked the estate's boundaries, still exists today. At the time, this property was far removed from commercial conveniences. Gleason commented, "Herschel was a savvy real estate man and knew even in the 1920s that the best property in the city would eventually be in northwest Atlanta."

Prominent businessman Wiley L. Moore also realized the value of the land in this outlying area. He built a stately Neoclassical Revival home in the late 1930s on Emma Lane, which was named for his wife. Moore sited the home on the highest part of the 200 acres he purchased, which included the former mill pond, adjacent to which he built a clubhouse that perched over the water. An *Atlanta Constitution* article from the period reported that Moore built the clubhouse as a "good-will gesture" to the community and that it "became one of the show places and entertainment centers of the city." The clubhouse burned in 1941, but the foundation is still visible today.

In the post-WWII era, a population boom in Atlanta encouraged land subdivision in pastoral areas removed from the city center. Popular mid-century ranches and multi-family apartments sprang up along Lakemoore, Haverhill, and Herrington drives and the northern reaches of Buckhead began to look more like the landscape we recognize today.

### Mt. Olive Cemetery Update

In June, Jessica Moore, a descendant of Henry Irby, and a group of 15 rising fifth and sixth graders volunteered their efforts to clean up Mt. Olive Cemetery, located near the entrance to Frankie Allen Park. Under the direction of our Vice President Tamara Bazzle and member Harriet Kirkpatrick, the group cleared leaves and sticks that had fallen since our last workday at the site.



Students after a successful workday at Mt. Olive Cemetery.

In July, a descendant of a man buried at the cemetery, alerted Buckhead Heritage to the City of Atlanta's plans to install a sidewalk along Pharr Road adjacent to the site. The sidewalk plans called for the removal of the concrete retaining wall along the road and a portion of the hillside behind it. Buckhead Heritage urgently alerted the city to the presence of unmarked graves indicated on a 2005 archaeological investigation in the area earmarked for removal. The City of Atlanta subsequently decided to realign the traffic lanes on Pharr Road and place the sidewalk in front of the retaining wall so that the cemetery would not be disturbed.

Buckhead Heritage continues to remain vigilant regarding the preservation of Mt. Olive Cemetery, a site which the Society fought to protect through legal channels beginning in 2009 when a developer applied to the City of Atlanta to remove the graves from the site.



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**Buckhead Heritage Society**

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**Randolph-Lucas House in Peril**

In May, Buckhead Heritage learned that the 2500 Peachtree Road Condominium Association had applied for a demolition permit for the Randolph-Lucas House, which stands at the front of the condominium property on Peachtree Road at its intersection with Lindbergh Drive. The Association contends that the house, which is locally designated as a Historic Building by the City of Atlanta, is a threat to public health and safety. The Association, therefore, applied directly to the Office of Buildings for a demolition permit. The Office of Buildings, however, found the building to be structurally sound and informed the Association that its application would have to follow standard procedures for a locally designated historic building and be reviewed by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission. The Association has appealed that decision. The appeal is still pending. Meanwhile, in the last two months, Buckhead Heritage has brokered behind-the-scenes discussions regarding potential relocation of the house. At the time of printing, a final solution had not been reached. Please visit [www.buckheadheritage.com](http://www.buckheadheritage.com) for the latest information.



Buckhead Heritage Society  
3180 Mathieson Drive, Suite 200  
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Return Service Requested