



# Buckhead Heritage Society

NEWSLETTER 2011

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## Mission:

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



Dear Friends,

Around Buckhead Heritage, we often like to say “We aren’t your grandfather’s historic preservation group!” Not to knock your grandfather’s organization, which I am sure was quite nice. But at Buckhead Heritage, we strive to be on the “cutting edge” of historic preservation. And while that may sound like somewhat of an oxymoron, historic preservation, like anything else, must evolve with the times or risk being left behind. To this end, 2011 has been an exciting year for Buckhead Heritage.

Yes, we continued with our more traditional “preservation projects” such as Harmony Grove Cemetery and Mt. Olive Cemetery, but we also unveiled exciting new initiatives such as the history page on our website. This page features an interactive map of all of the historic markers in Buckhead, which without taking your life into your own hands, can often be difficult to read. We have also been uploading clips of our oral history interviews to YouTube.

But perhaps nothing illustrates our philosophy on historic preservation better than our involvement in the Buckhead Collection. In conjunction with the Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association, the Buckhead Community Improvement District and Livable Buckhead, Buckhead Heritage is taking an active role in shaping Buckhead’s future. The Buckhead Collection will be an interconnected system of parks, trails and green spaces to our community, which currently has the least amount of parkland in the City of Atlanta. At some point in the not too distant future, you will be able to hop on your bike in North Buckhead and pedal downtown to connect with the Beltline trail, circle the city and return to Buckhead unscathed.

So where does Buckhead Heritage fit into the Buckhead Collection? Our Executive Director, Erica Danylchak, was a member of the Steering Committee to help create a broad vision for the initiative and she will work closely with the other stakeholders to implement the historic resources component of the plan in the future. The historic resources part of the plan, along with the cultural resources component, will add the flavor necessary to bring these trails and parks alive through things such as interpretive signs that explain the origins of Buckhead, public art, guided walking and bike tours and even through applications that can be downloaded directly to your phone.

The Buckhead Collection will help fulfill our mission of improving the quality of life in Buckhead by promoting an appreciation of Buckhead’s historic resources. We are honored to be a part of this effort and we are excited to see it come to fruition.

In addition to our preservation programs and community involvement, we also held our first annual Party in the Pasture which drew almost 400 people and we co-hosted some fun educational events with the Cherokee Garden Library and the Southeast Chapter of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. You can read more about these events and the other programs in the newsletter. We are also in the process of planning our 2012 event schedule and you will be receiving more information about those events soon.

I hope we will see you at some of our upcoming events. As always, we would love to hear from you if you have any questions, comments or suggestions for future programming. Just send us an email to [info@buckheadheritage.com](mailto:info@buckheadheritage.com) or call (404) 467-9447. After all, without you, our members, none of this would be possible. We thank you for your support!

Wright Mitchell  
*President*



# Events



## Exploring Buckhead's Heritage Through Archival Treasures - January 27, 2011

Buckhead Heritage partnered with the Cherokee Garden Library to host a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Atlanta History Center's archival collections for Buckhead Heritage's Founding Members and major donors. The program showcased remarkable original documents that told the stories of Civil War activity in Buckhead, the development of the Buckhead Village, the creation of Buckhead's residential neighborhoods, and the families that have enlivened the community's character.

## Philip Shutze and his Georgian Muse: Precedents from the Georgian Period - February 12, 2011

Buckhead Heritage proudly sponsored a lecture for the Southeast Chapter of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art (ICAA) exploring the inspiration which architect Philip T. Shutze found in precedents from the Georgian era. Designer Jonathan Wills LaCrosse provided case studies, including several Buckhead residences, that revealed Shutze's unique vision and method of design.

## Tours of Harmony Grove Cemetery - March 12, 2011

Buckhead Heritage hosted two tours of Harmony Grove Cemetery as part of the Atlanta Preservation Center's Phoenix Flies—A Citywide Celebration of Living Landmarks. Wright Mitchell, Buckhead Heritage



Marcan Hall, a Tudor Revival Style residence built in 1930 for Samuel Candler Dobbs, Jr. It was a featured stop during the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Cocktails and Cartouches.

Society President, and Erica Danylchak, the Society's Executive Director, led guests through the restored site where a fascinating variety of formal and informal gravestones mark the final resting places of some of Buckhead's earliest residents.

## Digging Up Civil War History: Battlefield Archaeology of the Atlanta Campaign - May 12, 2011

As part of the Sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War, Buckhead Heritage hosted a fascinating lecture on the cutting-edge field of battlefield archaeology. Guest lecturer Garrett Silliman, an archaeologist with Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., shared case studies from his work studying Civil War battlefields of the Atlanta Campaign, including a site near Tanyard Creek in Buckhead. Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks the Buckhead offices of Harry Norman, Realtors for sponsoring this program.

## Cocktails and Cartouches: An Architectural Bus Tour of Buckhead - June 4, 2011

Buckhead Heritage and the Southeast Chapter of the Institute

of Classical Architecture & Art (ICAA) partnered to envision and present the first annual "Cocktails and Cartouches." The sold-out event entertained guests with a reception at the Raymond Goins Studio Showroom and a driving tour through the neighborhoods of Peachtree Heights West, Haynes Manor, and Tuxedo Park. Wright Marshall, President of Revival Construction and Executive Board Member of the ICAA, and Jonathan Wills LaCrosse, designer at D. Stanley Architect, served as guides on the excursion exploring the early suburban development of Buckhead. Architects Norman Askins and Laura DePree and landscape architect Spencer Tunnell also provided stories and insights along the way. One of the tour highlights was a stop on Valley Road at Marcan Hall, the home designed for Samuel Candler Dobbs, Jr. by Cooper & Cooper in 1930. The Buckhead Heritage Society thanks the Vawter Group, Atlanta Fine Homes, Sotheby's International Realty for making this event possible.

For updated event information, please visit our website at:

[www.buckheadheritage.com/events](http://www.buckheadheritage.com/events)

## Harmony Grove Cemetery: Preservation at Work

At Harmony Grove Cemetery false crypts, stylized obelisks, upright slabs, and rudimentary fieldstones mark the final resting places of some of Buckhead's earliest residents and visually tell the story of economic and racial disparity in the Buckhead community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Unfortunately, time has been unkind to several of the headstones at this historically significant site at the corner of Chatham and West Paces Ferry roads. As part of Buckhead Heritage's continuing commitment to preserve the cemetery, we contracted with Dustin Hornsby, the Restoration Manager at Historic Oakland Foundation, to repair the headstones determined to be preservation priorities at



James H. "Whispering" Smith's false crypt at Harmony Grove Cemetery prior to repair (top) and after repair (bottom).

the site. Because of the generous financial contributions from Buckhead Heritage members and neighbors on Chatham and West Paces Ferry roads, we were able to complete the repair of not only our first tier of priorities, but our second tier as well. Over the course of the spring and summer, seven headstones were repaired in total.

As part of the work, two false crypts in the Smith family plot were stabilized and repaired, including that of patriarch James H. "Whispering" Smith, who was one of the largest landowners in the Buckhead community when he died in 1872. False crypts, which are hollow, raised structures that stand over the burial plot of the interred, are an evolution in the mounding practice. Some folk traditions

believed that if dirt sunk into a grave too quickly, it was a sign that another family member would soon die. Mounding dirt protected against this phenomenon. The false crypt was a sort of "permanent" mound that was a more expensive form of burial and was restricted to the upper classes. Smith's false crypt had shifted and cracked severely over time. This year's repair work included disassembling the crypt, pouring a stable concrete base for the structure, reassembling the pieces and holding them together with stainless steel pins and color-matched epoxy.

In addition to the false crypts, the Smith family monument, which sat precariously on a base of stacked stones, also was stabilized. Miss R.A. Ervin's headstone, which had cracked into three pieces, was reassembled. The loose slab of August Krause's gravestone was reattached to its back with mortar. And the gravestones of Martha Smith and Mary Johns were secured in their bases.

Buckhead Heritage has been acting as the steward of Harmony Grove Cemetery since 2006. For more information on the preservation work at the site or the history of the cemetery, please visit [www.buckheadheritage.com](http://www.buckheadheritage.com).

*Buckhead Heritage extends a special thanks to the donors to the Harmony Grove Cemetery Repair Fund: Claudia & John Barnes, Tamara Bazzle, Amy & Hardy Brumfield, F. H. Boyd Coons, Susan Bronson Croft, C. L. Fain III, Arlene Helget, Mary Ellen May, Carolyn & Bruce Mitchell, Jill & Donald Toth, and Mary Moncure Watson.*

## Workdays at Harmony Grove Cemetery

Last fall, Buckhead Heritage partnered with Hands On Atlanta for a volunteer work day at Harmony Grove Cemetery as part of the 20th Annual Hands On Atlanta Day. Volunteers gathered to enjoy a tour of the cemetery and then rolled up their sleeves to plant daffodils, transplant ferns, lay mulch and pine straw, and remove debris from the wooded area between the cemetery and West Paces Ferry Road. Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks our volunteers, including members of the Atlanta Kiwanis Club, for dedicating a beautiful fall morning to this sacred site.

On Saturday, November 12th, Buckhead Heritage will host another volunteer workday the cemetery. Please join us in our efforts to maintain this historically significant site in the heart of Buckhead. This year, we will be pruning, bagging leaf litter, clearing brush, and planting ivy and daffodils. Check our website for updated information about this event as it approaches.

## Buckhead Heritage Thanks Habersham Gardens

Buckhead Heritage is happy to report that Habersham Gardens will be providing monthly services at Harmony Grove Cemetery as of September 1st. We thank our friends at Habersham Gardens for agreeing to help us maintain this meaningful green space.



## Mt. Olive Saved and Spruced Up!



Buckhead Heritage members and Atlanta International School students after a successful workday at Mt. Olive Cemetery.

Since 2009, Buckhead Heritage has been fighting for the preservation of Mt. Olive Cemetery, an African American burial ground adjacent to Pharr Road. Fulton County erroneously had sold the cemetery for “back taxes” even though cemeteries are exempt from ad valorem tax. The Stone Mountain developer who purchased the property subsequently applied for a permit from the City of Atlanta to remove the graves from the site. Buckhead Heritage Society President Wright Mitchell and his law firm, Constangy, Brooks & Smith, LLP, subsequently filed a lawsuit against the developer on behalf of Elon Butts Osby, whose ancestors are buried in the cemetery. Mr. Mitchell and his firm handled the lawsuit on a *Pro Bono* basis.

Last fall, the Fulton County Superior Court ruled that Mt. Olive is a public cemetery. Its removal is therefore prohibited by Georgia law. According to the Court's Final Order, the developer is “barred from disturbing the Mt. Olive Cemetery or otherwise appropriating it for private use” and is “prohibited from taking further actions to obtain a permit from the City of Atlanta government that would sanction the disturbance and/or relocation of the Mt. Olive Cemetery.”

In May, Buckhead Heritage spearheaded a clean-up day at the cemetery and solicited the participation of our members as well as students and teachers from the Atlanta International School. About 30 volunteers gathered to learn about the history of the cemetery and the legal battle to protect it. They then worked to remove leaf litter, small limbs, and invasive plants from the site. The volunteers made great progress in just one morning, filling 120 lawn refuse bags with debris and uncovering brickwork and other burial features that had been previously hidden under leaves and brush.

Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks the committed volunteers for their diligence and effort during the workday this spring!

### Online Resource for Buckhead History Now Available!

Have you ever wondered what those bronze historic markers that stand so stately along our roadsides actually say as you speed by? Have you ever wondered which buildings in Buckhead are listed on the National Register of Historic Places? Well, now you can visit [www.buckheadheritage.com](http://www.buckheadheritage.com) to satisfy your long-burning curiosity.

Last fall, Angelica Dion, Buckhead Heritage Society intern and Master's degree candidate in the Heritage Preservation Program at Georgia State University, mapped all of the historical markers in Buckhead. To compile the comprehensive listing of markers, Angelica used information from the Buckhead Guidebook, published yearly by the Buckhead Coalition, the Georgia Historical Society, and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. She then used ArcGIS software to create maps that illustrate what aspects of Buckhead history have been recognized by historical markers and the years that the markers represent. She also created an interactive Google map that reveals the text of the markers when clicked!

Buckhead Heritage also has added summaries of all the individually-listed National Register buildings in Buckhead to our website with links to the National Register nomination forms for more information. So, visit our website to find out about the Cecil & Hermione Alexander House, one of the rare examples of modern residential architecture in Georgia, which was featured in LIFE magazine in 1957. Or, read about the William & Ruth Knight Lustron House, a significant example of post-WWII pre-fabricated housing in Atlanta. Or, discover more about how New Hope AME Church, with a congregation dating back to 1872, was founded on Arden Road. You can, of course, also read more about some of Neel Reid's and Philip T. Shutze's most prominent commissions. Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks the Historic Preservation Division, GA DNR and the Atlanta History Center for sharing beautiful photographs of these properties for our website.



## The Buckhead Collection – An Extraordinary Vision for Buckhead’s Future

In October 2010, Buckhead Heritage was asked to serve on the Steering Committee for the Buckhead Greenspace Action Plan. So, what does history have to do with greenspace? Well, over the course of the last year, the answer has become clear to Buckhead Heritage and many others in the community. Since October, an extraordinary vision has been created to build an interconnected network of parks, trails, and greenspaces that interweave opportunities for history, art, and environmental protection into a meaningful system that enhances the quality of life in Buckhead.

Perhaps we should begin at the beginning. In 2008, the City of Atlanta’s Project Greenspace identified Atlanta City Council District 7, which includes the commercial core of Buckhead and immediately adjacent neighborhoods, as the most “under-parked” district in the city. And, overall, the City of Atlanta ranks 23rd among the 25 largest cities in the United States in the amount of greenspace per capita. Leaders in Buckhead realized that this was simply unacceptable for a world-class community.

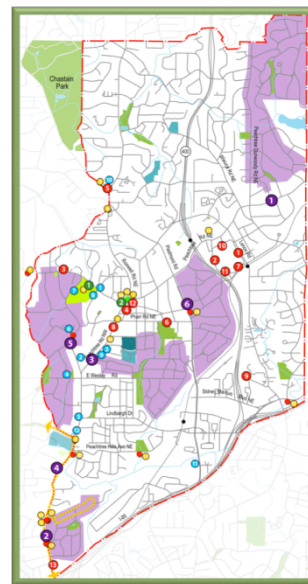
So, last year, working at the request of City Councilman Howard Shook, BATMA (the Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association) directed an effort to develop a plan to increase the amount of greenspace and open space in District 7. The Buckhead CID and the Buckhead Coalition funded the planning process. A broad range of organizations were asked to take part in Steering Committee meetings and provide input to the consultant group AECOM on the development of a long-range greenspace vision for Buckhead. Of course, representatives from entities like the Trust for Public Land and the City of Atlanta’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs were present. But, representatives from Buckhead schools, churches, neighborhoods, commercial businesses, and arts and historic preservation communities were integral voices in the process as well. The result is an exceptional vision known as the Buckhead Collection.

The Buckhead Collection will consist of civic spaces, neighborhood parks, community parks and sports facilities, dog parks, conservation parks, trails and greenways, streets and sidewalks, public art, *and* cultural and historic sites.

The Buckhead Collection proposes that cultural and historic sites be physically connected and integrated into the greenspace system, which should be used as a platform to interpret and celebrate significant Buckhead stories. The Buckhead Collection proposes to integrate historic and cultural resources into the system through interpretive physical design, interpretive signage, public art, guided bicycle, walking or Segway tours, and through digital media tools and apps that can be downloaded into smart phones or GIS devices for use during personal tours.

A new organization known as Livable Buckhead has been tasked to oversee the implementation of the broad vision that has been created. But, Buckhead Heritage realized quickly that the goals of the plan align with the mission of our organization: to sustain the quality of life in Buckhead by identifying, preserving, and promoting its historic resources. So, Buckhead Heritage has committed to being a long-term partner with Livable Buckhead and other invested groups to move the historic resources component of this visionary plan forward. We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress!

For more information on the Buckhead Collection and to view maps of the proposed vision, visit [www.livablebuckhead.com](http://www.livablebuckhead.com).



Map of identified historic districts, sites, and buildings generated through the planning process.

### Buckhead Heritage Oral History Project

Buckhead Heritage continues to collect oral history interviews with long-time residents of Buckhead. We want to ensure that a broad range of experiences are represented in our collection, so we are currently seeking interested candidates to participate who have been small shop owners, school teachers, ministers, doctors, or industrial workers in Buckhead. We are also seeking women and African Americans to share their memories of living or working in the community. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in our Oral History Project, please call 404-467-9447 or email [info@buckheadheritage.com](mailto:info@buckheadheritage.com).

For all those interested in learning more about the community’s rich history, transcripts of the interviews collected thus far and select video excerpts are available to view at [www.buckheadheritage.com](http://www.buckheadheritage.com).

## CURRENT MEMBERS THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2011

Donors who gave between September 1, 2010 and August 31, 2011. Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks you for your generosity.

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**Buckhead Heritage Society**

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**3180 Mathieson Drive, Suite 200**  
**Atlanta, GA 30305**  
Or join online at

[www.buckheadheritage.com](http://www.buckheadheritage.com)

## History Day at the North Buckhead Civic Association Fall Fling

**October 30<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

Join Buckhead Heritage and the Blue Heron Nature Preserve for a History Day at the North Buckhead Civic Association Fall Fling! Buckhead Heritage will be recording oral histories and scanning documents and photographs related to the neighborhood that may be used in future educational programming and publications. Come ready to share your recollections and information about North Buckhead! For more information about the program, visit [www.buckheadheritage.com/events](http://www.buckheadheritage.com/events).

Buckhead Heritage extends a special thank you to the following:

*Continued from page 7*

Garrett Silliman  
Sylvia and Tim Small  
Spencer Tunnell  
Smith, Adcock and Company  
Tucker & Associates  
Tower Beer, Wine & Spirits  
Julia Waterfill

## Save the Date: Party in the Pasture

**October 22nd, 3:30 pm to 7:00 pm**

Don't miss out on the 2nd Annual Party in the Pasture! Last year, over 400 friends gathered together to support Buckhead Heritage and enjoy barbeque, bluegrass music, history-themed exhibits, and kids' activities. This year, bluegrass band Strung Jury will entertain guests and immerse them in a not too distant past. The event is being catered by Five Star Barbecue. Buckhead Heritage sincerely thanks Buckhead-based Paces Construction for serving as the event's Presenting Sponsor. For more information and to purchase tickets to the event, visit [www.buckheadheritage.com/events](http://www.buckheadheritage.com/events).



Buckhead Heritage Society  
3180 Mathieson Drive, Suite 200  
Atlanta, GA 30305

Return Service Requested