

Berkeley Park Centennial – A Walk in History

In honor of our Centennial Celebration, Terry Horgan created this walking tour with its accompanying map from the oral Histories of neighbors interviewed during the 90's and documented in the National Register for Historic Places. These residents helped shape our community when it was outside of the City Limits before streets were paved and indoor plumbing brought to our community. Many Residents relied on the streetcar for transportation, attended E. P. Howell Elementary and worked nearby at the Railroad, Atlantic Steel or owned their own businesses. The Waterworks was built in 1892 and served as a Park for Social functions as well as the pumping station for Atlanta's water. I know the developer of Berkeley Park was E. Rivers Realty, but I wish I knew more about the Builders or Architects that may have built these homes. Any information you would like to share is welcomed.

In addition to these neighbors, many have built on the foundation they left, volunteering their time. Gwen Langston founded the BPNA, Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association, in 1996 to reopen our fire station when it was closed by the City for lack of funding. Tawn Chi worked tirelessly for our seniors with Chef Ron Horgan delivering several meals a year. Jim Martin and his wife Barb Mortimer began the work to protect our community from development that may degrade our quality of life. Jim has continued that work as NPU-D Chair. Patrick Brady created our beloved logo that you see on the flags and shirts featuring the geese we see flying over our neighborhood on their way to the Waterworks Park.

Many of these neighbors are no longer with us so I wanted to acknowledge their contributions as well as thank those of you that have continued their work serving on the Board of the BPNA.

I can't help but wonder however if the John Whitley that originally obtained the farmland where Berkeley Park stands by land grant in 1835 could be the same John Whitley that shot the Buck giving Buckhead its name.... I welcome any clues you may have.

- 1. Katherine Kent** – one of Berkeley Park's first residents, Katherine's Family purchased their lot at 800 Holmes Street in 1910 for \$750 and paid \$10 down and \$10 a month till it was paid off. They built their home in 1927, Katherine was born there, never married and cared for her parents till their death. Three generations of Kents were raised in this home which has since been replaced.
- 2. Mattie & Jim Thompson**- purchased their home at 724 Bellemeade Ave. in 1936. Mattie had lived in the neighborhood since 1927. Jim owned Thompson's Garage off Howell Mill Rd. and Mattie made custom draperies in her home.
- 3. Katie & J.P. Anderson**- bought their first home at 766 Berkeley Ave. in 1929. They built her second home at 766 Bellemeade Ave. in 1950.
- 4. Clyde & M.P. Black** – purchased their first home in 1936 at 6 Tallulah Street (now the Techatoriums). They then moved to 801 Antone Street in 1942. M.P. was active with the Masons Lodge and Clyde took pride in welcoming new neighbors with a meal or a helping hand.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Blacks two daughters and being a fly on the wall as they shared memories with their friends the Ayers who also grew up on Antone. They remembered many events at the Mason Lodge. They shared some of their pictures with me to include in the slide show.

5. **Dorothy Gregory** – purchased her home at 720 Berkeley Ave. in 1941. Dorothy's husband's parents lived next door. The creek behind their house once flooded the fishpond they had built near their back door.

6. **Alma & Berlin Wigley** – when Alma and Berlin purchased their home at 685 Holmes Street in 1942, Holmes Street was not paved. They had electricity, but no indoor plumbing or gas. Their home was heated with a coal heater, and they cooked on a wood stove. There was a well on the back porch for drawing water.

7. **Verdal & Frank Garmon** – purchased their home at 681 Holmes Street in 1947. Frank's Brother-in-Law, Mr. Williamson, built their home in an area that was mostly cow pastures and woods. They were hooked up to the City Sewer in 1955, the same year the roads were paved. Edgar Garmon, Frank's Brother lived across the street.

8. **Johnnie & Aaron Lanier** – Johnnie grew up in the area and she and her husband purchased their home at 1608 Tallulah Street in 1949. They were the original owners.

9. **Jack & Geneva Ayers** – purchased their home at 728 Antone Street in 1951. Three generations of Ayers were raised in this home. They were good friends with the Black's and provided some great photos for my Centennial slide show. Jennifer, the granddaughter is now the proud owner and a fabulous asset to the community.

10. **Irene & Dee Boggs** – Dee grew up around Howell Mill Road. Irene & Dee purchased their home at 788 Berkeley Ave. in 1954. Dee owned and operated a Service Station at Howell Mill & Collier Road. Irene and her sister Willie Mae DuBose were neighbors. Their Son, Don Paulson purchased a home at 797 Berkeley Ave. He was known to some of us as 'Elvis' entertaining at Mr. C's in the 80's. Dee Boggs, knowing he had a heart condition decided to be baptized at the

Northside Park Baptist Church on Easter Sunday in 1977. He sadly died of a heart attack on the church steps leaving the church.

11. Willie Mae & James DuBose - purchased their home at 770 Berkeley Ave. in 1955. James was a Barber at Collier Road and Howell Mill Rd. next to the Service Station owned by his Brother-in-Law, Dee Boggs.

12. Ruby & James Parker – Ruby was born and raised with 12 Siblings and three generations in a farmhouse where Northside Drive crosses I-75 today. Ruby & James bought their home at 1615 Tallulah Street in 1958. Ruby's Father grew and sold vegetables to the local Grocery Store, Springers, managed by Ed McGill another neighbor. Ruby remembers Mrs. Spencer's farm at Bellemeade Ave. and Howell Mill Road before E. P. Howell was built in 1928 where Kroger is today.

13. Phillip Massey – remembered moving into 793 Berkeley Ave. when he was a teenager and riding the streetcar watching the conductor reverse the seats and steering column at the end of the line at Collier Road. He purchased his home at 786 Antone Street in 1959. Phillip was a wonderful member of the community and those of us lucky enough to know him, remember him fondly and miss him. He attended Northside Park Baptist Church and a church member remembers him giving them money for the offering in return for pictures they made in Sunday School.

14. Ed & Willie McGill –purchased their home at 741 Antone Street in 1958. Ed was instrumental in the community managing the local Springer Grocery at the corner of Howell Mill and Collier Road from 1960 to 73 (after Mr. Springer passed away).

15. Mildred & Walter Fritz – purchased their home at 744 Bellemeade in 1962 raising their son and daughter there.

16. Gwen Langston – grew up in the Georgia Tech area. She first moved to Defoors Ave. then to 708 Berkeley Ave. in 1961. She then moved to 810 Berkeley Ave. in 1973. Her book “Gathering Wool” published in 2002 chronicles her memories of growing up in this area.

17. Katie & (Shorty) Taylor McKinzie - purchased their home in 1962. I did not find info on the location of that home, but it was built in the 40's. Katie remembers her husband running his hunting dogs on the site where Walmart is now.

My family is grateful to be fortunate enough to have found this little hamlet called Berkeley Park and to have known many of these neighbors. I look forward to continuing the legacy they created and watching Berkeley Park continue to grow as the tight knit community we can all be proud to call home.

The Westside is the Best Side!