

Est. 1979

# EAST POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## FALL 2014

### President's Note

As the year 2014 winds down, we find our annual Holiday Open House approaching on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:00pm-4:00pm. (See the announcement to the immediate right). We hope you will join us for this opportunity to meet and greet friends and neighbors. As the late comedian *Brother Dave Gardner* once said, "A stranger is just a friend you ain't met yet." Come and enjoy the good food and refreshments. Look around our museum.

There are hundreds of photos, artifacts and files that hold their own stories just waiting to be discovered. We have hundreds of research file folders covering people, families, businesses, churches, schools, neighborhoods, government agencies and more. We have the complete sets of high school yearbooks for **Russell, Tri-Cities, Headland, Briarwood, Woodland, Pathway Christian School** and an incomplete but growing collection of **South Fulton** yearbooks.

If you are internet savvy, you can go to Ancestry.com and find our "East Point Family Tree", an ever-growing collection of East Point families and their descendants. Of the "secrets" to be found here at the museum, did you know that before being made into a paved street, Willingham Drive was the streetcar line between East Point and Hapeville? Or that the oldest continuously operating business in East Point is the "Atlanta Utility Works"? Or that in its later years, the Buggy and Wagon Works operation made steel auto frames for the automobile industry?

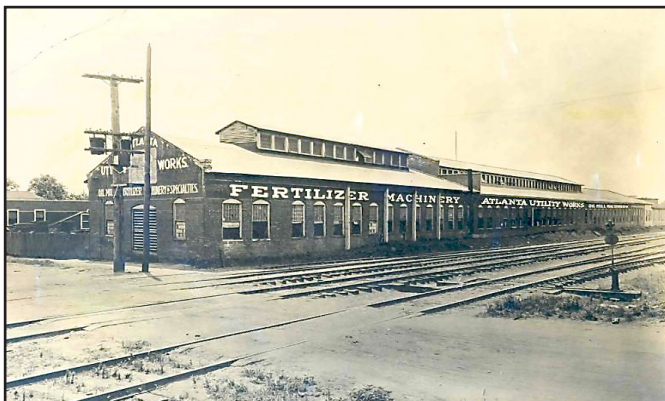
There are interesting things being donated all the time, and so it evolves. Come and make your own discoveries.  
- Charles Strickland, EPHS President



### Great News From The EPPA About East Point's Historic Civic Block

The East Point Preservation Alliance shared the news on October 29 that our Historic Civic Block (that's City Hall, The Auditorium, The Library and Victory Park) was one of ten properties chosen for the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's 2015 Places in Peril. Congratulations EPPA!

The Places in Peril listing does not obligate the City of East Point to take any action towards restoring or preserving the Historic City Block. If you would like to support this effort, there are several ways you can help. Write your City Councilpersons and the Mayor, place a SAVE THE BLOCK sign in your yard, buy a SAVE THE BLOCK t-shirt. Visit their website to learn more - [www.preserveeastpoint.org](http://www.preserveeastpoint.org). -Holly Keyes, EPHS Board Member



Atlanta Utility Works



City Hall circa 1940



## Transit in East Point and Metro Atlanta Then and Now

Streetcar rails connected East Point and Atlanta when many if not most streets were still dirt—dusty or muddy. “Downtown areas that were once completely accessible on foot began to spread out over greater distances, creating a need for...public transportation to accommodate working and middle-class urban residents who were unable to afford the costs of owning or renting their own horse and carriage for the commute.”<sup>1</sup> The railroads which gave East Point its name had provided people with long-distance rail comfort. Streetcars or trolleys moved them shorter distances from Atlanta to outlying communities, such as Decatur, Marietta, East Point, and beyond—the system map of 1924 shows Line 20 College Park & Hapeville, and by 1946 Atlanta was connected to Atlanta Municipal Airport (Hartsfield).

Atlanta streetcars “began with horsecars in 1871, and electric streetcar service started in the 1880s.”<sup>2</sup> Also, there were small coal-fired locomotives called steam “dummies” that towed one or two streetcars. At times, there could be self-propelled electric trolleys and others pulled by dummies, horses or mules on different routes. Streetcar lines ran to important places: 1872 to Oakland Cemetery, 1884 to Westview Cemetery, 1891 to the new Hollywood Cemetery, and 1905 to Crestlawn Cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

As Jim Crow was taking over the South, tensions on streetcars increased. An “1891 Law passed requiring segregation on streetcars ‘as much as practicable’ and at the enforcement of streetcar conductors.”<sup>2</sup> As we know, this situation continued for more than half a century.

New developments in the Atlanta area aided the network of streetcars. “In 1902, all of the street railway, electric light and power, and steam properties in Atlanta were consolidated under the Georgia Railway and Electric Company. Among the new tracks was a 1902 extension from East Point to College Park. Within a decade an interurban connection to Fairburn would follow.”<sup>3</sup> “The development at Morgan Falls was the first in a series of hydroelectric facilities built to fuel Atlanta’s need for electric traction. In 1912, Georgia Railway and Electric Company reorganized into Georgia Railway and Power Company and later Georgia Power.”<sup>1</sup>

Through the decades, streetcar companies were created, grew, shrank, merged and died, with their rail lines expanding and contracting. Then came the popularity of the automobile, so the bicycle and public transit rail use slowed and then ended as effective transportation options. “While trackless trolleys and the personal automobile would bring an end to their use, funeral parties in many cities honoring ‘the last trolley ride’ were held testifying to their hold on the public.”<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1949, they were disappearing all together, and Atlanta entered the trackless decades until the 1970’s and now again in 2014.

This was an interesting era to read about. Next time: Rail returns to East Point in the form of MARTA.  
– by D. Gordon Draves, EPHS Vice President

1 Historic Streetcar Systems in Georgia <http://www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/programs/environment/resources/outreach/Documents/Reports/GAStreetcar.pdf>

2 Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streetcars\\_in\\_Atlanta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streetcars_in_Atlanta)

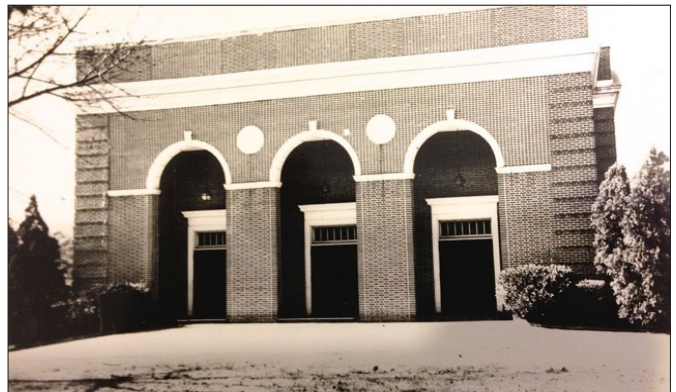
3 Streetcars in Atlanta <http://railga.com/oddend/streetrail/atlantastr.html>

The Street Cars that once ran on Main Street were owned by the Georgia Power Company. Each car was manned by two people, The Motorman which operated the Street Cars Movement and the Conductor who collected fares.

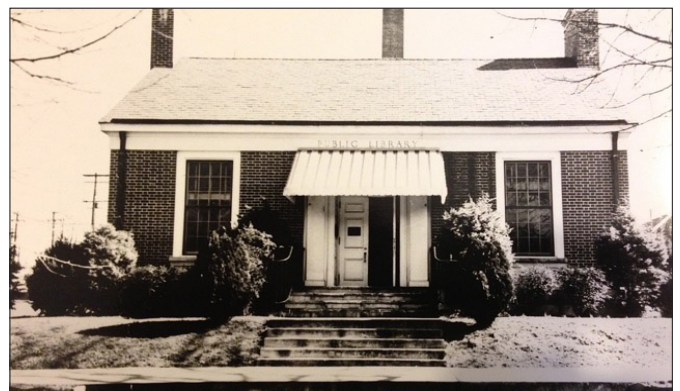


The man on the left in this late 1920's photograph is Henry Grady Chambers. Henry married Claudia Jones and they had the following children. Opal, Roy, Alice, Jamie, Gladys, Merrill and Charles.

*Henry's son is Charles Chambers, our very loyal docent at the EPHS most every Thursday.*



*The City Auditorium circa 1940*



*The Old Library circa 1940*

# East Point Centennial Quilt

## A History Lesson in Needlework

### Part Six: Community Landmarks

In 1987, members of the East Point Woman's Club stitched together a quilt to commemorate East Point's Centennial. Each of the 49 squares helps tell the story of East Point's history. The quilt is on display at the East Point Historical Society. Here are the fourth and fifth parts in a series of East Point history lessons, as reflected in a sampling of the quilt's squares:

### PART SIX: COMMUNITY LANDMARKS:

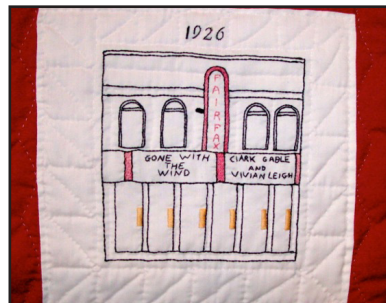
#### **Nellie's Chapel**

East Point's first church was built in 1873 as a memorial to Nellie Thompson, the seven year old daughter of Dr. J.D. Thompson, one of East Point's early founders. It served as the meeting place for many other congregations until their church buildings could be erected. The building originally faced Main Street but was later moved to face East Point Street. Additions were made and repairs made after a major fire and it is now known as East Point Avenue United Methodist Church.



#### **The Fairfax**

The Fairfax was one of three theaters in downtown East Point built beginning in the 1920s and reflecting the popularity of film entertainment. "Gone With the Wind" was released in 1939 in the heyday of the movie industry. The Fairfax (Main Street) and the East Point Theater (Church Street) were demolished in the 1950s. The Russell Theater (Jefferson Avenue and later renamed the East Point Theater) operated into the 1960s.



#### **Victory Park**

Built in 1970, this park is dedicated to East Point's service men and women killed in war. The name comes from the USS East Point Victory, a cargo ship launched in 1945, honoring East Point's success in World War II loan drives and Red Cross activity. The ship was decommissioned in 1969. Plaques removed from the ship were placed in the park along with a 1919 Howitzer machine gun and tributes to the war dead.



#### **Rose Garden**

After several years in design work and fundraising, the Keep America Beautiful Rose Garden was dedicated in August 1986. It was part of a nationwide beautification program that continues today through Keep East Point Beautiful. A variety of roses were planted and are maintained and nurtured by volunteers, local businesses and the city parks department. Each year in May or June, KEPB hosts a garden tea to encourage citizens to appreciate and enjoy the roses.



#### **Tower Clock**

The Tower Clock and the East Point MARTA station were both dedicated on August 16, 1986, and timed to celebrate the 99th anniversary of East Point's incorporation. The Tower Clock was envisioned as a landmark for downtown and an image for East Point's move into its second century and its continuing associations with different forms of transportation.





EP Quilt Part Six, Community Landmarks: (Cont.)

### **Velodrome**

East Point has been a destination for cycling enthusiasts since the 1890s. Inspired by the 1972 Munich Olympics, the Dick Lane Velodrome was built in 1974 and was used during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics as a training facility. One of 26 velodromes in the U.S., it is the only one that features a green space, oak tree and creek in the center. It continues to serve cycling, racing and youth programs. Dick Lane was a long-term director of East Point's recreation department and a state representative.

Learn more about East Point history and see first hand the collection of artifacts, photographs, maps and records that further illustrate East Point's history. Visit the East Point Historical Society, go to [www.eastpoinths.org](http://www.eastpoinths.org) or join our group on Facebook.

– Carole Griffith, EPHS Volunteer



### **A Thanks To Our Volunteers**

We are truly grateful for the support we've had from many wonderful volunteers throughout the years. We'd like to spotlight a few and their contributions to EPHS.

#### **Ruth and Chester Richardson**

For many years, the EPHS held its quarterly meeting at the United Methodist Church at 2792 East Point Street, the location of Nellie's Chapel, across from City Hall. Our thanks to Ruth and Chester for their dedication in taking care of all our needs when opening up the church for our meetings, even after they moved away from East Point, and even after the congregation stopped meeting. Thank you both!

#### **Carole Griffith and Dorothy Brown**

Carole Griffith has been the rock that has kept us on track and a link for us to the efforts of previous dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to bring the collection to its current size. Carole also held the secret recipe for the infamous holiday punch we serve. Dot Brown has helped us as hostess at the Open House event for many years. As planners of this event changed hands over these past years, both Carole and Dot made sure we newbies got it done with grace! Thank you both!

#### **Janet Alford**

If you notice that the research files at EPHS seem, well, ORGANIZED on your next visit, we have Janet Alford to thank. She volunteered out of nowhere and now every file is in its place with shiny new printed labels. This was an overwhelming task that Janet took on zealously over this past year. It culminated in getting all of the file cabinets out of the front display areas of the house and into the research areas...with labeled drawers. We have a few more big rocks to move around, but we're well on our way to reorganizing the display areas to improve the flow of our visitors' experience. Thank you Janet!

#### **Charles Chambers**

We can't say enough about this guy, he has opened EPHS on Thursdays since forever! Charles was born in 1928 at 220 Martin Street and grew up on Cleveland Ave. He has lived here most all his life and has been a member of

EPHS since its founding. He first made himself available to install a new comode at the house as a favor to Jake Goen, and has been involved with EPHS ever since. He's never wanted to be on the Board, or he would still be on it, however he is the docent that opens the EPHS for Thursday visitors. Leslie Champion, his daughter has been meeting Charles to open EPHS for the last several years and we are grateful for her dedication to her Dad and to us. If you need to get the scoop from someone who lived most of the last century in East Point, stop by EPHS on Thursdays and chat Charles up, he has thousands of great memories to tap. Thank you both!

We have many ways for you to volunteer your time at EPHS. If you would like to get involved, here's a link to a list of volunteer opportunities with which we need help: <http://www.eastpoinths.org/p/we-need-volunteers.html> Check it out and see if any of these activities suit your skills and a desirable use of your available time and get in touch with a Board Member to get started.  
–Holly Keyes, EPHS Board Member



*Victory Park was dedicated in 1971. The dedication plaque and memorial markers listing the names of all East Point citizens who lost their lives in those conflicts have recently been vandalized. An effort to restore these plaques is underway, thanks to the efforts of the EPPA and our own Board Member, Lieutenant Colonel Perry Bennett, Army Historian*

## Keep East Point Beautiful Is Awarded an Orchard Grant!

Frances Kennedy, Executive Director of Keep East Point Beautiful, announced that East Point has been awarded a grant to plant orchards in three locations as part of “The Keep Georgia Beautiful Community Orchard Project”, The first orchard will be planted at PATCH, the community garden established over a year ago by Jefferson Park resident, Nathan Strange, and maintained by a growing group of volunteers. The Garden is located next to the recreational section of East Point’s largest park, Sykes Park.

The second location is River Park, in a spot that sits across the street from Parklane Elementary School, which will provide a great experience for the children attending this school.

The third location is on THE GROUNDS OF THE EAST POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY!! Because we’re open to the public, located near downtown on a major street, near Sumner Park, near Jefferson Station and Tri-Cities High School, all of which make this a perfect location for a public orchard and a great use of the property around our facility!

Some of the species that will be planted are fig, pear, plum, apple, persimmon, pawpaw and pecan. Educational information will include opportunities to learn about the orchards and to volunteer with planting and maintenance of the orchards. The trees will be planted in early 2015. There will be a meeting to set a date and time for the plantings and to discuss the trees to be planted at each site.

Congratulations to Frances Kennedy and Keep East Point Beautiful on the grant and the opportunity to leave a bountiful legacy for generations! And thank you Lowe’s for providing the funds for East Point’s new orchards!  
 –Holly Keyes, EPHS Board Member



*Edward Gordon Nabell, 1896. He was born in 1877 in East Point. This farm, was near where Nabell Avenue is now, in the Colonial Hills Neighborhood. It was a family plot farmed by the Nabell family for whom Nabell Avenue was named.*



## In Memoriam Arianna We Hardly Knew You

With heartfelt loss, we bring you news that our most recent addition to the EPHS Board has passed. The Atlanta Progressive News (on-line) had this to say: Arianna Sikes, who served as a Policy Advisor and Senior Council Aide to Atlanta City Councilwoman Cleta Winslow (District 4), was found to have passed away...May 24, 2014. She was described as a “breath of fresh air” at Atlanta City Hall. “She was a wonderful staff person of mine,” Winslow told Atlanta Progressive News, referring to Sikes’s struggles with seizures. (Arianna Sikes, 1979-2014, !Presente!, APN May 25, 2014)

Arianna was Chair of the East Point Cultural Enrichment Commission. ADS Group, LLC was the grant writing company she founded in 2012. She was the type of EPHS board member we hunger for: young, enthusiastic, talented, and friendly. We would have been overjoyed to welcome her on the board with any one of those four abilities, much less all. She was outstanding, and we had her for only 2 to 3 months. She passed far too young.  
 –D. Gordon Draves, VP EPHS



### Visit Us Online...

The EPHS is enjoying a thriving online presence. We now have over 800 members on Facebook! Our online community shares stories and photos and helps reconnect people.

Please visit our official website at [www.eastpointths.org](http://www.eastpointths.org) or join our group if you’re on Facebook., and we also have an Instagram account!

### ...or In Person!

Learn more about East Point history and see first hand the collection of artifacts, photographs, maps and records that further illustrate East Point’s history.

We are located at 1685 Norman Berry Drive, East Point, GA. Our phone number is 404-766-4656.

Our hours are as follow:  
 Thursday, 12 p.m.-3 p.m.  
 Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

2015 EPHS Annual membership

I/we would like to renew my/our annual membership at the following membership level and help bring East Point's past to the present for the benefit of the future:

- Single, \$10
- Family, \$15
- Corporate, \$50
- Donation of any amount gratefully accepted, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**EPHS is a nonprofit organization that depends on your membership and generosity in order to operate.**  
**We welcome your contribution whether it be your time or monetary donation.**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and send to the following address with your check:

East Point Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 90675  
 East Point, Georgia 30364-0675

Or visit us in person:

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