

EST. 1979

EAST POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2012

President's Note

Dear Folks,

I have had the honor of being the President of the EPHS for the past four years and have seen just how important the organization is to the community at large and its contributions to all of the people of the City of East Point.

I've seen little kids and adults, both young and old walk through those halls in absolute wonderment while looking at the rich history of our municipality.

Our city has a poignant and prolific history, and much of it is outlined and portrayed in the museum, whether in the form of empirical data or in artifacts like antiquated police badges and uniforms from another era, or the locomotive and its caboose parked outside.



Thank you all for accepting me into the fold and for allowing me to serve as your President for the last several years. You've made this Poor Poet (literally) feel at home. When Steve Bramlett (God rest his soul) nominated me for the Presidency, I was at first unsure, but then fell in love with the EPHS, what it stands for and its endeavors. It became sort of an extended family to me. I am also grateful to Ora Jean and Olen Gunnin, the founders of the EPHS, for their approval and support.

One of my prime goals as President has been to make sure that it is known that the EPHS welcomes and includes all of the people, with an emphasis on the word all, and keep our doors open to the person on the street, and make sure that ordinary, everyday folk know that they can come and visit anytime that our doors are open. We want to be viewed as accessible, and not as some isolated, esoteric-elitist club on the hill.

Though I am retiring as President, I hope to make myself available in any way that I might be of service to the organiza-

tion in the future. In conclusion, let me say that I believe that the East Point Historical Society is an invaluable asset to the City of East Point and to the community at large, and shall remain so for years to come. Any city worth its salt has a place to store its archives and memorabilia, the proof and records of its past. This is intrinsically essential to its future and for generations to come. East Point has that in the EPHS.

God bless and long live the EPHS.

– Walter Griffin, EPHS Outgoing President

Quarterly Membership Meeting

Our next quarterly meeting will be Sunday, March 25, 2012 at 3:00 PM at the East Point Avenue United Methodist Church (across the street from City Hall).

This will also be our "Annual" meeting when the slate of officers and directors as nominated by the present board will be presented for approval by the general membership.

We are honored to have as our guest speaker, Dr. William E. Fry, a 1971 graduate of Russell High School, who is researching and documenting the 60-year history of the Russell Band. He just retired after 36 years of service to music education and is writing the Russell Band History as his first retirement project.

After his graduation at Russell, where he was a band student of Dr. William Prescott, Fry graduated from Columbus State University (GA) in 1975 and received the Masters of Music Education from Georgia State University in 1981. He obtained the Doctor of Musical Arts in Instrumental Conducting from the University of North Carolina/Greensboro in 1991.

Prior to his recent retirement from a music position with the Muscogee County School District (Columbus, GA), Fry held band conducting positions at Columbus State University and Susquehanna University (PA). From 1975 to 1987, Fry was coordinator of all instrumental music activities at Redan High School, Stone Mountain, Georgia, and held an assistant conductor position with the Yaarab (Atlanta) Shrine Band.

Fry has appeared as a feature conductor at the Georgia Music Educators State Convention, Florida State University "Tri-State" Conductors Symposium, CBDNA/NBA Southeastern Regional, and the Carolina Conductors Symposium. He has authored several articles on conducting and is a noted authority on the band music of Don Gillis.

Fry resides with his wife, Anne, in Columbus, Georgia, where he is a part-time member of the saxophone section of the Columbus Cavaliers Jazz Band and has been conductor of the Columbus Community Orchestra for 12 years. He is also a saxophonist with "DNR," an all-doctor rock band that performs volunteer benefits throughout the Columbus area.

– Charles Strickland, EPHS Board Member

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

James L. Jackson

In recognition of Black History Month in February, the East Point Historical Society is proud to honor Mr. James L. Jackson, who has lived in East Point, Georgia for over 80 years.

Mr. Jackson moved to East Point, Georgia with his grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. James and Mattie Meadows in 1926 at the age of three. They resided in a \$12.00 per month rental property in the East Washington Avenue and Central Avenue area near the railroad tracks.

Mr. Jackson stated East Point was a thriving industrial community with seven cotton mills and two chemical plants. His grandfather worked at the Hercules Power Company which still exists today. Mr. Jackson remembers the community grocer, school and his neighborhood church being only a few blocks from his home on Georgia Avenue. For entertainment, the Fairfax Theatre was where black citizens could watch a movie, but upstairs only.

He mentioned the City of East Point being a predominately white city with neighborhood boundaries separating the small black community from the larger white communities. He remembers somewhat friendly duals as the white and black children would periodically chase each other back into their own territories.

Mr. Jackson attended East Point School where he completed his elementary education before attending Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, Georgia. He shared he had to commute to Washington High because there were no high schools for black students to attend in East Point.

In 1942, Mr. Jackson enlisted in the United States Civil Service where he traveled worldwide gaining knowledge and many useful skills. He retired from the Army as a Tech Sergeant, and returned to East Point in 1946, and obtained employment as a mechanic's assistant and driver for the federal government. He also met a sweet and beautiful lady named Gladys Phillips while attending their neighborhood church. Although she did not like baseball, Mr. Jackson's favorite sport, he said they were compatible in personality and strengths. They courted for a year and were married in his mother-in-laws living room in 1947.

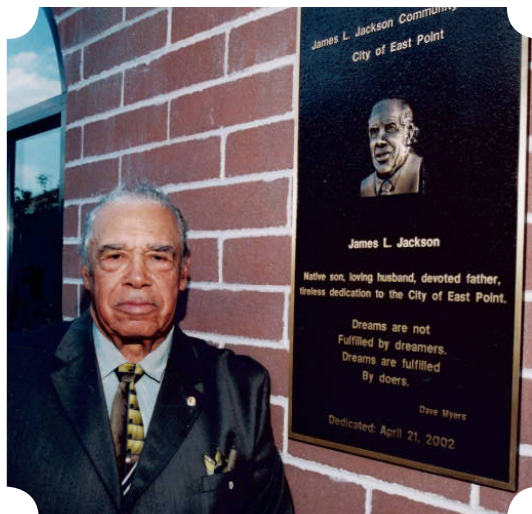
Mr. Jackson continued to excel in his career where he displayed a high work ethic, excellent quality of work and determination which were continuously recognized by his supervisors. After 27 years of work, Mr. Jackson retired at age 48 and he shared, 'I love every minute of it.' He has enjoyed traveling, and hunting rabbit which Mrs. Jackson is an expert in cleaning.

In 1972, Mr. Jackson was the first black man to run for election for the East Point Councilman position in Ward B. He ran for this position from 1972-1988 consecutively, and although he did not win, he became very popular and accomplished many positive endeavors in the East Point community.

Mr. Jackson stated, "It is not about winning or losing, but achieving." He has been on several boards and committees during his life in the City of East Point including president of the Gus Thornhill Scholarship Committee, member of the bi-racial council and a member of the East Point Housing Review Board.

In 2002, the then Mayor, Patsy Joe Hilliard, named the East Point Pedestrian Bridge, near the East Point Marta station at Washington Road and extending over the railroad and MARTA tracks ending at Cleveland Avenue, in Mr. Jackson's honor.

A plaque acknowledging his tireless dedication to our city is located on the Cleveland Road entrance to the bridge (see photo).



The Jacksons have now been married for 64 years. They have two grown children, five grandchildren and two great-grand children. Mr. Jackson is nearly 90 years old, and continues his 80 plus years of church service at East Point First Mallalieu United Methodist Church, a 2002 successful merger of two historic churches in East Point: Mallalieu United Methodist Church (Mr. Jackson's church as a boy), and East Point First United Methodist Church. He holds the position of lay leader, sings in the choir, and leads a weekly community Bible study.

During Mr. Jackson's long life there have been many blessings, and, of course, there have been some hard times woven in as well, but with a few tears and a smile, he expressed that he gives the praise and credit to God for enabling him to endure and grow from them, provide for his family and serve others in East Point and abroad.

I asked Mr. Jackson if he had any advice he would like to give to the youth of East Point and he immediately said, "The youth don't know enough about their history. We come from kings. Forget saying we are slaves, but instead say and know that you come from kings." I asked Mr. Jackson if he had any last words to share and he stated, "Pray that I may be of service to someone." My last question to Mr. Jackson was if he ever plans to move away from East Point. He exclaimed, "No way! East Point is the best city in the world!"

I feel like I have known Mr. Jackson for years. It is my hope that you, the reader, now know him, his family and his life's commitment to the betterment of East Point, Georgia a little better as well.

– Cassandra Ware, EPHS Board Member

Remember to Visit Us Online

The EPHS is enjoying a thriving online presence. We now have over 300 members on Facebook! Our online community shares stories and photos and helps reconnect people.

Please visit our official website at www.eastpoinths.org and follow the link to our Facebook page.



See you soon!

EAST POINT CENTENNIAL QUILT

A History Lesson in Needlework

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. This is the first in a series of East Point history lessons, as reflected in a sampling of the quilt's squares.

The land that East Point now occupies was Creek Indian territory until 1821 when the Treaty of Indian Springs transferred ownership to the U.S. government



East Point's settlers farmed and developed industries related to agriculture from the very beginning through the late 19th century.



The town that was to be known as East Point was the result of a strategic location where two railroad lines intersected. In 1847, the Georgia legislature chartered what was later named the Atlanta and West Point Railroad. East Point was its eastern terminus, where it met the Central of Georgia line that ran between Atlanta and Macon.



In 1851, East Point gained official recognition with the establishment of a U.S. Post Office.



Farming and industry related to it grew around the railroad terminus. After the Civil War, East Point experienced a rapid growth in industry and housing for factory workers. Atlanta's demand for suburban development spilled over into East Point as well. By 1887, this expansion warranted East Point's incorporation by act of the Georgia Legislature. This design of the city seal features East Point's City Hall, its industrial base and housing opportunities.



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, 1685 Norman Berry Drive, 404-766-4656 on Thursday and Saturday afternoons.

– Carole Griffith, former EPHS Board Member

Thank-You to our Corporate Sponsors

It is through the support of businesses like you that we are able to keep the history of East Point alive and accessible to the public at the East Point Historical Society Museum and Research Facility.

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2012 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): _____

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*Thanks for
your
support!*



PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, CUT IT OUT AND SEND TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS WITH YOUR CHECK BY MARCH 31:

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