A Virginia-Highland Pioneer and His Legacy to This Neighborhood

by Jeni Evans

One of Virginia-Highland's earliest residents was also one of the first pioneers to settle in what is now Atlanta. Today, Todd Road, which runs from Highland View to Virginia Avenue, honors that Atlanta pioneer -- Richard C. Todd.

Todd settled in this area in 1822, the year after the Indians left and the area was available for settlement by white pioneers through the land lottery. (Todd family history credits Richard Todd as being the one who encouraged his brother-in-law, Hardy Ivy, husband of Sarah Todd, to also come to North Georgia. Ivy was the first person to build a permanent residence in what is now Atlanta, though Todd is also recognized as one of the very first settlers in Fulton County, as he purchased land lot #17 from William Zachry immediately after the lot was awarded to him. Of course, Fulton County did not then exist, but it was eventually carved out of the existing counties.)

Todd was a farmer from South Carolina who continued to farm once he settled here. As there was no industry, no railroad and no Atlanta, as yet, it was probably the availability of land that brought Todd, Ivy and others to this area.

Land lot #17, like all other land lots, was 202.5 acres. Its approximate boundaries today are North Avenue, Adair Avenue, Boulevard/Monroe Drive, and Barnett Street, though in Richard Todd's day, none of these streets were in existence.

Richard Todd died in 1852. Of his six children, four were sons -- three of whom were lost in the Civil War. The surviving son was Judge John C. Todd who kept most of the original lot together by buying the interests of the other heirs.

Richard Todd and his wife Martha were buried in the family cemetery, located behind their home on Greenwood Avenue. Although the house is no longer standing, the cemetery is still there, a reminder of Virginia-Highland's rural antebellum history.

Franklin Garrett Speaks at March Meeting

Franklin Garrett, noted Atlanta historian, will be speaking to the neighborhood at the March 6 General Meeting of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association. He will be presenting a history of the Virginia-Highland neighborhood and answering any questions you might have concerning the development of this area.

Meeting time is 7:30 at the Ponce de Leon branch of the Library.
Being a Security-Conscious Neighbor
The following article is part of a series on personal safety and property protection by Ken Lavine, president of Pro-Tech Security Systems, Inc. and co-chair of the Civic Association Public Safety Committee.

Everyone has heard stories about various crimes in the neighborhood; everything from car vandalism to rape. And everyone knows at least one person who has been a crime victim at one time or another. We need to think about it so we'll be prepared to respond effectively if it happens to us. If we communicate with our neighbors, perhaps we can help each other before we become victims.

Each of the following questions represents a situation that most of us have been in at one time or another. Read the questions first, and think about how you've responded in the past or how you think you'd respond in a similar situation. Then read the suggestions we offer about each situation. Did you think of an effective response in each situation?

What do you do if a stranger comes to your door soliciting donations or asking for food or work?
Don't open the door. Remember, food and shelter are available from the appropriate organizations. If you speak, just direct him to the nearest phone booth. Don't reveal your habits or any information about your home. If he persists after you have finished speaking, tell him firmly to leave your property. After he leaves, call 911. Your neighbor may benefit from your responsible action.

What do you consider suspicious activity in your neighborhood?
Anything out of the ordinary that makes you uncomfortable and gives you reasonable cause for alarm.

What would you do if you saw someone you considered suspicious?
Call 911. Describe the suspicious activity and the person involved. Give the exact location and time you noticed the activity.

How would you describe a suspect to the police?
Keep to the basics: race, facial hair, build. If you remember a telling detail, such as an unusual item of clothing, include it in your description.

What would you do if you heard a whistle or a cry for help?
Look out your window and see if you can get a description of the suspect. Call 911.

(continued on page 16)
Letter from the Editor

One drawback that I have found to our country’s electoral system is that our votes are difficult to fine tune. If we vote for a particular politician because of his or her stand on one issue, we must accept that person’s position on many other issues as well. Many people are discouraged from voting because they feel they must compromise in this way in any election.

For those who feel the way I do, you will see this issue’s Ponce de Leon survey as a bright spot. This is an opportunity to fine tune our control of the institutions which govern our lives. The data we gather will be made available not only to elected officials, but also to many private individuals who make decisions along Ponce de Leon.

The issue of our homeless neighbors has received a lot of media attention, not only in these pages, but also in many other publications across the country. In Atlanta, we who live, work, and serve along Ponce de Leon Avenue are the experts on this situation. We live face-to-face with all of the emotions of homelessness instead of just hearing and reading about them. We feel, not just intellectually. Although we are often in disagreement about how to address the problems --and even what the problems are-- we can and must continue to look for solutions. Silence would be our worst mistake.

“Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all--the apathy of human beings.”

--Helen Keller

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Virginia-Highland Civic Association
Calendar of Events

**MARCH**

6  VHCA General Meeting
   Franklin Garrett Speaking
11  Recycling Pickup
16  St. Patrick’s Day 5K Race
18  NPU-F Meeting
27  Zoning Meeting

**APRIL**

3  VHCA General Meeting
8  Recycling Pickup
15  NPU-F Meeting
15  Voice Deadline-Articles and Ads
24  Zoning Meeting
28  Dionysia (see page 14)

**MAY**

1  VHCA General Meeting
6  Recycling Pickup

20  NPU-F Meeting
29  Zoning Meeting

All meetings are open to the public. Anyone who wishes to discuss a topic of interest to the neighborhood with the Board should call ahead to get on the agenda. Otherwise, your concern may not get all the attention it deserves. Call 876-8970.

Note: The VHCA General Meetings and Zoning Meetings are held at the Ponce de Leon Branch Library at 7:30 PM. The NPU-F Meetings are held at the Morningside Presbyterian Church at 7:30 PM.
Grady Students Speak Out
The following essays about homelessness, war and other current issues were written by 9th and 10th graders at Grady High School.

What It Means To Be American
by James Miller

Being American used to be a big deal to me. When I was younger—about 10 and in fifth grade—my friends and I used to make fun of the kids who weren't from America. It wasn't because they weren't born in America that we played pranks on them. It was the fact that they didn't talk like "us normal kids."

You could almost see the scene: an Oriental kid straight from Japan, crying his eyes out on the playground surrounded by a bunch of dirty, bedraggled boys. Back then, I was all for this type of emotional "lynching." I use the word lynching because we destroyed their integrity and their sense of self-esteem. Looking back on it, I'm sorry for what I did and I wonder how they are doing today.

I used to take pride in being born in the United States, but now I'm not so sure. I can always remember being taught about America's history and hearing about our great forefathers. They always refer to the black man as a slave. It's good to know your nation's history and all that, but if you're going to learn American history, you should learn about all of its facets. This should include the Black American's struggle for freedom and independence, which is still going on today.

Americans have rallies, demonstrations, pickets, books, etc., on world peace, but peace starts from within. Until America conquers its problems of racism, bigotry, homelessness and illiteracy—just a few—then we should stay out of other nations' business and worry about our own affairs.

Journal 10
by Jascha Wanger

The wind was blowing from east to west and my skin was as cold as a polar bear's nose. It must have been 2 degrees outside. It was mid-December. I walked past a storefront window where there must have been thirty televisions, all on the same channel.

I continued walking past other stores when I came upon a dark storefront with odd-looking costumes. I entered the store to see such things as fake blood and other props. I stumbled to the back of the store where I fell through a trapdoor. I found myself in a long tunnel. The floor had a layer of real blood! I continued walking down the corridor to come upon a door. It was then I noticed that oil was mixed with the blood. The door had oil running down it.

The door opened and I saw George Bush at a table with beakers and other lab equipment on it. Off to the side there was a car. I slowly walked up to George and asked him what he was doing. He said he's first seeing if blood is thicker than oil and second, if he could find a way to run a car on blood. It just goes to show you how we should spend all that money on finding alternatives to oil instead of spending it on keeping troops over in Saudi Arabia.

I don't think the U.S. people would still support action when people start coming back in body bags. I don't understand why people my age don't really care about what's going on over in Saudi Arabia that much.
More Grady Writing

**Love?**
*by Sir Jason Green*

Love is funny. It plays with your heart and your mind. It makes you do things that you wouldn't normally do. It also plays a very big, important part in your life, giving you strength and sometimes even pain. You have to be strong in order to face what happens, good or bad, because there's no turning back. There's always tomorrow.

**Relationships**
*by Sir Jason Green*

When you're in love with somebody, you will know. When you are in love, you sometimes feel happy or sad. When your girlfriend or boyfriend says it's over, don't get sad. Get glad. Dump that zero and go with a real Hero.

**The Streets of Atlanta**
*by Tim Kimbrell*

The streets of Atlanta are a rich and glamorous place. A lot of the people are wealthy and widely known. The most glamorous place in Atlanta is Buckhead, but there are many other luxurious places, with elegant buildings and people. Downtown is another fabulous place of designs and people.

The people of Atlanta have a positive attitude that their city could be bettered for the benefit of everyone. Atlanta has great pride within itself and there have been a number of parties and parades. The two most recent parades were the Olympic parade and a victory parade for Evander Holyfield. Unfortunately, there is a downside to Atlanta. There are drugs, gangs, crime, and most importantly to me—homelessness. Drugs are the most troublesome problem of Atlanta's streets. Young children are dying, selling and using these killers. It's sad to see so many young people dying and killing for these drugs. The ones who distribute the most drugs are in gangs. The users are the ones that commit a lot of crimes to get money to buy drugs from the gangs.

The homeless people of Atlanta are the saddest problem of all. They sleep, live and die in the streets. It's sad to see a young lady living on the streets with her children because her parents didn't try to help her out. Then when she tries to get a job, the employer turns her down because she doesn't have an address. It's the same way with welfare. Whenever you go, you see lots of men, women and children everyday who have no place to sleep, no food, no family and no warm clothes.

Every problem can be solved by the people of Atlanta, with a little love, caring, patience and a little money from everyone. All of the problems could disappear in a very short time if we could come together and fight our own war against the problems of Atlanta's streets.
Curious to know what projects the neighborhood was working on ten years ago? I was lucky enough to get my hands on an issue of *The VOICE* dated November, 1980. Here goes:

- The December meeting was the annual Christmas Party and Awards Ceremony. People who had given their time and talents to the Civic Association over the year were recognized.

- The Police Assistance Committee had 3-inch white reflective tape house numerals for sale for 60 cents. They were highly recommended by the fire and police departments because they were both visible and readable from the street.

- Lorraine Frankel had agreed to co-chair the St. Valentine's Day Swing, an annual dance begun the year before with the Midtown and Morningside-Lenox Park neighborhoods.

- Charles Longley and Jeff Whalen were the co-chairpersons of the Annual Tour of Homes for spring.

- Jerry Bright was the co-chairperson of the June In-Town Celebration. He was requesting a co-chairperson to help with the parade.

- The History Committee needed a co-chairperson to keep track of clippings about the Virginia-Highland Civic Association.

- The community was moving closer to obtaining additional park land along the south side of Virginia Avenue between Arcadia and Barnett streets. The DOT and the City of Atlanta were negotiating an exchange of properties (the Virginia Avenue land for parcels then held by the City, which DOT needed for expansion of the Downtown Connector). The City would, in turn, open negotiations with the Civic Association to keep the land as open space if the neighborhood would provide maintenance and upkeep.

- Neighborhood School News featured Georgia State art students who were practice teaching at C. W. Hill Elementary School. Inman Middle School had a Red Cross Club and Halloween parties for hospitalized children. Morningside Elementary had a week of KALEIDOSCOPE, during which an artist-in-residence at the school worked with the children.

The issues were quite different back then, but the Association was very active. Maybe we can take some of the old ways and use them now.
Variance and How to Get One

By Steve Jagger

As our neighborhood has become more popular, there has been an increased rate of remodeling and requests for variances. The Virginia Highland Civic Association is involved in the process, but it DOES NOT approve or deny variances. However, it does vote to support or oppose individual variances.

This is the process we go through for each variance. First, the Civic Association Planning Committee reviews proposed projects and makes recommendations to the Neighborhood Trustees at their next meeting. The Trustees vote to support or oppose each project and send a letter and/or representatives to the next meeting of NPU-F (Neighborhood Planning Unit F).

Next, NPU-F reviews each variance and votes to support or oppose it. Both groups then send a letter and/or representatives to the next meeting of the Board of Zoning Adjustments. The Board votes to grant (with or without conditions) or deny the variance.

The variance process is not a short or easy one. However, the Planning Committee can help you along. The following is a list of documents and considerations that should help ease and speed the process:

1. Come to the V-H Planning Committee meetings (the last Wednesday of each month at the Ponce de Leon Branch Library at 7:30 PM) as early in the planning process as possible. We have been doing this for quite a while and are familiar with the process and many of the problems you will encounter. We may be able to help speed things along.

2. When you present your project to the Planning Committee, be prepared to leave a copy of the site plan and a sketch of what the completed project should look like. This allows us to review the impact of the project on adjacent property owners and the neighborhood as a whole. A variance is normally conditional on executing the project in accordance with the plan presented to the Neighborhood. A permanent record will help avoid any "misunderstandings" later.

3. If you have the support of your neighbors, ask them to write you a letter and bring a copy for our files. If you are a neighbor in opposition to someone else's project, come to the meeting and express your opinion.

In planning your project, keep the following in mind: Virginia Highland is part of a Conservation District (parts of it are Historic Districts). This means that the houses and ancillary structures, in many cases, are considered to be of historic significance. It is the intent of the Civic Association (based on the Comprehensive Development Plan) to maintain and promote the current style and mix of the neighborhood. Therefore, your project should be compatible with the style of the existing structures and the neighborhood mix. This includes style as well as intensity, quality of the project or "appropriateness".

The design of your project is up to you. However, bear in mind that you have successfully opposed "ultra-contemporary" projects in the past because they did not fit in. Your design and site plans will usually have to be approved by the Urban Design Commission as well as all of the other appropriate city code officials. Our support is usually conditional on maintaining setbacks, heights, density (in the case of multi structures), etc. that are in character with the zoning ordinances and other houses on the same street. We no longer support parking reductions for any reason.

In addition to the style and appearance of a project, the Planning Committee takes into consideration such things as type of construction, long-term maintenance problems (based on materials, etc.) and access for maintenance that could affect the neighborhood.

INMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Ellen England and Janice Giddens

The first semester was a busy time with many activities and academic accomplishments. We had a spaghetti dinner, sixth grade mixer, new student/parent meeting, book fair, Red Cross health instruction, dance/activity night, parent workshop, Grady Night and two PTA meetings.

We now look forward to an even more eventful second semester. Some of the events planned are: Dance/Activity Night for the students with parent workshops for the adults. February 15, J.J. Reneaux will spend the day giving two performances and eat lunch with the students sometime in February. After spring break, Odadaa will perform at Inman in conjunction with a Ghanian Exhibition at Emory. The spring fund raising event will be April 26 which will include a silent auction. The tutoring committee has had great success but always needs more volunteers. We invite prospective students, parents or neighbors to participate in any of the activities. For more information, call the hotline at 594-5812 or Janice Giddens at 873-1845.

Inman Middle School continues to improve with the help of a hardworking principal, faculty, staff, PTA, parents and students. The spirit of Inman keeps it a School of Excellence.

Mitch Falkin
5 Years of Virginia Highland Real Estate Experience
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February/March Program Schedule
Ponce de Leon Branch Atlanta Public Library

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Dates/Time</th>
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<td>AARP Tax Assistance</td>
<td>Sr. Citizens</td>
<td>Mondays, 10 am-2 pm</td>
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<td>Feb. 4, 11, 25</td>
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<td>March 4, 11, 18, 25</td>
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<td>Time for Two's*</td>
<td>2 year olds</td>
<td>Tuesdays, 10 am</td>
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<td>Feb. 5 and 19</td>
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<td>March 5 and 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytime*</td>
<td>3-5 year olds</td>
<td>Wednesdays, 10 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytime*</td>
<td>3 years-K</td>
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<td>Sleepytime*</td>
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* Reservations are required for groups

February is Black History Month. There will be a special display of materials and staff will assist patrons with research. During the month, storytime will feature books that emphasize the Black and African-American experience.

Liberty Playhouse
The Ponce de Leon Library celebrated its first anniversary with a new acquisition -- a cozy, gabled playhouse. The child-size structure was designed by Terry Minor, architect for the new branch. It was built as a volunteer project by Mike Couch and Bill Thomsen, with the assistance of Kathy Couch and Sally and Sarah Thomsen. Donations for materials were made by the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Highland Hardware and Peter H. Hand and Associates.

We've Added Punch To Murphy's Take-Out.
Bring this mailer in and receive a punch card for our take-out deli. When the card is all punched out, use it for a $5.00 discount on your next take-out purchase. Come on in and I'll pull the first $3.00 punch.

Our deli-to-go is filled with fresh selections made daily by our four in-house chefs. Choose from imaginative salads, a full take-out menu, fresh baked goods, desserts, beer, wine and gourmet coffees.

Murphy's also offers dependable delivery to your front door at a small fee. Or call us in advance with your order and we'll have it bagged and ready to go for you to pick up.

Murphy's also likes company for dinner...and breakfast and lunch. Since 1979, Murphy's has been the neighborhood restaurant/deli which offers a full-entrée menu, complete catering service and bakery. Come in and see us sometime.

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Good Neighbor Policy
by Kathy Couch
Living cheek-by-jowl the way we do allows us to develop a wonderful sense of community. But it's also easy for little things to become major annoyances. Dog droppings and false security alarms, for instance.

When you walk your dog, be a good neighbor and keep him off of other people's property. No one should have to clean up after someone else's pet. Or worse yet, step in it! Keep your dog's activities confined to the right-of-way between the sidewalk and the street. And be sure to clean up after him so that no one will get an unpleasant surprise stepping in and out of parked cars. Pooper scoopers are available at pet stores for a few dollars.

If you exercise your dog in Orme Park, neighbors in the area ask that you do so at the southern end, away from the children's playground. City ordinances require you to keep your dog on a leash.

If you have a security system, you owe it to your neighbors and yourself to make sure it works properly. Repeated false alarms defeat the whole idea of having a system in the first place. Even if false alarms are rare, consider giving your house key and alarm code to at least one neighbor you trust. When on vacation, let that person know where you can be reached in case of a real emergency. And if you don't know anyone well enough, get out and do something about that!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY 5K RACE
by Doug Sligh

The Virginia-Highland Track Club (VHTC) will host its annual St. Patrick's Day 5K Race on March 16th. This is the 8th year for the race and they usually have about 750-1000 runners. Last year they had over 500 runners in the rain!

The starting line is located on Los Angeles, about a block west of N. Highland Ave. The route covers several residential streets around Orme Park, Amsterdam, and Courtney. The runners will finish at the playscape area of Orme Park.

This is a great opportunity to get involved with people in the community. Businesses and individuals can take part by contacting Doug Sligh, President of the VHTC, at 525-6507.
The Ponce de Leon Task Force (PTF) is a coalition of businesses and neighborhoods (including this one) which are joining forces to address the problems (crime, homelessness and substance abuse to name a few) along Ponce de Leon Avenue. The Task Force has been meeting regularly for the last year and has sought long term solutions.

The PTF realizes that it is not clear how to address the problems. There are many impassioned voices and all have good reason to be impassioned - the voices are not only emotional but are often most rational as well. The PTF is hoping that the reason so many rational voices can disagree is because they/we have different information. Thus, the PTF's first and most important goal is to communicate.

Many of you have seen the PTF slide show at neighborhood meetings. Others perhaps have read about the goals and early successes of the PTF in these pages. The goal in this issue is to solicit your input.

One of the long range goals of the Task Force is to develop a plan for the Ponce de Leon Corridor. Phase I of this plan is a twofold survey: 1) a property inventory of all properties along the Ponce Corridor and 2) an opinion survey to determine what we want to see happen. The survey on the facing page is the second part of Phase I. Phase II will be to formulate a development plan based on information gathered in the first phase. Information from the opinion survey will be made available to anyone who requests it. Everyone who makes decisions affecting the Ponce Corridor will be made aware of the information we have gathered: developers, business owners, service organizations, public servants, elected officials, and police, as well as neighbors.

This neighborhood is one of several that are participating in this survey. Since the schedules for each neighborhood are different, you may read about partial results in the next issue. Eventually, when all the forms are returned and tallied, you will find the final results here.

Completing the Survey
First check off as many of the ten categories at the top that would apply to you.

The statements which follow the ten categories should be graded on a scale from 1 to 9. If you strongly disagree with the statement, then circle the 1. If you strongly agree, then circle the 9. If you are completely undecided or really don't think it is a worthwhile statement, then circle 5. All opinions in between are shades of gray.

The PTF welcomes any additional comments on a separate sheet of paper. In particular, they would like to know what type of personality you envision for Ponce de Leon. Some ideas to jot your thoughts are an Arts & Crafts District, International Corridor (appropriate for the Olympics and in-line with our current diversity), or International Cinema. If you have any ideas: solutions to the problems, dreams for a better life, crazy off-the-wall ideas - let them know.

We, the people who live face-to-face daily with the trials and tribulations of Ponce de Leon, are the experts on the situation. The PTF is tapping into this resource. Let your best thoughts flow.

Returning the survey for tabulation
You can mail or drop off your completed survey to:

PTF Survey
1109 N. Highland Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30306

Or drop it off at:
Babes in Highland
1030 N. Highland Avenue
(on corner at Virginia)

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Ponce de Leon Task Force Survey

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