

sign in

Tuesday, July 30, 2013

- Choose Your Neighbor
- Buckhead
- Brookhaven
- Sandy Springs
- Vinings
- Alpharetta
- Roswell
- Johns Creek
- Milton
- All Neighbors
- Dunwoody
- DeKalb
- Douglas
- Paulding
- Bartow
- South Fulton
- Clayton
- Henry

articles

Column: Before Buckhead natives there were Native Americans

by Thornton Kennedy
Northside Neighbor Columnist

September 19, 2012 11:44 AM | 2564 views | 0  | 19   



[view image](#)

Some trace Buckhead's history back to Henry Irby's tavern in the 1840s.

Others think Buckhead's history begins with the emergence of neighborhoods, schools and businesses along Peachtree Road as the area morphed from a rural farming enclave into a thriving suburb of the city of Atlanta.

The actual human history of the area extends back much earlier, by literally thousands of years. I remember well searching the grounds of The Lovett School on Paces Ferry Road for the odd arrowhead or pottery shard. With Lovett being on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, there were many stories and artifacts linking the private school campus to the area's earliest residents. Those stories, it turns out, are the stories of much of Buckhead, Sandy Springs and Vinings, as earlier Native American settlements tended to be along the creeks and rivers that are so prevalent.

OPENING JULY 18TH
YOUR OUTLET FOR A GRAND OPENING LIKE NO OTHER

APPROVED
The Outlet Shoppes at Atlanta
LEARN MORE

Your ad belongs here...
Call us to learn more
770.428.9411 x501

Long before Thrasherville, which in 1839 was the earliest community in the downtown area, the rich abundance of natural resources here drew Native Americans, specifically the Muscogee people. Their stories will be explored on Sept. 29 at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve as the Buckhead Heritage Society presents Buckhead's Native American history.

Looking back 5,000 years to when we have evidence of the earliest humans living here up through the more recent history, one thing is abundantly clear. Our love affair with roads predates the automobile, the horse and buggy and anyone with an Anglican last name. The grounds upon which the northern enclaves grew were crisscrossed with well-traveled Indian trails.

The most famous of these is perhaps the Hightower Trail, which crossed through northern Sandy Springs. It sounds as if a settler named the trail. That is not the case. "Hightower" was a mispronunciation of "Etowah" which somehow picked up an "h," becoming "Hightower" when said in a British accent (eye-tow-wah). The Muscogee are misnamed as well. The many references to Creek Indians are actually the same people as the Muscogee. British explorers called the Muscogee "Creek" because of their propensity to live near water.

Park Ranger Jerry Hightower will be leading the program at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve, which costs \$5 for children of members and \$10 for children whose parents have not yet joined. He is uniquely qualified. Raised on Powers Ferry Road, his interest in Native American history was sparked as a child when he found artifacts in his back yard. Among the interesting finds were flint and chert, which he traced back to Fort Payne, Ala.

That may not seem too terribly far, but for nomadic tribes walking more than 100 miles through thick Southeastern woodlands, it was quite a trek. Jerry is now a park ranger and environmental

educator with the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area. He said he will have plenty of artifacts on hand for next Saturday's program. The Buckhead Heritage Society notes that there were Native American settlements in the current preserve and Chastain Park areas. Please visit www.buckheadheritage.com/events to register as space for the Blue Heron program is limited.

Thornton Kennedy is a fifth-generation Buckhead resident and can be reached at thorntonkennedy@me.com.

[Share This Article](#) |

similar stories

- [African Children's Choir to perform at Buckhead Theatre](#) | 12 days ago
- [Column: Historic groups lend relevance to Independence Day](#) | 28 days ago
- [Column: Pink Palace not to be confused with Pink Castle](#) | 13 days ago
- [Column: Pittsburgh defined by teams, rivers](#) | 19 days ago
- [Column: Chastain Park hosting Bluegrass and BBQ](#) | 6 days ago

Comments (0) Post a Comment

No Comments Yet

*We welcome your comments on the stories and issues of the day and seek to provide a forum for the community to voice opinions. All comments are subject to moderator approval before being made visible on the website but are not edited. The use of profanity, obscene and vulgar language, hate speech, and racial slurs is strictly prohibited. Advertisements, promotions, spam, and links to outside websites will also be rejected. Please read our [terms of service](#) for full guides



Create an Account

- [Register](#)
- [Email Alerts](#)
- [Make Us Your Homepage](#)

Help & Information Services

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

NeighborNewspapers.com

- [News](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Legal Notices](#)

Tools & Formats

- [Photos](#)
- [Email Alerts](#)
- [Submit Your Photos](#)
- [Submit Your Stories](#)
- [Purchase Photos](#)
- [Place Classified Ad](#)

Digital Network

- [Marietta Daily Journal](#)
- [Cherokee Tribune](#)
- [Cobb Life Magazine](#)
- [Cherokee Life Magazine](#)
- [Alpharetta Neighbor](#)
- [Clayton Neighbor](#)
- [Bartow Neighbor](#)
- [DeKalb Neighbor](#)
- [Douglas Neighbor](#)
- [Henry Neighbor](#)
- [Johns Creek Neighbor](#)
- [Milton Neighbor](#)
- [Northside Neighbor](#)
- [Paulding Neighbor](#)
- [Roswell Neighbor](#)
- [Sandy Springs Neighbor](#)
- [South Metro Neighbor](#)