

Community Partner: Historic Columbus

Project: Interim Report on the
East Highlands District,
Columbus GA.

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Geographical Location

The East Highlands district is located on the raised bench above the flood plains of the Chattahoochee River in Columbus, west-central Georgia. The district lies approximately 1 mile east of the river.

Boundaries (The boundaries of the district are still to be determined)

The district's southern boundary is still to be determined and may begin at 12st to include an area of industrial, service and commercial businesses. Residential neighborhoods begin approximately at 15th Street. However, for this project we used the 17th street boundary for the southern end of the district. Its northern boundary is Talbottom Road, its western boundary is 11th Avenue and the eastern boundary follows approximately along 16th Avenue as shown in the map below. The district contains 712 properties built between 1873 and 2007. The district is divided into five primary historic neighborhoods: Bonny Doon (dates), East Highlands Groves (dates), Hill House Subdivision (dates), and East Highlands First and Second Editions (1888 and ****). The site covers approximately ** acres.

Historical Overview

East Highlands is a community that contains over 712 homes (if we go from the 17th street as the southern boundary) built between 1873 and the early 21st century, many of which were built by their owners. This community is an early unplanned street car suburb. The street car, owned by the Columbus Railroad Company, ran along a north-south axis from the city's central business district along 10th Avenue to East Highlands. By the early 20th century it had extended out to Waverly Terrace, just north of East Highlands. In contrast to Waverly Terrace (Historic District), the first "planned suburb" in Columbus, just to the north of Talbotton Road, East Highland is a prime example of an unplanned, post Civil War southern suburb that offered housing. Though some housing was provided for professional, white collar residents, this district primarily offered homes to blue-color working class residents. The district witnessed the development of both segregated and unsegregated neighborhoods in this post Civil War period.

East Highlands saw its first home completed on October 17, 1888, and in the four year period to 1892, a dozen houses were constructed. The initial development in East Highlands occurred 17th Street (formerly known as Weracoba Drive). Over the next fifty years, the district would see four major neighborhoods: East Highlands First Edition and Second Edition, East Highland Grove, Hill House Subdivision and Bonny Doon. This district was slowly embraced by the city. In 1920 the city limits extended north to include 15th to 23rd streets. In 1925 the limits were extended to include the Bonny Doon neighborhood (24th-29th streets).

District Neighborhoods:

East Highlands First Edition: This neighborhood began at Wecacoba Drive now 17th Street on the south to Talbotton Road on the north, 10th /Avenue to the West and to Wecacoba Creek. The Georgia Midland and Gulf Railway ran north to south close to the western boundary of the district and separated eleven lots from the first edition. The Columbus Railroad Company ran through East Highlands along Wildwood Drive in a northeastern direction to Wecacoba Park. The district was surveyed by Josiah Flournoy for Muscogee Realty Company. The neighborhood has four primary lot sizes.

East Highlands Second Edition:

Bonny Doon: (a subdivision within East Highlands First Addition) named after the estate of John Abraham Jones and Mary Louisa Van Leonard. The land was purchased for \$2,000 in 1898 by John F. Flournoy and H.H. Epping who owned the Columbus Investment Company. This neighborhood is made up of modest properties and was included in the city limits in 1925. Though a few properties were built in the ****, many of which are shotgun homes that were constructed in the 1930s and early 1940s. These properties were probably the residences of hosiery mill workers. Over Talbotton Road (to the north outside the East Highlands District) stood the Perkins Hosiery Mill (est. 1905), locally known as the Jordan Mill. East Highlands saw its own mill, Shannon Hosiery Mill, built in 1938. The mill was located in the East Highlands District to the west of Bonny Doon. The Shannon mill was built on a five and a half acre lot at 1338 Talbotton Road and produced silk hosiery. The local board of education purchased the mill in 1958 and for five years this was the home of the city's junior college, known as Columbus College. When the college moved the site was the home of Talbotton Road Junior High School from 1966-

1979. The mill was destroyed in 1988. Today Hannan Academy (elementary school) is located on the site of the old mill. Buck Ice was also located close to Bonny Doon and may also have housed employees.

East Highlands Groves: yet to be established

Hill House Subdivision: The name evolved from the name given to the Shepherd House estate that was located in the neighborhood along 15th Avenue to the west and 22nd street to the north, 16th Avenue to the east. In 1924 Colonel W. S. Shepherd bequeathed his family home, “Hill House” (also known as “Hillhouse”) and the eight acres on which it sat to The Ladies Educational and Benevolent Society of the City of Columbus. The bequest stipulated that the property would be maintained as the “Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Orphans’ Home” for dependent orphan girls.

Hawkins Subdivisions (phase 1 and two): *1948 city map yet to be established

Bowers (small section) – yet to be established

Amour (small section) - yet to be established

Major Institutions

- 1922 Buck Ice, T B. Buck founded the block ice delivery company using mull wagons.
- 1927 East Highlands Methodist Church (17th Street) an auditorium was added, built by J.C. Martin Jr.

Sources of Reference

Columbus State University Archives, Finding Aids.

Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home Records. Accessed at

<http://archives.columbusstate.edu/findingaids/mc22.php> accessed on May 2, 2012.

American Wool and Cotton Reporter. Volume 34, Issue 11, August 26, 1920. Boston: Frank K. Bennet and Co. Accessed at:

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