

The Historic Huntsville Quarterly

Volume 27
Number 1 *The Five Points Historic District: A
Community of Neighbors*

Article 10

3-20-2001

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Recommended Citation

Cross, Heather (2001) "The Wellman Family Park: A New Addition," *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Vol. 27: No. 1, Article 10.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol27/iss1/10>

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The Wellman Family Park: A New Addition

Heather Cross

In 1915 Helen and W. I. Wellman deeded the east half of the small triangular block at Holmes and Pratt in Five Points to the City of Huntsville “to be used and maintained as and for a public park for the benefit of the inhabitants of Huntsville and not otherwise [...] in the event the city abandons the lot or fails to maintain it as a public park, then the title shall revert to the grantors [...]” In 2000 the City Traffic Department planned to make a cut into the block for an asphalt curve and turn lane.

Upon hearing about the proposal to dissect one of the five points that may have given the East Huntsville Addition its name, Susan Bridges began her search for the original deed for the property. During her extensive research on the property, the Wellman family, and their stipulations, she contacted W. I. Wellman’s grandson, Mr. Willard Wellman Young. Mr. Young, as the heir to the Wellman property, had the right to claim the point. He, his wife Erika and Susan and her husband, Rob, met at the Young home in Florida. Together they decided the land should exist as a park for the City of Huntsville.

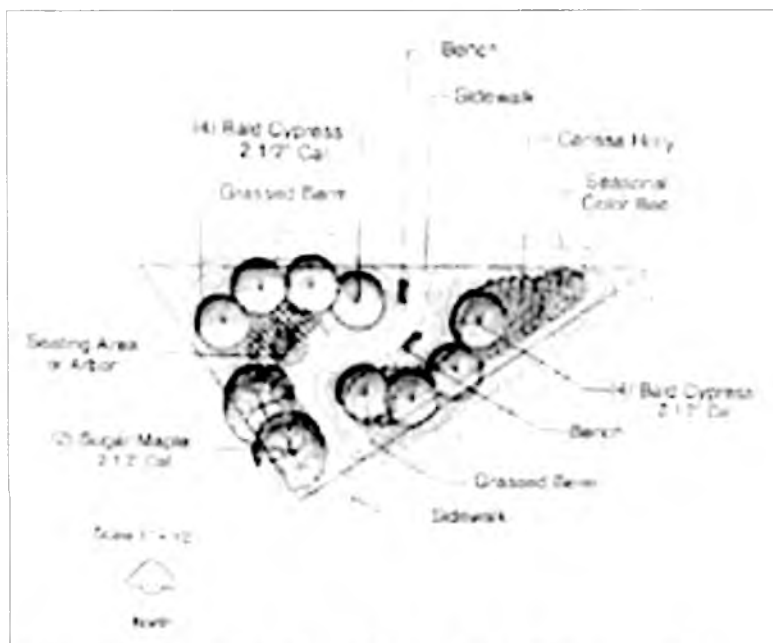


The Wellman Family Park—The east half of the “point” at the corner of Holmes and Pratt as it exists today. The house on the west half (right in the photo) of the block is the Adair house, now owned by Kirk Carlisle.

Photo Susan Bridges.

Meanwhile, one of the recommendations of the Auburn Center for Architecture and Urban Development study of the Five Points area was the addition of green space. With the support of the deed, the study recommendation, Mr. Young, and the Five Points Historic District Association, the corner of Pratt and Holmes will be landscaped with the help of local residents, businesses (Cole Landscaping, Hardee's, and Carlisle Gallery, so far) and Operation Green Team. The finished point will be renamed the Wellman Family Park.

This new addition to the familiar places and homes of Five Points began as part of the 1888 plat of land the Northwest Land Association—composed of investors such as W.S. Wells, Tracy Pratt, and Willard I. Wellman—purchased from the North Alabama Improvement Company in 1892. It seems only fitting that it remain undisturbed except for the footsteps of neighbors of the community and the visitors who enjoy its historic significance and beauty.



*Proposed design of the **Wellman Family Park**—The design is by George Bennett of Bennett Nursery and Trevor Cole, who owns Cole Farm and Landscape and Pondwise. Courtesy Susan Bridges.*