

“Unbossed and Unbought” Exhibit

The DeKalb History Center recently created a small space for temporary exhibits. Our inaugural exhibit is “Unbossed and Unbought: The Rev. Hosea L. Williams Exhibit.” Through materials on loan from **Hosea Feed the Hungry and The Hosea Project**, we profile the life and work of this prominent Civil Rights leader.

It is open to the public, free of charge, from June 2 to August 28. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Over 60 people attended the opening reception on June 2 to view the exhibit, visit with longtime friends and celebrate the remarkable life of Rev. Hosea L. Williams.

Dr. Barbara Williams-Emerson, one of Hosea’s children, was there along with many of his friends and colleagues. Guests included Rep. Tyrone Brooks, John Evans, Attorney Alan Begner and Rep. Earnest “Coach” Williams.

Rev. Williams was a resident of DeKalb County beginning about 1966. He and his family moved here from Savannah and lived in a house at 8 Eastlake Drive, which was recently rebuilt.

Williams was a Civil Rights leader on the national stage. He played an important role in the demonstrations in St. Augustine, Florida that led directly to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He organized and led the first 1965 voting rights demonstration in Selma, Alabama, and was tear gassed, beaten to the ground and



Rev. Hosea L. Williams’ overalls and red shirt are a highlight of the exhibit.

trampled by troopers on horseback. This brutality on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which was broadcast and witnessed internationally and became known as “Bloody Sunday,” was the catalyst for the historic Selma to Montgomery March, that ultimately led to the other great legislative accomplishment of the movement, the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Hosea continued to work for people’s rights

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DeKalb’s WWI Cannon

For many decades an imposing and enigmatic German naval artillery cannon has been a prominent and enduring fixture on the north grounds of the Historic DeKalb Courthouse. Until recently, although various rumors and legends have abounded, very little has been known about its history or origin. Bob Henneman, from DeVry University, who has an avid interest in historic cannons, has conducted extensive research that sheds new light on the history of the cannon.

According to his findings, the cannon was designed and manufactured in

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DHS Students Hunt Ghosts in the Old Courthouse

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Contributors to this issue include Melissa Forgey, Bob Henneman, Karen Kopanezos, Chris Parizo, Jill Sweetapple, Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. and Ben Zdencanovic.

On April 3, students from Decatur High School descended upon the Old DeKalb Courthouse with EMF detectors and digital cameras at the ready to capture evidence of the supernatural. The students make up the Decatur Paranormal Research Team (DPRT), a Decatur High School sponsored after school science and research club.

DPRT, sponsored by English teacher Chris Parizo and Science teacher Dave Schaar, started two years ago after a mutual love of the paranormal was discovered. In the past two school years, DPRT has become one of the high school's most popular student clubs. "It started as a joke," says Parizo, "we had no idea it would be so popular."

The team uses research skills and the scientific method to prove the supernatural to be nothing more than natural events, something the team refers to as "debunking." "We never go in trying to prove a haunting," continues Parizo. "In fact, we do the opposite."

DPRT members are challenged to think outside of the box, use their reasoning skills, and prior knowledge of science in order to effectively debunk events. Students have debunked a possible female voice to be the rumble of the local MARTA trains by comparing the time of the event to the train schedule and students debunked a photographed mysterious fog in the main courtroom as headlights through a nearby frosted window. Anything the team cannot debunk is considered possible paranormal activity until debunked. ✦

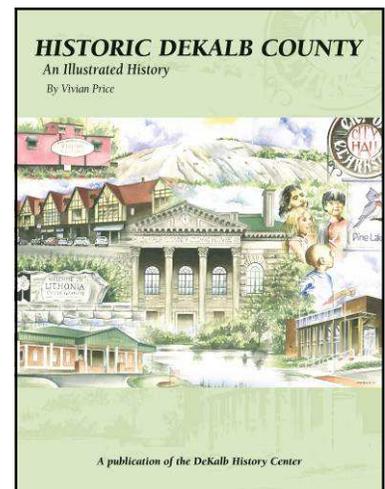
Historic DeKalb County

By Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Decatur, GA
 Courtesy of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The DeKalb History Center has published a new history. *Historic DeKalb County, An Illustrated History* was written by Vivian Price, who wrote the county's official history in 1997. This new book, published by Historical Publishing Network, a division of Lammert of San Antonio, has two main sections. The first section is the history which contains an overview of the county's history up through the 20th century, then a section on specific topics, such as Camp Gordon, the Candler family, essays on churches, and the dairy industry, to name but a few. There are illustrations throughout and a full-name index in the middle of the book.

The second section "Sharing the Heritage" contains 44 sketches with color illustrations on businesses and institutions in the county, including Agnes Scott College, Emory University, Wesley Woods, the county library system, Steel, Inc., Epps Aviation, the CDC, A. S. Turner Funeral Home, various banks, and numerous businesses. For many of these, this is the only time an official sketch has appeared in print. A separate list of these sketches of the book's sponsors is at the end, but no overall index. The sketches were prepared by each sponsor and edited by Britt Fayssoux. The full-color cover by Maceo Rogers highlights each of the county's cities. The main author, Ms. Price, stated that the best part of the project was capturing the stories, many being recorded for the first time.

The large-format, 136-page book, written in an easy-to-read and enjoyable style, will be a good addition to any household or library with an interest in the county. It is available for \$49.95 plus \$5 shipping (if not picked up) from the History Center. Call 404-373-1088 ext 22 for further details. The DeKalb History Center accepts cash, checks and credit cards in person or by phone. ✦



Hosea Williams Exhibit (cont.)

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when he founded Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless in 1971. For 30 years he ran this non-profit which provides hot meals, haircuts, clothing and medical attention for those in need.

Williams was also an avid public servant. He was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, and held the 54th District seat from 1974 -1985. Following that, he was elected to the Atlanta City Council (1985 – 1990) and then the DeKalb Board of Commissioners (1990 – 1994).

On the King Holiday in 1987, Hosea led two nationally-covered marches in Forsyth County. Williams and 75 supporters were confronted by over 400 Ku Klux Klan members and sympathizers who threw objects at the crowd. The following weekend, 20,000 marchers joined Williams and other leaders in Forsyth, which became Georgia’s largest civil rights demonstration.

The “Unbossed and Unbought” exhibit features a wide variety of photographs, archival materials, and artifacts from Rev. Williams’ many years as a Civil Rights Leader and politician, and provides an insightful glimpse into his personal life. The majority of the material is on loan from The Hosea Project/Hosea Feed the Hungry.

The photograph panels showcase his involvement in the civil rights movement in the 1960s and his work for employees’ rights in the 1970s. Artifacts relating to his political career include buttons and a telegram from President Elect Ronald Reagan. Documents from Hosea Feed the Hungry include a handwritten memo to his staff and employees. His desk chair and iconic overalls and red shirt are also on display. Other cases detail his involvement with the SCLC, Freaknik and “The Poor People’s Campaign.” ✦



Orientation for new DeKalb County Commissioners, January 1991. Left to right: Judy Yates, Hosea Williams, Jacquie Scott, Bob Morris and Manuel Maloof. From the DeKalb History Center Collection.



Guests view the exhibit during the June 2nd opening reception.



Elton John, Hosea Williams and Liane Levetan. From Hosea Feed the Hungry/The Hosea Project Collection.



Alan Begner, Commissioner Jeff Rader and Stuart Zola at the opening reception.

Lecture Series Continues

Volunteers

Johnette Brooks
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Thanks to **SunTrust Bank**
 for providing parking.

Volunteers are needed
 for the Heritage Education
 Committee and programs.
 Call Leslie at 404-373-
 1088 ext. 20 for more info.

Volunteers are also
 needed to staff our
 temporary exhibit space.
 Call Melissa at ext. 22 if
 you can help during the

Interns

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 Rebecca Crawford
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Donations - Thank You!

Mary Arapian
 Jane Maas Edwards
 Mrs. Myree Mass
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The DeKalb History Center is pleased to present a lecture series held in the Old Courthouse, free of charge and open to the public. The lectures highlight 6 historic communities and are presented by local historians, concentrating on the collections, persons and organizations related to their distinct areas. The first two lectures were on Stone Mountain and the MAK neighborhood in Decatur.

The May 26th lecture was given by local historian Tim Timmons about the history of Tucker, including churches and early businesses. His topics included information on the founding families and looked at the how Tucker grew around the Seaboard Airline Railway.

On July 26, Dr. Richard H. Sams spoke to a record crowd of 180 people about the history of Druid Hills. He began with the geology and pre-history of the area and brought the history into the 1950s. Sams is also the author of *Atlanta is Ours: The Plot to Capture Sherman*. This novel takes place in and around Druid Hills.

Please mark your calendars for our next lecture on September 22 at noon about the history of Dunwoody. The final lecture, on November 17, will be presented by Terry Martin-Hart on the history of Avondale Estates . ✦



Top: Tim Timmons teaches guests about the history of Tucker.

Middle: 180 guests packed into the courtroom to learn about Druid Hills.

Bottom: The 1926 Realty Board meets in Avondale for a picnic. This photo was donated to DHC by Terry Martin-Hart.

Nimble Nour: “Old Man of the Mountain”

In 1933, nineteen-year-old Elias Nour performed his first “stunt” on Stone Mountain by driving a Ford Model-T christened “Depression” down the steep northern side of the mountain.

This would not be his only connection with the mountain. Over the course of 40 years Nour rescued 36 persons and 6 dogs who fell victim to the unforgiving terrain of Stone Mountain. The people usually just slipped after wandering too close to an unforgiving edge. The dogs often became lost following their owners up the mountain or slipped chasing rabbits.

Nour made his first rescue and the astonishing age of 13, but later became known as the fabled “Old Man of the Mountain” who performed his rescues barefoot with a strong rope in hand. Close to a century later, Nour’s legacy remains an endearing part of local folklore.

The most famous rescue occurred on October 18, 1953, when Nour rescued young Georgia Tech student Jack Wilson. Wilson, like many others, adventurously climbed the mountain only to slip down the perilous northern side. He was with his bride, Alice, when he fell. He called and called for help, while his wife waited on top of the mountain. Wilson was trapped on the side of the mountain for over two-and-a-half hours. Thousands of spectators witnessed Wilson as he was hauled to safety. Nour received the prestigious *Carnegie Medal* for his gallantry. The Carnegie Medal is a bronze medallion that is

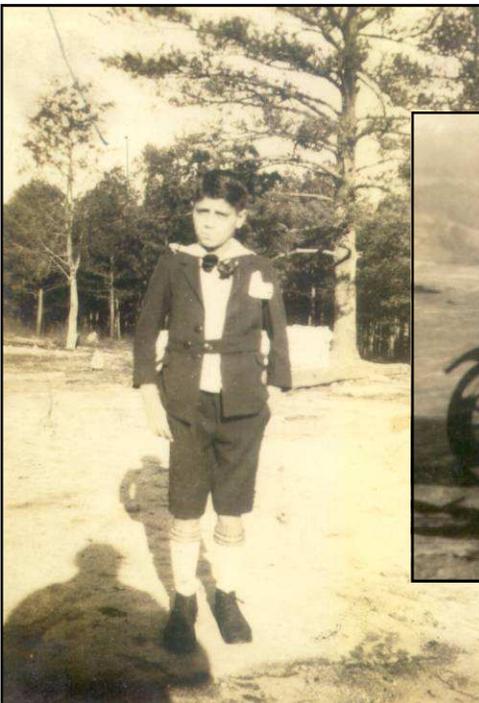
awarded to civilians who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

Nour stated that Wilson was as far down the mountain as anyone he had previously rescued. “I was scared myself,” said Nour. “The last section of that rope was a little rotten and I wasn’t sure it would hold.”

As rescues became more frequent, Nour initiated a provision for safety lines to be drawn. He affirmed, “Painted lines would reduce the need for rescue by 90%.” In the 1950s, the DeKalb County Jaycees began a project of painting and maintaining these lines. Nour was briefly fired from his job as a security policeman and banished from the park in 1962. He was rehired in 1963 to assist in shoring up the platform, under the uncompleted Confederate memorial carving.

A descendant of Nour, Dr. George Coletti, followed his uncle’s lead and in 1956 made his own rescue at the age of 17 in order to save a Decatur man who slipped over the edge and became lodged against a tree. Coletti is a lifelong resident of Stone Mountain and is currently writing a book on Nour and the history of the town. He was also the speaker for the Lecture Series held by the DeKalb History Center in January.

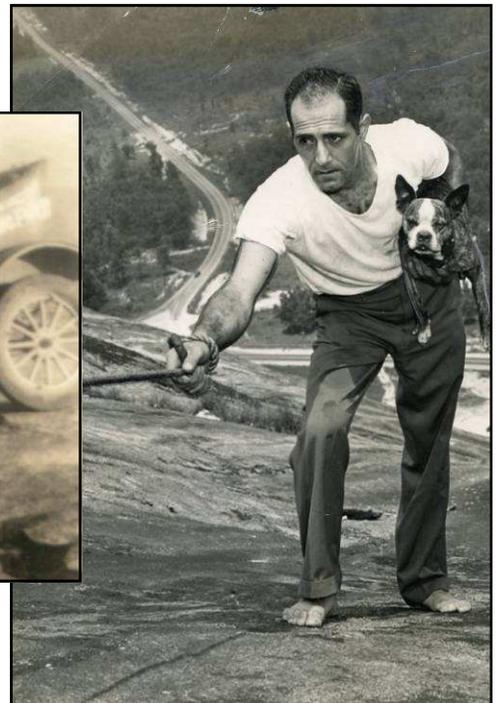
For more information on Nour, Stone Mountain or research on DeKalb County, contact the DeKalb History Center at 404.373.1088, ext. 23 or archives@dekalbhistory.org. ✦



Elias Nour in his youth.



Nour driving his Model-T down the side of the mountain.



Elias Nour rescuing a dog from the steep side of the Stone Mountain, 1946.

DeKalb's Cannon (cont.)

Continued from page 1

1897 by the renowned German armament manufacturer Friedrich Krupp AG Hoesch-Krupp, in Essen, Prussia. The 10.5 cm weapon was capable of firing a 38.5 pound shell at a range of 7.5 miles. It was originally fitted to one of two identical gunboats of the German Imperial Navy, either the SMS *Iltis* or the SMS *Luchs*.

During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, both of these ships saw action in the defense of the German colony of Tsingtao, China. At the outbreak of the First World War, the two ships were stranded in Tsingtao with no hope of making the return voyage to Germany. In late 1914, just prior to the Japanese siege and capture of Tsingtao, the ships were stripped of their arms and intentionally sunk to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

The four weapons removed from the *Iltis* and *Luchs* were fitted to the SS *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, a German civilian ocean liner that happened to be docked in Tsingtao. As an auxiliary cruiser, the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* served with distinction as part of Vice Admiral Maximilian Graf von Spee's East Asian Squadron. It was later assigned as an independent commerce raider, capturing and sinking 11 Allied vessels and taking 342 prisoners. On January 27, 1915, she captured and subsequently scuttled the American schooner SS *William P. Frye*, the first US flagged vessel lost during the First World War.

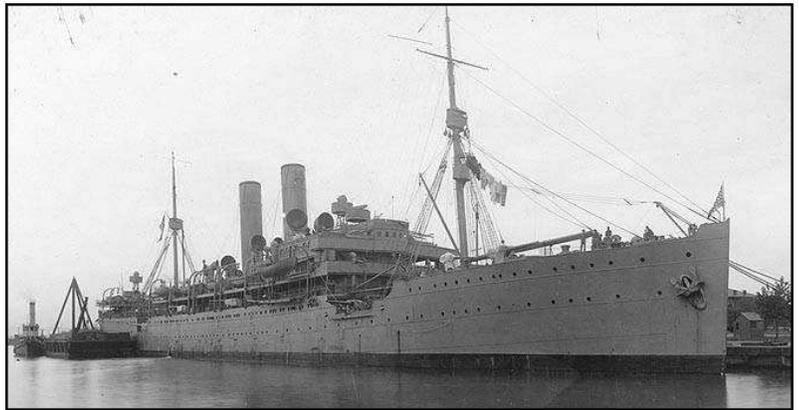
Low on coal and in poor repair, the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* sought internment at the then neutral port of Newport News, Virginia. When the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies in 1917, the Navy seized the ship and captured her crew, many of whom were held in a POW camp in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Refitted with US weapons, the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* was rechristened the USS *DeKalb*, and served in the United States Navy from May 1917 to September 1919. She was later returned to civilian control and renamed the SS *Mount Clay* as a North Atlantic passenger vessel before being scrapped in 1934.

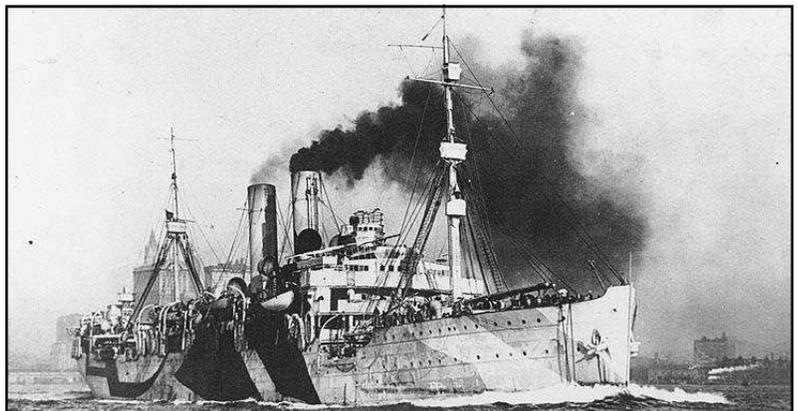
At an unknown date, the United States Navy donated one of the guns removed from the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* to DeKalb County, Georgia, where it was placed at its current location on the grounds of the DeKalb Courthouse. ✦



Why is this German naval cannon on the lawn of DeKalb's historic courthouse?



*USS DeKalb at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, June 11, 1917.
From the Navy Heritage Command.*



*USS DeKalb underway in Harbor, circa 1918.
From the Navy Heritage Command.*

Saving History - *I Remember Hour*

By Jill Sweetapple

Wynne S. Christianson was a staff member of the DeKalb History Center in the 1980s and a resident of the Druid Hills area. Her good friend, Joyce S. Cohrs, donated funds in Wynne's name for DHC to preserve this valuable collection. As a result, the *Wynne S. Christianson I Remember Hour Collection* was begun in late 2008.

The *I Remember Hour* was begun in 1982 by James Mackay to record DeKalb residents and their reminiscences about living and working here. The first tape, in March of that year, features Julius McCurdy. He and his wife were 2 of the original 24 members when the DeKalb Historical Society was founded in 1947; he also served as our second Board President. He is in 5 *I Remember Hour* programs in all. The last tape is on the politics of preservation, recorded in 2003. Since then, the History Center switched to recording directly onto DVD.

We researched affordable options for transferring VHS tapes to digital video disks (DVD). VHS tape is rapidly becoming obsolete and it deteriorates quickly; losing this collection would have been regrettable. We found and purchased a DVD Recorder/VHS player combination machine, along with blank disks and labels. The VHS tapes are still here in the building, stored in the basement where it is much cooler, but we found that many were in bad shape, with yellow or blue video, or failing audio.

Pages of handwritten notes were kept, especially for the first 80 programs in the collection. These have been typed and added to the Archives finding aids, under the oral history section.

The collection includes interviews with a variety of people and covers many subjects. There are programs on the 100th anniversary of the Tucker Baptist Church, the integration of Decatur High School and two which cover the 1996 visit of the Olympic Torch to downtown Decatur. Guests on the *I Remember Hour* include local judges Oscar Mitchell, Bond Almond, Clarence Peeler and Richard Bell. Members of the R.L. Mathis family talk about the dairy business in DeKalb, Thomas Vinson speaks about public health issues, George Dillard talks of working for the FBI and Joe Pugh provides information on Baron DeKalb. Local resident Scott Candler, Sr. , explains a 1968 project to identify historic Georgia homes, Pauline Pounds gives a talk on one-room schoolhouses, and Fire Chief Dudley Martin talks about fire services. Women during World War II, Hardman Cemetery, Scottdale Mill, Peachtree DeKalb Airport, Swanton House and the making of the movie "Driving Miss Daisy" are all included in this wide-ranging collection.

There are 135 VHS tapes in the *I Remember Hour* collection and I have transferred 100. Detailed instructions have been written to finish the project and maintain the equipment. ✦

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