

DeKalb History Center

DeKalb Superior Court Records

Scope and content: The DeKalb Superior Court records include 4 boxes of documents, many water damaged, and the Superior Court minute book (1836-1843) saved from the devastating courthouse fire. The records came here from the DeKalb County Records center and are here on permanent loan. The records begin in 1820 and cover until about 1962, with the bulk being in 1880-1905. There is an 1820 land lottery deed, along with a drawing of the 202 ½ acre plot.

Provenance: Permanent loan from DeKalb County and serving clerk of Superior Court Whitfield Smith, October 1983. ACC # 1947.2.

Access: Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish materials from this collection must be requested from the archivist, DeKalb History Center. Citation should be as follows:

Description of specific item; DeKalb Superior Court Collection, DeKalb History Center Archives

Processed by Jill Sweetapple, Archivist, 2012.

Size: 4 document boxes and 1 ledger.

Organizational Sketch of DeKalb Superior Court, Stone Mountain Circuit: The Superior Court of DeKalb County takes care of the vast amount of records generated by the court system. The Superior court began as a division of the Municipal Court of Atlanta in 1914 and was renamed the Civil Court of DeKalb in 1939. In 1958 it became known as the Civil and Criminal Court of DeKalb County and in 19780 assumed its current name of Superior Court. Ben F. Burgess was a long time clerk, from 1923 to 1935, and he was succeeded by his nephew Ben B., who had worked in the office with him for 13 years. Ben B. Burgess was deputy clerk of the Superior Court from 1931 to 1935 and then clerk from 1935 until 1956. Whitfield Smith was elected in 1980 and served for 10 years. There are currently 10 judges and 33 have been appointed since the beginning of the court system in 1885. Richard H. Clark was the first superior court judge to sit in the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit.

In January 1842 a fire destroyed all of the DeKalb records, except for one minute book of the Inferior court, which was in the home of clerk John Glen, who had taken the book home to do some other work. As a result, this book is the only survivor of the fire. The book is part of this collection, stored here for posterity since 1983, and can be viewed upon request.

The mission of the court, currently on the website, reads:
To provide an independent, accessible and responsive forum for the just resolution of legal disputes and criminal matters in a manner that preserves the rule of law and protects the rights of

all parties. To act expeditiously in a manner that instills public trust and confidence that the Superior Court operates fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Additional information: <http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/superior/index.html>.

Also see: <http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/superior/history.html>.

Description: The loose documents are primarily land records, deeds, mortgages, most of them paid in full, sheriff's sales records and a road crew list. There are scattered documents on juries and Inferior court matters as well as oaths taken by county officers and an 1820 plat and deed from the 1820 land lottery that divided DeKalb County into land lots for the first time. There is also a ledger of court minutes. This is the only volume of official county records that survived the 1842 courthouse fire. The volume covers all cases tried in the DeKalb Superior Court from 1836-1843. Please call ahead for an appointment to view this volume.

Subject Headings: Where possible, Library of Congress Subject Headings have been used.

Main Entry: DeKalb County Superior Court (Ga.)

Subject/Added Entries: DeKalb County (Ga.)
Burgess, Ben F.
Burgess, Ben B.
Smith, Whitfield

Folder List

Box	Folder	Contents	Date(s)
1	1	Mortgages on land, district 15, 1 of 2	1887-1903
	2	Mortgages on land, district 15, 2 of 2	1868-1903
	3	Satisfied deeds to secured land	1886-1905
	4	Mortgages, district 15, 1 of 2	1888-1903
	5	Mortgages, district 15, 2 of 2	1889-1904
	6	Mortgages on land, Decatur	1883-1904
	7	Mortgages on land, Edgewood	1889-1904
	8	Mortgages on land, district 16	1891-1904
2	1	Mortgages on land, district 16, Lithonia	1887-1904
	2	Mortgages on land, district 18, 1 of 3	1887-1903
	3	Mortgages on land, district 18, 2 of 3	1880-1903
	4	Mortgages on land, district 18, 3 of 3	1881-1904
	5	Sheriff's sales	1895-1933
	6	Quit claim deeds	1866-1904
	7	Administrators' deeds	1857-1900
	8	Warranty deeds to land 1 of 2 Includes 1820 land lottery	1820-1902
	9	Warranty deed to land 2 of 2	1891-1904
Box	Folder	Contents	Date(s)
3	1	Land records, district 15, Atlanta	1890-1930

	2	Federal Land of Columbia, title abstracts	1852-1962
3	3	Land records-processioners	1920-1940
	4	Road hands list	
	5	oaths and bonds, county officers	1850-1922
	6	Elections	1908-1950
	7	Guardians	1857-1924
	8	Subpoenas, grand jury	1893-1897
	9	Court of ordinary	1867-1928
	10	Liens	1888-1904
	11	Mortgages on moveable property	1886-1904
	12	Citizens' bonds and oaths, leases, petitions	1867-1929
	13	Mortgages 1893-1904 1 of 2	1893-1904
4	1	Mortgages 1893-1904 2 of 2	1893-1904
	2	Bastard notes	1888-1904
	3	Atlanta rifles roster	1895-1898
	4	Bond for title	1885-1894
	5	Releases	1893-1894
	6	J.H. Almond inventory	1895
	7	Miscellaneous 1 of 2	1893-1900
	8	Miscellaneous 2 of 2	1872-1899
	9	Plat Map, J.L. Kilgore D18-LL74	1894

Room 034, Shelf C9 has the 1836-1843 Superior court minute book