

“All Roads Lead to DeKalb”

Our temporary “Unbossed and Unbought” exhibit on renowned civil rights leader Hosea Williams closed in September, and it was a resounding success with over 950 visitors. Special thanks go to **Hosea Feed the Hungry and the Hosea Project** for loaning us this exhibit. On October 13, the DeKalb History Center unveiled “All Roads Lead to DeKalb,” which features just a small fraction of historic maps from our archives.

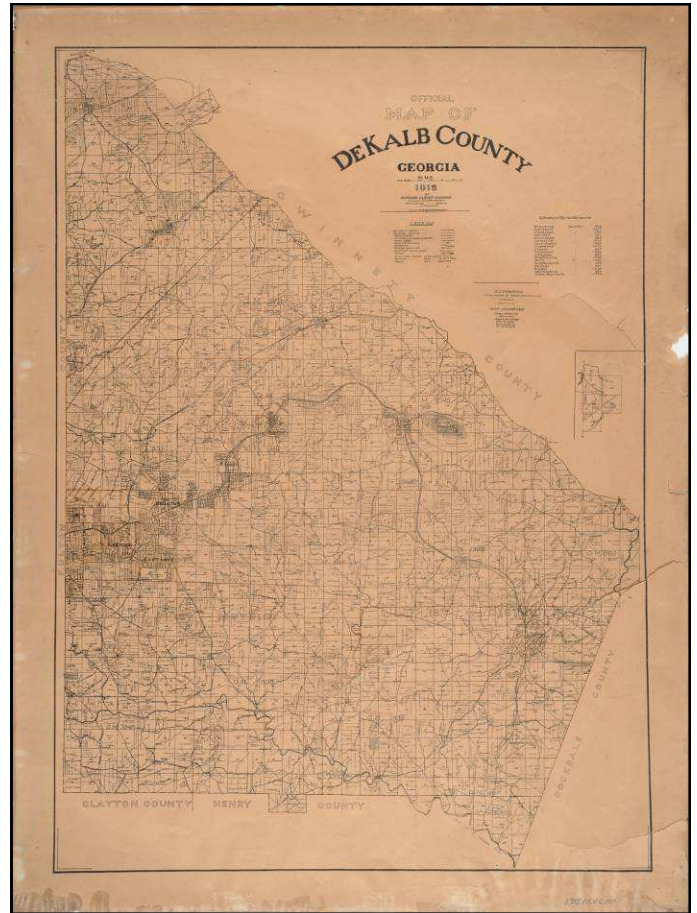
“All Roads Lead to DeKalb” is comprised of over 40 individual maps, both originals and high quality reproductions, which were scanned by the Georgia Archives. In addition to countywide maps, areas as diverse as Decatur, Druid Hills, Brookhaven, Edgewood, Stone Mountain and Tucker are also featured.

Some of our most unique items include turn-of-the-century plat maps detailing the rapid development along Edgewood and DeKalb Avenue and a multi-page Sanborn Insurance map open to Brookhaven and western DeKalb County.

Sanborn Maps were originally created for fire insurance liability in urbanized areas in the United States from 1867 to 1970. The maps are a

great resource when researching historic properties. They provide a wealth of information such as building size and shape, construction

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Donaldson-Bannister House

— GA Department of Natural Resources/Historic Preservation Division

The Donaldson-Bannister House and Cemetery, located on the corner of Chamblee-Dunwoody and Vermack roads in Dunwoody in DeKalb County, was listed in the National Register on August 9, 2009. The Dunwoody Preservation Trust, Inc. sponsored the nomination and prepared the nomination materials.

William J. Donaldson, a yeoman farmer, built the Plantation Plain-type house circa 1870. During the late 19th century, the house was part of a

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Contributors to this issue include the Georgia Department of Natural Resources/Historic Preservation Division, Leslie Borger, Melissa Forgey and Ben Zdenecanovic.

Arbor Montessori Project

The DeKalb History Center is partnering with seventh and eighth grade students from Arbor Montessori School to research and document the history of the Nelms/Mt. Zion community. The students, guided by Annie Frazer, are building on previous research and oral history interviews done by DHC and former students of Arbor Montessori and will build a traveling exhibit for display at DHC and their school. They are interviewing long time residents of the community as well as conducting archival research at the DeKalb History Center Archives and deed research at the DeKalb County Courthouse.

The Nelms community is a small African-American enclave, located on the northeast side of LaVista Road, and was settled in the 1800s. The name of the area originates with William Nelms who owned a sizable farm and was an important figure in the area. During the 20th century, the community changed from family farms to a suburban landscape which caused a large portion of the community's African-American population to move away in the 1940s and 50s and then again in the 1980s and 90s. The community remained close-knit during these times of change and retains its cultural heritage today.

The students have outlined particular areas of interest including everyday life, employment, education and architecture and are focusing their research and interviews on these topics. Residents of the Mt. Zion/Nelms community have been gracious in sharing their stories and the students have had the unique opportunity to learn first-hand about topics such as desegregation and early life in their community. All of the information they gather will be added to the DeKalb History Center Archives for use by future generations and the exhibit will be on display at DHC next year before moving to its permanent home at Arbor Montessori. ✦

DeKalb Archives Update

The DeKalb History Center recently hired Ben Zdenecanovic as our interim Archivist. Ben has been working with us since October of 2008, first as an intern and then as an Administrative and Archival Assistant. An Atlanta native, Ben received his undergraduate degree in history from New York University and has done graduate work in history in the City University of New York system.

The Archives has acquired several major new collections recently, including hundreds of items donated from the General Motors plant in Doraville, which ceased operations in 2008. The GM Collection includes photographs, maps, blueprints, documents and memorabilia related to the plant's 61 year history as a symbol of the county's enduring progress and industry. We also received a collection of early 20th century household and archival items belonging from the Arabia Mountain area farm of the Hooper and Floree Patillo family. Items include a bed sheet made from fertilizer sacks and a 1925 receipt for a Ford Touring Motorcar.

The Archives staff and volunteers are hard at work indexing and digitizing collections to make research at the History Center easier than ever. We encourage members of the community to come the Archives to access our extensive and growing holdings. ✦



Items from the General Motors plant in Doraville

“All Roads Lead to DeKalb” (cont.)

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materials, height and street numbers. Sanborns are a great way to determine approximate construction and addition dates, and if the property had any secondary structures such as a carriage house or detached kitchen.

Our eight-volume set of Sanborn Maps was published in 1924 and covers much of the Atlanta area. Each volume has up to 100 pages and they were updated through the 1960s.

Maps are created to provide different types information. Most include a compass and a scale for estimating distances.

The DHC collection includes political maps, which indicate boundaries such as those around a city or between counties. Road and transportation maps, while focused on streets and highways, can also show other points of interest. Topographic maps include contour lines to show the shape and elevation of an area. Resource maps present the economic activities or natural resources that dominate an area. A physical map indicates natural features of an area,

like creeks, mountains and lakes. Plat maps show the divisions, or lots, of a parcel of land and can be created by developers or governments. Some maps combine several of these elements.

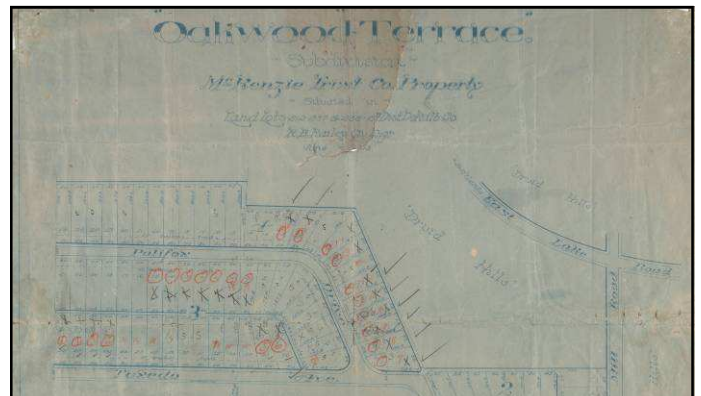
The exhibit is free and is located in the Temporary Exhibit Room of the DeKalb History Center at the Old Courthouse on the Square. It will run through January 15, 2010, and it is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Display-quality reproductions of many of the maps are available for \$45 - \$95.

This program is supported in part by the Grassroots Arts Program of the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. ✦

DECATUR LOTS

21 LOTS—Fronting Candler, Davis, Haddock and Green Streets

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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 exhibits. Call
 Melissa at ext. 22 if you
 can help during the week.

Interns

Rebecca Crawford
 (Georgia State University)

Batini Oluremi
 (Gwinnett College)

Lauri Sedicino

Correction

Our last issue contained a
 spelling error— Joyce Cohrs
 donated funds in **Wynne
 Christensen's** name to
 preserve our "I Remember
 Hour" collection.

The DeKalb History Center's 2009 Archives Lecture Series concludes in November with a presentation by Terry Martin-Hart on the history of Avondale Estates. The City of Avondale Estates was founded by George Francis Willis in 1924 after a trip he took with his wife to Stratford-upon-Avon. This planned city was listed in National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The historic district is recognized for its significance in architecture, community planning and landscape architecture. Planned landscape features are located throughout the city, which features a commercial area in the English Vernacular Revival style.

In 1999, Terry Martin-Hart released the book *Images of America: Avondale Estates*, through Arcadia Publishing, which shows the history of this unique town through a vivid collection of historic photographs.

Terry Martin-Hart is an independent communications specialist with over 20 years of professional experience. She spent ten years in Southern California achieving national recognition as a magazine journalist. In Atlanta, Terry resumed her media and public relations practice focusing on the arts, community outreach and historic preservation. Clients range from statewide publishing houses to national media firms.

The free lecture is Tuesday, November 17 at 12:00 noon at the Old Courthouse on the Square. Guests are encouraged to bring a lunch to eat during the program.

Many people braved the floods on September 22 to hear Lynne Byrd talk about the history of Dunwoody. She also spoke about its historic resources and the Dunwoody Preservation Trust. We thank Lynne and our previous speakers: Dr. George Coletti, Scott Leith, Tim Timmons and Richard Sams, for making this series a great success. ✦



Views of Avondale Estate from the 1920s.



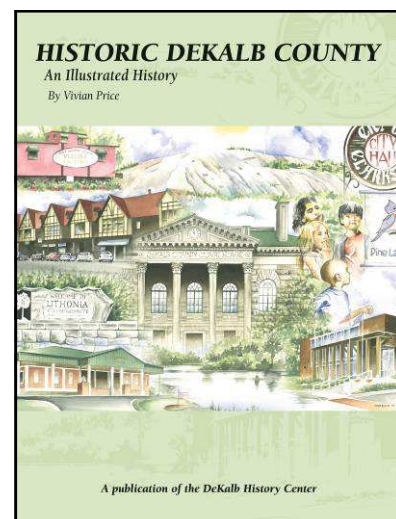
DHC Launches a New Website!

Be sure to visit our new website at our old address — www.dekalbhistory.org. Our crisp new format is easier for the user to navigate. Portions of the site may still be under construction, so check it frequently for updates and added content. ✦



Holiday Gifts at DHC

Please consider the DeKalb History Center as you begin to shop for holiday gifts. Our newest publication, *Historic DeKalb County*, by Vivian Price, is always a delightful and informative gift! We still have other titles in print, including *Life In Dixie During the War*, by Mary Gay. Some scanned maps from our collection are available immediately and others can be ordered within two weeks. They are ideal for decorating the home or office. We also have our very popular Old Courthouse tree ornament and wooden Courthouse replica. And don't forget that you can give a Gift Membership to anyone on your holiday list! Memberships are one of the best ways to support your DeKalb History Center and keep the recipient informed of our activities for a full year. We accept cash and checks. Credit card purchases may be made in person or over the phone. Members receive at least a 10% discount on all purchases. ✦



Donaldson-Bannister House (cont.)

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large farm owned by Donaldson. After Donaldson's death in 1900, his wife, Milly Adams Donaldson, managed the farm until her death in 1931. Four years later, Lois Patillo Bannister purchased the property at an estate sale to be used as a secondary residence. Bannister was an affluent widow, socialite, and entrepreneur. As the nation endured the hardships of the Great Depression, she paid for an extensive architect-designed renovation of the house and property. Bannister sold the property in 1942.

The property is significant in architecture as an excellent example of the thorough application of Colonial Revival-style elements in an early 20th-century residential renovation project in Georgia. The Colonial Revival style was a dominant expression of residential architecture during the first half of the 20th century. The style was viewed by many as an architectural expression of the nation's common heritage of good sense and egalitarian principles. The Colonial Revival style was popular in Georgia for a long period, from the 1890s through the 1940s and beyond. During the 1930s and 1940s, the style was sometimes referred to as "Williamsburg" because of its association with John D. Rockefeller's renovation of Colonial Williamsburg.

The house is a two-story, central hall, Plantation Plain-type building with an 1880s rear ell addition, which underwent significant changes in 1935. Bannister hired the Atlanta architectural firm of Cooper and Cooper to design a series of alterations. Changes to the exterior façade of the original building include the replacement of the one-story, full-length, front porch, with a square-columned portico and the addition of three wall dormers.

Examples of the interior alterations include the addition of pedimented door surrounds, paneled cabinets, and elaborate moldings. The house's floor plan was expanded to 11 rooms and included the addition of new family living spaces, bedrooms, closets, and bathrooms.

The 2.8-acre property also contains five contributing outbuildings built and/or altered during her ownership: barn, guesthouse, blacksmith shop, commissary, and washhouse.



The Donaldson-Bannister House. Photo courtesy GA Department of Natural Resources/ Historic Preservation Division

The Donaldson-Bannister House and Cemetery is also significant in the area of landscape architecture because this family cemetery is an excellent example of a type of funerary landscape associated with rural agricultural homesteads in Georgia prior to the mid-20th century. The cemetery's grave markers are also good examples of common marker types found in turn-of-the-20th century Georgia. The cemetery's 27 plots contain the remains of three generations of Donaldson family members who died between 1883 and 1931, including the gravesites of William J. and Milly A. Donaldson.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance.

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices. †

Behind the Scene's Tour—Masonic Lodge

Have you always wanted to peek inside the Pythagoras Masonic Lodge in downtown Decatur? Here is your chance! Join the DeKalb History Center for a rare opportunity to tour the interior of this historic Lodge designed by architect William Sayward and learn about the building and the Mason's history in Decatur.

**108 East Ponce de Leon Ave
Decatur, Georgia 30030**

Wednesday November 18, 2009

6 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Members: Free

Non-Members: \$5.00

Reservations Required

**Please RSVP to dhs@dekalbhistory.org or
404-373-1088, extension 20.**



Decatur's Pythagoras Masonic Lodge as constructed in 1926. Photograph from a negative donated by Albert Martin.

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All funds received through memberships directly support the preservation of DeKalb County history and are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Your generous contribution to the DeKalb History Center will provide you with a year-long membership that includes our quarterly newsletter to keep you informed on all our activities. We hope that you will join our team by either renewing your membership or joining as a first-time supporter.

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Please mail this form with your contribution to: DeKalb History Center, 101 East Court Square, Decatur GA 30030

Our 2009 Membership list will be published in the next issue of *Times of DeKalb*. Please call the office if you would like to renew or check the status of your membership. Thank you for your support!

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DeKalb History Center

Old Courthouse on the Square
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