

## Kirkwood Historic District

Courtesy of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources—Historic Preservation Division

The Kirkwood Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 and is the largest historic district in Georgia based on its 1,792 contributing resources. The district is part of the City of Atlanta but lies completely within DeKalb County, west of Decatur, between DeKalb Avenue and Memorial Drive. Students in Georgia State University's Heritage Preservation program conducted research for the nomination with the support of the Kirkwood Neighbors Organization. Residential, commercial, and industrial buildings are all included in the Kirkwood Historic District along with two parks, a cemetery and the historic railroad corridor to the north.

Jesse Clay and James H. Kirkpatrick were two of

the major landholders in the Kirkwood area during the mid-1800s, and it is believed that the area derived its name from the Kirkpatrick family. The Georgia Railroad arrived in Kirkwood in 1845, but its impact on Kirkwood was minimal. The area saw little development until after the Civil War. In the 1870s, Kirkwood began establishing itself as a haven for Atlanta political leaders while still maintaining its rural atmosphere through continued farming. It wasn't until the arrival of the streetcar in 1891 that Kirkwood began to develop as a suburb of Atlanta and received its first post office.

By the turn of the century Kirkwood was served by two streetcar lines running between Decatur and



*Kirkwood's houses span decades; this bungalow may date from the 1920s.*

Atlanta, and the neighborhood followed the suburbanization trends seen in other communities like Edgewood. The neighborhood became popular with the upper class due to amenities unavailable in Atlanta such as sewers and its artesian well water supply that could serve 14,000 people. The "rural" setting was also a welcome change from the gritty urban landscape of Atlanta. By 1920, Kirkwood had established itself as a "bedroom" community, with most residents commuting to Atlanta for

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## Attic Treasures Exhibit

Join us for the unveiling of our latest revolving exhibit, "Attic Treasures – Memories of the Carr Family." This one-room exhibit provides a glimpse into the life of a prominent DeKalb County household from the 1920s to the 1940s. H. J. Carr founded a construction firm which built numerous local landmarks such as the Biltmore Hotel and the Crum and Forster building. H. J. and Bonnie Carr started their family in Druid Hills and later moved into the fieldstone house he constructed, now known as the Houston Mill House. Upon moving onto the Houston Mill property, he restored the historic mill to working condition.

Explore this bygone era of DeKalb through the Carr family's treasures. Take

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# Images of Decatur

By Claudia Stucke

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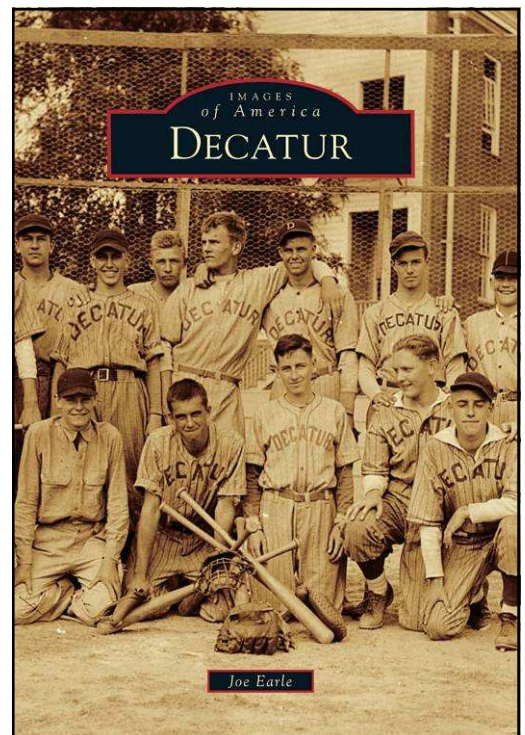
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How many times have we told the story of Decatur's refusal to be a railway hub, sending the train west toward the town that would become Terminus (and eventually Atlanta), thereby preserving small-town charm while availing Decatur citizens of nearby big-city amenities? According to *Images of America: Decatur*, the story is probably not true; most historians agree that Atlanta was the intended terminus all along. But it's still a good story and one that is likely to continue to circulate.

Arcadia Publishing's most recent title in its Images of America series is the work of Decatur's own Joe Earle, veteran newspaper reporter and editor. Earle's journalistic experience is evident in his choice of more than 170 photographs selected from hundreds in DeKalb History Center's archives, as well as dozens more from institutional and private collections. Rather than outline a history of Decatur, ranging chronologically from pioneers to present day, Decatur presents an assortment of images categorized by those things that define the community: "homes, schools, and places of worship," as Decatur's motto proclaims, but also its people, altruism, government, and commerce. Each chapter is organized around one of these themes, and text is spare—a brief chapter introduction followed by photographs and captions.

Yet in this economy of words are interesting bits of trivia (such as the fallacy of the would-be Decatur train terminal) as well as straightforward text and images that date back to the "separate but equal" days before enforcement of Brown v. Board of Education. Readers will find more legends ("General Sherman

is said to have watered his horse here"), photographs of faces that we can at last associate with their familiar names (among them Agnes Scott and Mary Gay), and images of families whose children or grandchildren might be our neighbors today. Sometimes in the backgrounds of these pictures are homes and gardens, from Victorian gingerbread to simple cabins, some now restored and some long gone, including homes designed by one of the country's few female architects of her time, Leila Ross Wilburn. Residences, churches, schools, and businesses are featured prominently in their own chapters, along with their histories, including dates of construction. ✦



## Memories of the Carr Family

*Continued from page 1*

a glimpse at the heirlooms of this prominent DeKalb family including a historic dollhouse, evening wear from the 1920s and 30s, and personal photographs. Highlights of the exhibit include details about the youngest daughter's wartime wedding and a case of period evening bags. The exhibit also includes tips on preserving your own family treasures.

**Special thanks to Karen Chance, Jim Morrisette, Maureen Morrisette, Cathy Mullins, John Mullins and Howard Stacy.** ✦

## Kirkwood (cont.)

*Continued from page 1*

work. This early 20<sup>th</sup> century development encouraged Kirkwood to incorporate, and the city of Kirkwood was officially formed on April 9, 1904. Kirkwood's population increased from 1,226 in 1910 to 3,000 in 1915 and boasted home values of \$3,000 to \$15,000 in 1914.

Soon after its incorporation Kirkwood experienced another change with the construction of a foundry near the railroad line by Nathaniel P. Pratt. The foundry, later named Pratt Engineering & Machineworks, became a major employer in the city and manufactured munitions during World War I. In 1926 the property was purchased by the Pullman Company and was used to repair their passenger rail cars until 1955. The Pratt property continued to be an industrial landmark in Kirkwood until the Southern Iron and Equipment Company closed its doors in 1965.

The economic prosperity of the 1920s paired with a third streetcar line increased the middle class population of Kirkwood and even brought in some working class families. Land speculators began buying and dividing property, building utilities and roads, and auctioning off the lots. The Craftsman bungalow and Queen Anne cottage were popular housing types during this time period, and many residents constructed their own homes from pattern books and manuals. The shift from upper to middle class changed the physical landscape of the old Kirkwood; as houses and lot sizes became more modest the neighborhood lost many of its "rural" characteristics and relied instead on parks for its open spaces. The growth of Kirkwood continued relatively unhindered despite its annexation into the city of Atlanta in 1922. Kirkwood also developed its own commercial district along present-day Hosea L. Williams Drive that boasted 13 businesses in 1931.

As with most places in America, Kirkwood saw little development in the 1930s as it dealt with economic uncertainty of the Great Depression, but after World War II the many federal programs focused on war veterans caused a small housing boom in the area. The American Small House and Ranch House were common in this post-war period; and many additional areas were developed in Kirkwood full of these new houses, such as Alder Court and Wisteria Way. The commercial district also doubled its number of businesses to serve the growing community despite the gradual decline that began after the trolley system ceased operations in 1949.

The Kirkwood community began to face major changes in the 1950s as suburban housing was popularized in other parts of DeKalb, just as it had been in Kirkwood at the beginning of the century. Upper and middle class families took advantage of the mobility afforded to them by the automobile and moved out of the city, which also caused major demographic changes in urban areas. However, it was the Supreme Court rulings such as *Brown vs. Board of Education* that ultimately changed Kirkwood. While the Atlanta Public School system had planned a gradual process of

desegregation, parents sought a quicker solution to the overcrowding in the African-American schools in the area. In 1964 the NAACP joined with Kirkwood parents to picket the all-white Kirkwood Elementary School, and they were successful in getting the school board to agree to the timely desegregation of the schools. As a result, white parents quickly transferred their children to other schools, and Kirkwood Elementary was left with only seven white students. By the following school year, the school's population was 100 percent African-American.

The racial shift in Kirkwood's public schools closely mimicked the demographic changes that would take place in the 1960s within the neighborhood. Real estate agents employed a business practice called blockbusting to scare white homeowners into selling their property at low prices; the property was supposedly devalued by incoming minority groups, according to the real estate agents. These agents would then sell the cheaply purchased properties to African-American families at much higher prices, thus creating large profit margins for themselves at the expense of the former and new residents of Kirkwood. Despite some efforts by white residents to resist the changes occurring in Kirkwood, by 1967 the neighborhood was over 95 percent African-American.

The Kirkwood neighborhood declined dramatically during the 1970s and 1980s as absentee landlords failed to maintain the buildings, and many houses were demolished through neglect. It wasn't until the late 1980s that some efforts were made to rehabilitate the neighborhood, and the process of gentrification soon began. Once again Kirkwood saw a demographic shift as middle class whites returned to the neighborhood to rehabilitate buildings and construct new ones in styles sympathetic to the historic area. This process has continued into the 2000s as more people move into the area and new businesses open along Hosea L. Williams Drive in the old commercial district. †



*This sanctuary, built in 1926 as Kirkwood Baptist Church, was home to Seventh Day Adventists in the 1960s and now houses the Pentecostal Church of God.*

## Travel Back in Time...

The purpose of Archives Month is to celebrate the value of Georgia's historical records, publicize the many ways historical records enrich our lives, and recognize those who maintain our communities' historical records. To join the celebration with the Society of American Archivists and the Society of Georgia Archivists, enjoy some transportation themed images from our collection. The images include the Weekes family in their automobile, the Stone Mountain Cable Car, Adela Chupp Evans (ca. 1890s) on her bicycle, MARTA buses in Decatur, Sam McCook of Lithonia (1908) with a horse and buggy, Peachtree DeKalb Airport in the 1950s, canine "Tiny" hitching a ride on Walter's boat, and the some 1957 Tucker beauty queens riding in a parade.

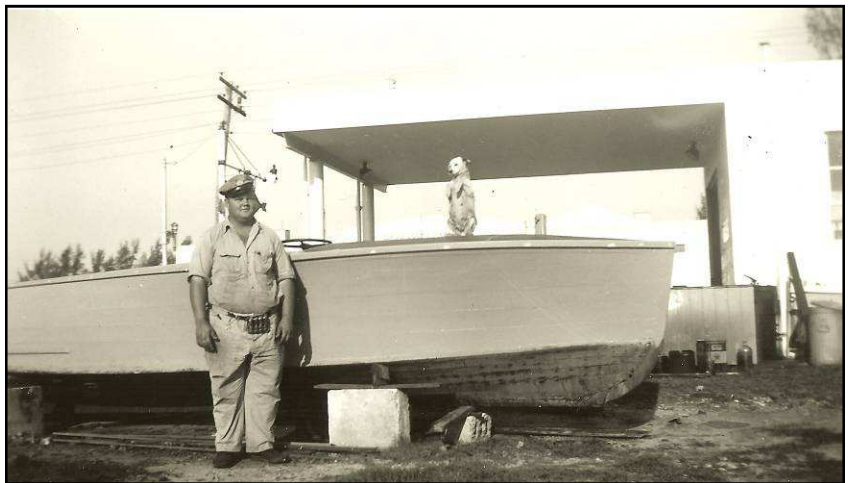


## Thanks to our Volunteers!

Volunteers are essential to keep our programs running smoothly. We thank the following individuals who have helped us over the past few months. These people have given their time to help us in the office, with our archives, our children's programs, setting up the new exhibit, speaking during the Lunch and Learn, serving on committees and staffing the exhibits. To learn more about how you can help, please contact **Jim Overbeck**, by email at [volunteer@dekalbhistory.org](mailto:volunteer@dekalbhistory.org) or by phone at 404-373-1088, extension 0. Jim is also a volunteer who is currently coordinating the docents for the exhibits and has been a tremendous help to our organization!

Ray Barreras	Malcolm Dunn	Cecile Long	Arlene Poretzky
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# October is Archives Month!



## Early Edgewood-Candler Park History

Join us for a walking tour on Saturday, November 6 from 11:00 a.m. to noon. The tour will be led by Edith Kelman, the Project Manager for the *Early Edgewood-Candler Park BiRacial History Project*. This project, which began five years ago, is a collaborative community effort using original research, historic documents and personal narratives to uncover the rich African-American history of this neighborhood. The project is anchored in the historic Old Stone Church at 470 Candler Park Drive, Atlanta. It may be the only remaining community structure associated with the African Americans who settled in this area. The Project has compiled, created and presented educational materials to restore awareness of the forgotten legacy of these African American pioneers in the evolution of Candler Park.

Members of the Antioch East Baptist Church congregation hand-built the Stone Church between 1918 and 1922. It replaced their 1890s wooden church which mysteriously burned to the ground in 1916. The forces of racism accelerated over time until, in 1950, Antioch East could no longer remain in the Candler Park neighborhood. The congregation moved to a new location “south of the railroad tracks,” in modern Edgewood. The church building was



*In this 1948 photo, members of the Antioch East Baptist Church gather on the steps of the granite sanctuary. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Sophie L. Carey.*

bought by the “caucasian only” Candler Park Improvement Corporation, operating as a Civic Club, until 1977. Since 1980, the Old Stone Church has been under the stewardship of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, a Unitarian Universalist-affiliated spiritual community.

Archival records reveal that the Antioch East Baptist Church was founded as early as 1874. Pioneering black residents in the area established the Mayson Subdivision of homeowners and developed nine acres (of the current public park property) into a thriving community. Maps and deeds from the late 1800s help define the picture of a growing African-American working class neighborhood in and around today’s Candler Park. With this early black neighborhood as its focus, the *Early Edgewood-Candler Park BiRacial History Project* has anchored their living history collaboration with the surviving Elders and their descendants through the Old Stone Church.

During the tour, you will walk around the block adjacent to Candler Park and learn more about the Project, their research and the rich history of this neighborhood. For more information, visit the website at [biracialhistoryproject.org](http://biracialhistoryproject.org). ✦

## Upcoming Events

**Exhibit Opening, “Attic Treasures—Memories of the Carr Family,” Tuesday, October 19, 5:30—7:00 p.m.** Come enjoy beverages and light refreshments as we unveil our newest exhibit. Old Courthouse on the Square, First Floor.

**Candler Park Tour, Saturday, November 6, from 11:00 a.m.—noon.** Reservations required and space is limited. Free for members, \$5 for non-members. Call 404-373-1088, extension 22 or email [director@dekalbhistory.org](mailto:director@dekalbhistory.org).

**Lunch & Learn, “Equalization Schools,” Tuesday, November 16, at noon.** Or, **“The Short Life of Modern Schools in Georgia’s African-American Communities from 1952-1970.”** This lecture, given by Steven Moffson, from Georgia’s Historic Preservation Division, will look at the impact and legacy of the schools built across Georgia as the state tried to demonstrate that it could operate racially separate and equal public school systems. Free—bring your lunch!

**Masonic Lodge Tour, Wednesday, November 17 at 6:30 p.m.** Reservations required and space is limited. Free for members, \$5 for non-members. Call 404-373-1088, extension 20 or email [dhs@dekalbhistory.org](mailto:dhs@dekalbhistory.org).

**Fall Log Cabin Storytelling, Fran Frantz presents storytelling and frontier crafts “with a twist.”** Mrs. Frantz is a local historian and enthusiastic storyteller who weaves tales of pioneer life with information about children’s chores, science, entertainment, bartering and more. Select Saturdays from 10:00—11:30 a.m. \$6 per child ages 6—12. Reservations suggested; call 404-373-1088, extension 20 or email [dhs@dekalbhistory.org](mailto:dhs@dekalbhistory.org). **October 23—Spooky stories & handmade soap; November 13—Gingerbread and open hearth cooking, December 4—Old time holiday crafts around the fire.** ✦

# Masonic Tour

# Flat Rock Archives

Back by popular demand! Come to a behind the scenes tour of the Pythagoras Masonic Lodge in downtown Decatur. 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.

The tour will be led by Al Martin, who is an active Scottish Rite Mason, past Commander Knight Templar Commandry 38 in Decatur, and the librarian/archivist of Pythagoras Lodge #41 in Decatur. Born in Atlanta in 1928, he grew up in the Goodwin House in Brookhaven. Mr. Martin attended Southern Technical Institute in Chamblee and Wesleyan Conservatory in Macon.

We will tour on Wednesday, November 17th from 6:30–7:30 p.m. Space is very limited! The tour is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Reservations are required. Please RSVP to dhs@dekalbhistory.org or 404-373-1088, extension 20. †

The Flat Rock Archives & Museum will host a 5K Benefit Walk at the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area on October 30 at 8:00 am to support the preservation of the Flat Rock Slave Cemetery. Afterwards, there will be a procession to the cemetery featuring the Georgia Geechee Gullah Shouters, a consecration ceremony with descendants of the Flat Rock community, and a celebration at the museum with food and entertainment. Tours of the Lyon Plantation will also be offered. For more info visit [www.flatrockarchives.org](http://www.flatrockarchives.org) or email [flatrockarchives@bellsouth.net](mailto:flatrockarchives@bellsouth.net) or call 770-808-0030. †

**In Memoriam**  
**Louise Knight Bounds**  
**Col. James Golden Bogle**

## Your Membership Makes a Difference!

The membership committee needs your help in meeting our goal of doubling the number of members over the next few years. If you have marketing or public relations experience or if you are just interested in planning programs, events, and campaigns to attract new members, please contact Mary K. Jarboe, chair of the membership committee, at 404-373-9638 or [mkjarboe@comcast.net](mailto:mkjarboe@comcast.net). Any suggestions you have for recruiting new members will be welcomed. **We will publish all current members in the next newsletter—please contact us at [director@dekalbhistory.org](mailto:director@dekalbhistory.org) to check on the status of your membership.**

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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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