

The Historic Zuber-Jarrell House

By Rebecca Crawford

The Zuber-Jarrell house was built in 1906, under the supervision of John William Zuber. The Zuber family arrived in the United States from Germany in the mid 1800s when the family patriarch, John Zuber (John William's father), decided to make a new start for his family. After serving in the New York Light Artillery Regiment during the Civil War, John was deeply affected by the destruction that he witnessed as a soldier in Atlanta. In 1871, several years after the birth of his first son, John William, the family moved to war-ravaged Atlanta. The Civil War veteran was determined to help rebuild the

city he had seen so badly damaged. Not long after the family's arrival in Atlanta, John Zuber founded a wholesale lumber business.

John's oldest son, John William, eventually took over his father's business, and he too became an important presence in Atlanta economics. The company, which John William renamed J. W. Zuber Wholesale Lumber Company, eventually controlled a vast amount of forestland in the southeast region of the United States.



The 1906 Zuber-Jarrell House in East Atlanta.

In 1892, Zuber began purchasing land in DeKalb County, most of which surrounded a main thoroughfare, Flat Shoals Road, and by 1904, he had accumulated 37 acres of land. It was in this area, known as East Atlanta, where Zuber decided to build his stylish home.

On January 1, 1909, East Atlanta was annexed into the City of Atlanta, creating a ninth ward. Before the annexation, the area was a sparsely populated farming community with only one general store, J. W. McWilliams and Son General Merchandise, which was located on the corner of Glenwood Avenue

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Immigration in DeKalb

By Ben Zdencanovic

DeKalb County has long been home to America's immigrants. The influx here followed the patterns typical across the south. But during modern history, the county has become home to many new and diverse people.

The first white settlers to DeKalb arrived to claim territory acquired from the Creek and Cherokee Indians in the 1821 land lottery. These early pioneers were almost exclusively native-born United States citizens from Virginia and North and South Carolina. Generally poor and uneducated, they were primarily of English, Scottish and Scotch-Irish descent, their ancestors having arrived on the continent in the 16th and 17th centuries.

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Two New Exhibits

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Come see two new exhibits at the History Center. The exhibits are on the main floor of the historic DeKalb County Courthouse in downtown Decatur and are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Both are scheduled to run through January 14, 2011. Funding was provided in part by proceeds from the 2009 Great Decatur Craft Beer Festival.



Rosebud is the star of the Dairy Exhibit!

The Dairy Exhibit focuses on the history of dairy farming in DeKalb County in the 20th century. The boll weevil's attack on cotton farming led to the beginning of many dairy farms when cotton farmers were forced to change from growing cotton to producing dairy products. The one-room exhibit contains colorful signs, artifacts such as a route book and milk bottles, and even includes a life-sized replica of Rosebud, the famous cow mascot for Mathis Dairies.

The Quilt Exhibit was organized by Sarah Phillips and Debbie Steinman and has a mixture of historic and contemporary quilts. Many of these are on loan from local quilters who are affiliated with the Ebony Stitchers, Fearless Friday Guild, Intown Quilters Guild and Phoenix Guild.

Presenters include: Ray Barreras, Nicole Blackwell, Sheila Blair, Mary Carlock, Wanda Earley, Casey Green, Michelle Hiskey, Mary Maynard, Lenora Mcfarland, Taffy McLaughlin, Patty Murphy, Belinda Pedroso, Sarah Phillips, Arlene Poretzky, Jennifer Richardson, Denise Ritchie, Sahar Rosenbaum, Brenda Shelby and Debbie Steinmann.



This circa 1860 quilt features the Pomegranate, or Love Apple pattern.

Of the 47 quilts on display, eight are historic and date from 1850 to 1940. The colorful exhibit contains quilts with traditional patterns such as lone star, drunkard's path, twisted bargello, square dance and crazy quilt, and many contemporary themes such as hearts, cats, The Lorax (from Dr. Seuss), stained glass, sunflowers, and cupcakes. The quilts range in size from small intricate wall hangings to large quilts that would be appropriate for a king-sized bed. Many are made from batik fabrics, and several have received awards from various quilt shows. One is a replica of the quilt presented to the German Olympic Committee during the 1996 Olympics held in Atlanta. Other examples include a quilt made for a child's 5th grade graduation that includes her history, a tracing made of her body when she was 5 months old, and a quilt made from Peachtree Road Race t-shirts and race bibs worn by the runners. ✦



Historic and modern quilts are combined for a colorful display.

Zuber-Jarrell House (cont.)

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and Flat Shoals. After the annexation, the community began to grow and develop into a bustling commercial and residential area.

Construction of the house was completed in 1906, and in 1907, Zuber married Gertie Rogers, who hailed from Chattanooga, Tennessee. The couple moved into their new mansion on Flat Shoals, where they raised their four children, including a set of twins. John William and Gertie remained in the house until 1927, after which the property changed hands multiple times and was eventually foreclosed on in 1937.

In 1937, John Milton Jarrell, a World War I veteran and employee of Southern Railway, purchased the house and land for \$3,500. In 1941, Jarrell moved into the house after having rented it for several years. In 1954, he married Martha Frances Mitchell, who was 20 years his junior. Over the span of four years, the Mitchells had five children, including two sets of identical twins. The Jarrell family remained there for 66 years before Jennifer Murray and Marc Dobiecki, while en route to a estate sale, discovered that this house they had admired for several years was available for purchase.

In April 2003, Jennifer and Marc purchased the Zuber-Jarrell house. Jennifer explained that one of the main reasons they were attracted to the property was that the house remained

largely unchanged by previous owners. They brought on Doug Frey as project manager and together they have been meticulously stabilizing, restoring and renovating the house. Great care has been taken to reuse historic materials, and very little of the original fabric of the house has been discarded or destroyed. For instance, the couple used the wood from the attic floor for their new kitchen cabinets.

The physical integrity of the Zuber-Jarrell house has been preserved, largely because it was continuously owned by the Jarrell family for nearly 66 years. The house is an excellent example of the Neoclassical Revival Style. The exterior of the house retains the original form, columns, brackets, side-porch, portico, porte cochere and 13 stained and leaded glass windows.

Much of the interior, which is in the Victorian and Craftsman style, is also remarkably intact. The original wood detailing, floors, windows, and doors have been preserved. The Great Hall, which was crafted from local birch trees, shows how the original owner-builder, lumber entrepreneur John William Zuber, used his knowledge and expertise to ensure that his residence had the finest craftsmanship and materials.

The house is significant in terms of local commerce, because Zuber was a powerful and influential Atlanta businessman. The grand scale of the house is representative of a high point in Zuber's career, and much of the materials used in construction were likely from his own holdings.

Located only a half-mile from the bustling East Atlanta Village, the colossal Zuber-Jarrell House stands out among the mid-century ranch houses that have been built along Flat Shoals and the surrounding neighborhoods.

On September 30, 1997, the Zuber-Jarrell House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photographs for this story were provided by **Jennifer Murray and Rebecca Crawford.** ✦



The portico features two-story Ionic columns.



New kitchen cabinets made from recycled wood.

Meet Our New Archivist

Jill Sweetapple moved to DeKalb County in 1989 to work at Cable News Network. She started running camera and ended up as an electronic graphics operator in the control rooms during events like the Gulf War. She landed at Network Operations on Techwood Drive as an associate director for live events including the Braves, NBA basketball, golf and NASCAR.

In 2007, she left television for good and enrolled in the Library Science program at Florida State University. For class credit, she was instructed to write a research guide and instead of choosing an academic or public library, she chose the DeKalb History Center. Here at DHC, Jill worked on a property research guide for DeKalb. The final document can be found on our website on the newsletter page as *Researching Your House at the DeKalb History Center*. After she read a letter written by a DeKalb resident during World War II, she knew that archives was the place to be.

Jill volunteered and then interned here for class credit. She began the transfer of the "I Remember Hour" oral history series from VHS to DVD. She attended the Georgia Archives Institute in 2009; this two-week course teaches the concepts and

practices of archival administration and management of traditional and modern documentary materials. After Jill received her master's degree in Library and Information Science in August 2009, she began volunteering at other Atlanta institutions to broaden her skills.

She digitized audio tapes from the 1960s for the Atlanta History Center, processed a group of papers for the Women's Collection at Georgia State University and learned everything she could in the conservation lab at the Georgia Archives in Morrow. In January she was hired as a document preservation contractor for Ancestry.com, where she photographed documents at the Georgia Archives, including three volumes from DHC. She also completed the "I Remember Hour" transfer project which was funded by Joyce Cohrs, in memory of Wynne Christensen.

Our last archivist, Ben Zdencanovic, has moved to pursue a master's degree at the University of Chicago. We miss Ben and wish him well! Jill has seamlessly transitioned into her new position and is available to help you with your research requests. She was born in Pennsylvania but has called Georgia home for over 40 years. ✦

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 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!

Joe Alcock	Nancy Eramian	Diane Metts	Arlene Poretzky
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Did You Know these DeKalb Schools?



We recently received 15 slides which date from about 1949. The slides show eight different DeKalb County schools, an outhouse and a city skyline. The donor said that the slides were taken by Joe Morris, who at the time was the Chairman of the DeKalb County School Board. This information was included with the slides:

The photos were taken to be used in a presentation by Mr. Morris to a meeting of investment bankers at the offices of Blythe and Company in New York. The purpose was to graphically demonstrate the pressing need of the county to upgrade and expand its school system. These visual exclamations added poignancy to the prospectus and supporting data which led to the first issue of DeKalb County School Bonds. There were many issues to follow. The outhouse evidently did not negatively reflect on the Bonds' AAA rating by Moody's.

Unfortunately, the names and locations of the schools were not known to the donor. If you recognize any of these structures, please contact our archivist at archives@dekalbhistory.org or 404-373-1088 extension 23.

And remember, we are always looking for archival materials which can help researchers understand the history of DeKalb County. ✦

Immigration In

Continued from page 1

The original settlers and their descendants comprised the majority of DeKalb's population throughout the county's first few decades. With the arrival of the Georgia Railroad in DeKalb in the mid 1840s, however, Irish and German immigrants flooded the area to perform railroad work. Many of these newcomers planted roots and stayed permanently in DeKalb; in September, 1844, the DeKalb County Superior Court issued naturalization certificates to nine Irish laborers. Increased diversity also brought xenophobic sentiment for the first time to DeKalb County. A DeKalb Grand Jury determined in March of 1845 that, despite the upstanding moral character of most DeKalb citizens, "The commission of offences is mostly confined to foreigners and other transient persons engaged on the railroads."

In spite of prejudice, many foreign born citizens prospered in business and trading during the antebellum period. Jacob Haas was born to a Jewish family in Hessendarmstadt, Germany, and settled in DeKalb County after a brief period as a peddler in Philadelphia. Together with Henry Levi, another German immigrant, he opened one of Decatur's first and most successful dry goods stores in early 1845. James Hutchinson Kirkpatrick, one of DeKalb's first Irish settlers, owned one of the largest estates in DeKalb County history by the time of his death in 1853. His property included thousands of acres west of Decatur, including land that would become the Kirkwood neighborhood, along with \$11,157 and eleven slaves.

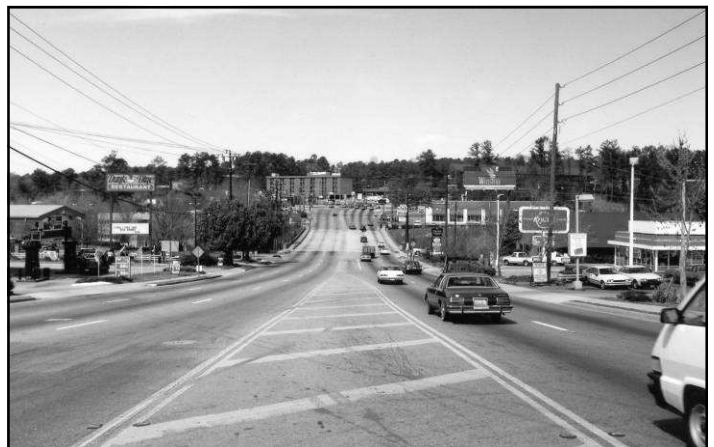
Although the South did not see the deluge of immigration that

other parts of the country did during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several prominent immigrant families did make significant, long-lasting contributions to the area during this time period. Bedros Sharian, an Armenian from Hadjin, Turkey, arrived in the United States following the First World War in the hopes of becoming a minister. He eventually settled in Decatur, and with the help of his wife and brother-in-law, established Sharian, Inc., in 1931. Specializing in the cleaning and repair of Oriental rugs, the company still serves Decatur to this day. Demetrius Elias Nour, a young Lebanese immigrant, moved to the Stone Mountain area in 1913 and started a prosperous hotel and general store.

The 1970s began DeKalb's most significant period of immigration as Mexican and Central American immigrants began to settle in the Chamblee and Doraville areas. Originally home to mostly white, blue collar workers employed in the nearby General Motors, Frito-Lay, and General Electric factories, the Chamblee-Doraville area saw a major demographic shift in during the economic downturn of the 1970s. As plants laid off workers, housing and rental vacancies in the area soared. Landlords and rental management companies began to aggressively market their properties to Asian and Latino immigrants. The arrival of two MARTA stops in the area in the 1980s accelerated the surge in working class immigrant relocation to Chamblee and Doraville. Mary Odem, a history professor at Emory University, has found that by the mid 1990s, immigrants from 12 different Asian countries and 18 different Latin American countries resided in the region.



The Sharian store in Decatur, image from the Joe Lee Postcard Collection.



A recent photo of Buford Highway's sprawling growth.

Upcoming Events

Lunch & Learn, "History in Decatur," on Tuesday, September 21, at Noon. Our speaker will be Walt Drake, who is a managing partner for McCurdy and Candler, LLC and a former mayor of Decatur. Free—bring your lunch!

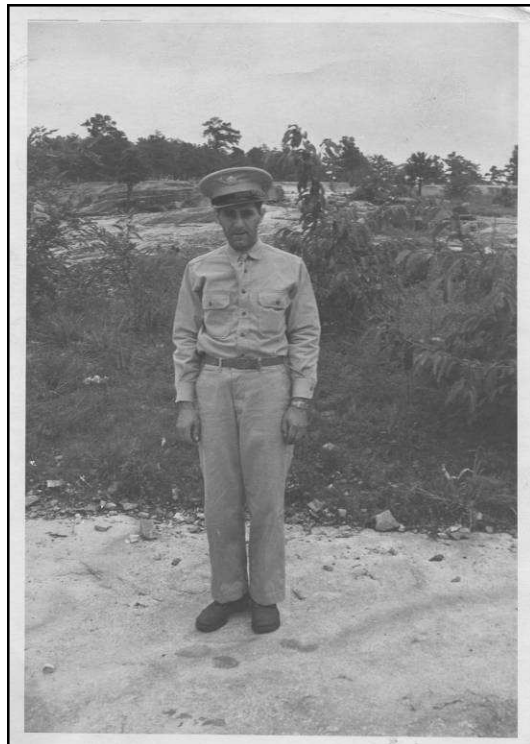
Decatur Book Festival, September 4 and 5. Look for our booth where we will be selling books and maps! Also come inside the Historic Courthouse to visit our exhibits on the main floor. ✦

DeKalb County (Cont.)

DeKalb's changing demographics can be seen in the ethnic diversity of the Buford Highway Corridor, which runs through northern DeKalb where many immigrants settled since the 1970s. In central DeKalb, changes are well illustrated by Your DeKalb Farmer's Market, which opened in 1977 and offers international foods not found at typical grocery stores. They employ people from all over the world who speak many different languages. The Farmer's Market is also located near Clarkston, which is the home of "Friends of Refugees;" an organization which has helped to resettle over 60,000 refugees from all over the world since the mid 1990s. ✦



The architect's rendering for the Chamblee Marta station as published in the DeKalb News/Sun.



Nour, famous for his Stone Mountain rescues.

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