

An Intern's Perspective

By Alexis Wheeler

Alexis Wheeler grew up in DeKalb County where she also attended public schools. She came to the DeKalb History Center from Clayton State University for an Archival Academic Internship during her last semester. She graduated in August 2017 with a B. A. in History and a concentration in Public History. In our Archives, she was able to extend her knowledge of archival management, standards, and best practices.

I didn't really know what to expect when I started my internship at the DeKalb History Center (DHC). What I understood was that the DHC caters to the history of DeKalb

County, Georgia. As a college history student, I relearned things taught to me between those tender and innocent ages from eight to eighteen when you're sitting in social studies and they teach you about "American History". Except in college you run into the true stories instead of the innocent version they teach you in grade school. Basically, I did not think that I would walk away from this internship with more information about DeKalb County in my head than the average Georgia History teacher. I felt coming in that I knew a little bit about DeKalb County having done a project on its early history, so I was confident that I could keep up a little.

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Alexis Wheeler learns more about our Collective Access database from Karen Chance, DHC's exhibits Coordinator.

History Quest 2017

By Marissa Howard

The DeKalb History Center hosted 1200 students from 10 schools around Atlanta for our annual History Quest from October 24th-27th. Students in grades 2, 3rd, 4th, and 8th grade rotated through nine stations experiencing history first hand through performers. Students had a chance to meet historical figures ranging from James Oglethorpe to Jimmy Carter. A new addition this year was students learning 19th century Regency Dance, they even held hands!

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Upcoming Events

Welcome Wednesdays

Second Wednesday of each month from 10:30—11:30 a.m.

Our toddler program, celebrating DeKalb's youngest citizens through stories and play, will continue into the new year! For ages 2 - 5.

\$3 for members, \$6 for non-members. Adults & infants free.

December 13

January 10

February 14

March 14

April 11

Black History Month Celebration

Join us as we learn about

Rural Civil Rights

Voices Across Georgia and DeKalb

Inspiring Dialogue on Race and Truth

This powerful program will include a soul-stirring, dramatic interpretation that will pay homage to the rich legacy of civil rights, an equally dynamic panel of rural leaders eager to share their personal experiences, and a powerful debut documentary sure to stir the audience to inspiration. Your ticket includes lunch. Sponsorship opportunities available!

Tuesday, February 13, 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

\$30 for members, \$40 for non-members

Contact Melissa Forgey for sponsorship information: 404.373.1088, extension 22 or forgey@dekalbhistory.org

Silent Auction & Annual Meeting

Friday, March 23, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Free & Open to the Public

Join us for our Annual Meeting and Silent Auction on Friday, March 23 from 6:00—8:30 pm at the Historic DeKalb Courthouse. Enjoy an evening of wine, beer, hors d'oeuvres and music while bidding on fantastic items donated by generous local businesses. We are currently seeking Silent Auction donations; contact Fred at mobley@dekalbhistory.org or 404-373-1088, extension 23, if you would like to donate. ✦

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Marissa Howard

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Fred Mobley

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Larry Serra

DeKalb Traveler

In addition to day-long bus tours, our “DeKalb Traveler” tours include member only meet-ups at various location around Metro Atlanta. These tours often offer a behind the scenes look or tour of museums, facilities, or historic sites.

The tours are capped with limited availability to keep tours small and intimate. Past tours have been of the CDC Museum, Waffle House Museum, and Fernbank Planetarium. During our last tour of the Planetarium, not only did we see two shows, but we got a peek behind the curtain and saw how the actual planetarium is run.

The DeKalb History Center’s mission with “DeKalb Traveler” is to foster a community of active learners who are eager to explore and learn. Members with a membership of \$50 or more are given two tickets to “DeKalb Traveler” as part of their benefits. All other members or those that have used their two tickets, cost is \$5. 2018 schedule will be posted soon. ✦

Photos—Clockwise from top right:

DeKalb History Center members catch up with each other at the Waffle House Museum.

Learning about malaria at the David J. Sencer Centers for Disease Control Museum.

Behind the scenes at the Fernbank Planetarium—the offices were filled with what many of us would consider historic objects: card catalogues, reel to reel tapes and equipment, drawers full of slides and more.

The Fernbank Science Center has found a way to showcase its large collection of taxidermied birds and animals. The locked storage cabinets make them visible to visitors.



History Quest *(cont.)*

Continued from page 1

The DeKalb History Center is proud to continue to offer this program in keeping with our mission. We are excited to begin planning for another sold out year in 2018. ✦



Internship *(cont.)*

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Subject Files: The first project that I encountered was the subject files. Subject files sounded easy enough or at least I thought. My initial job was to copy old newspaper articles that were deteriorating so that the information they held could be preserved and later scanned into the computer for easier public use. Opening my first file brought to my attention that I might end up learning more than just archival practices. While going through the files I began to read some of the articles going back to the early 1900s in DeKalb County. I realized then that these files contained DeKalb County history that many people aren't being taught. Honestly, it was like living in a place your whole life that you think you know like the back of your hand (like me) and finding out that you really don't have a clue or understanding of where you live. That being said, every file I pulled out made me ask more questions about the county I grew up in and the state of Georgia itself.

My project on the early history of DeKalb County involved my looking at tons of maps. I learned that DeKalb County was the literal "giant" of counties. The surrounding counties are cut from DeKalb which means they have some part of DeKalb County history within their own history. The subject files brought to my attention the disappearing towns and local history that many people in our day and age would find ancient history. Working with the volunteers and Fred Mobley, DHC's Archivist, while looking through the subject files was almost like sitting down and having the file cabinets talk to me (silly, right?). Most of the volunteers have grown up in DeKalb or lived here their whole lives. The subject files shined a whole new light on the history of DeKalb for me, and often times I have found myself asking questions or walking to the archives library and looking through books to learn more about what file I happen to be on.

My interest is piqued: my love for old houses. Interning at the DHC has been fun so far, but I have to say the exhibits really brought out my historical curiosity. I've always had a love for the old and unknown. One of these things happens to be old houses. Living in a southern state you often see old

structures, farm houses, or maybe even a grand southern plantation or two; most of the time they're in need of some work because of neglect or just abandonment.

Interning at the DHS stirred my interest again after years of just imagining what these places might have looked like in their heyday: all grand and beautiful before time came and made them what we see today. The Decorative Arts from the Permanent Collection, and The Mid-Century Ranch House: Hip and Historic! exhibits made me fall in love with the old houses of DeKalb County. Seeing the old furniture and experiencing how some of the prominent citizens of DeKalb County and the city of Decatur lived was refreshing in a way. I was looking at not just any history but that of an actual person who lived in the same county I did - but years before. I often wonder what will happen to old houses and whatever's inside them. I feel that if the surrounding community doesn't take care of them, then how can they know their history? How can they keep their community together?

The Ranch House exhibit gave me the same feeling. I come across old ranch houses on a daily basis and wonder what they were like before. This exhibit gave me that feeling of nostalgia and longing for the history of a part of DeKalb that is least talked about. Back in the subject files, I came across files of whole communities who used to live, work, go to school and church in the very places that I drive by every day. Looking at these exhibits made me think, "Wow - these were their houses so why are they abandoned now?" Having all these thoughts go through my mind as I toured the exhibits made me appreciate the subject files even more. I could go and see what Panthersville, the place where I grew up, was like before.

All in all, working with the subject files has been informative and fun all at the same time. So here's my advice to anyone reading this: even if you're not sure what you want to learn about DeKalb County, just have a look through some of the files or walk through an exhibit (which will probably lead you to the files). What you find might surprise you. ✦

HISTORIC DEKALB COURTHOUSE | DOWNTOWN DECATUR

DANCE HALL DECATUR

NEW YEAR'S EVE TO BENEFIT



DEKALB
HISTORY
CENTER

Sunday, December 31
8:30p > 1:00a

Tickets available at the
DeKalb History Center offices
or online at dekalbhistory.org

DeKalb Courthouse
101 E. Court Square
Decatur GA
Second Floor

Advance tickets \$40/\$55 per adult are
available until noon, December 29
(all prices go up \$10 after this deadline).
Advance tickets are \$15 for guests under
21 only.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR
with the best party in
Decatur! The DeKalb History
Center's holiday extravaganza
features a professional DJ
playing all your favorite
dance hits.

Admission includes delicious
appetizers from Soiree
Catering and Events,
two drink tickets, sodas,
a champagne toast at
midnight, and holiday party
favors. Guests can purchase
additional drink tickets for
beer, wine, or cocktails.
Festive holiday attire is
encouraged!



Your Membership

New exciting changes for memberships at the DeKalb History Center.

At the beginning of September, we began rolling out new Membership Cards for all members. These new cards feature your level of membership, expiration, and who the membership benefits belong too. As we add more events to our growing list of programs, your membership will go further than ever before. Your membership card will also help us identify members during check-ins at events. We will introduce the Membership Cards in your renewal or new member thank you letters-so this process could take up to a year to fully implement. We hope you are excited as we add at this new feature!

Membership donations are extremely important to our mission and we appreciate your support. Our next newsletter will include our annual list of members. If you have questions about your membership, please contact Marissa Howard at 404-373-1088, extension 20 or by email at howard@dekalbhistory.org. ✦

Indian Creek Cemetery

The DeKalb History Center oversees an account specifically designated for the perpetual care of the Indian Creek Cemetery. For over 15 years, donors with a family connection to the ancestors buried there have made financial contributions to ensure its maintenance and upkeep. Because the cemetery is not maintained through the Indian Creek Baptist Church, a group of people interested in the cemetery established this fund in 2001 through the DeKalb History Center. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send a check to the DeKalb History Center and specify that is for Indian Creek Cemetery.

In Memorium

Don and Mary Woyce (Donation received from the Georgia Postcard Club)

Membership donations are important to our mission. If you have questions about your membership please email Marissa at howard@dekalbhistory.org.

Join * Renew * Give

Collecting, Preserving and Sharing the History of DeKalb County

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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City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

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

DeKalb History Center

Historic DeKalb Courthouse
101 East Court Square
Decatur GA 30030

Phone: 404-373-1088
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