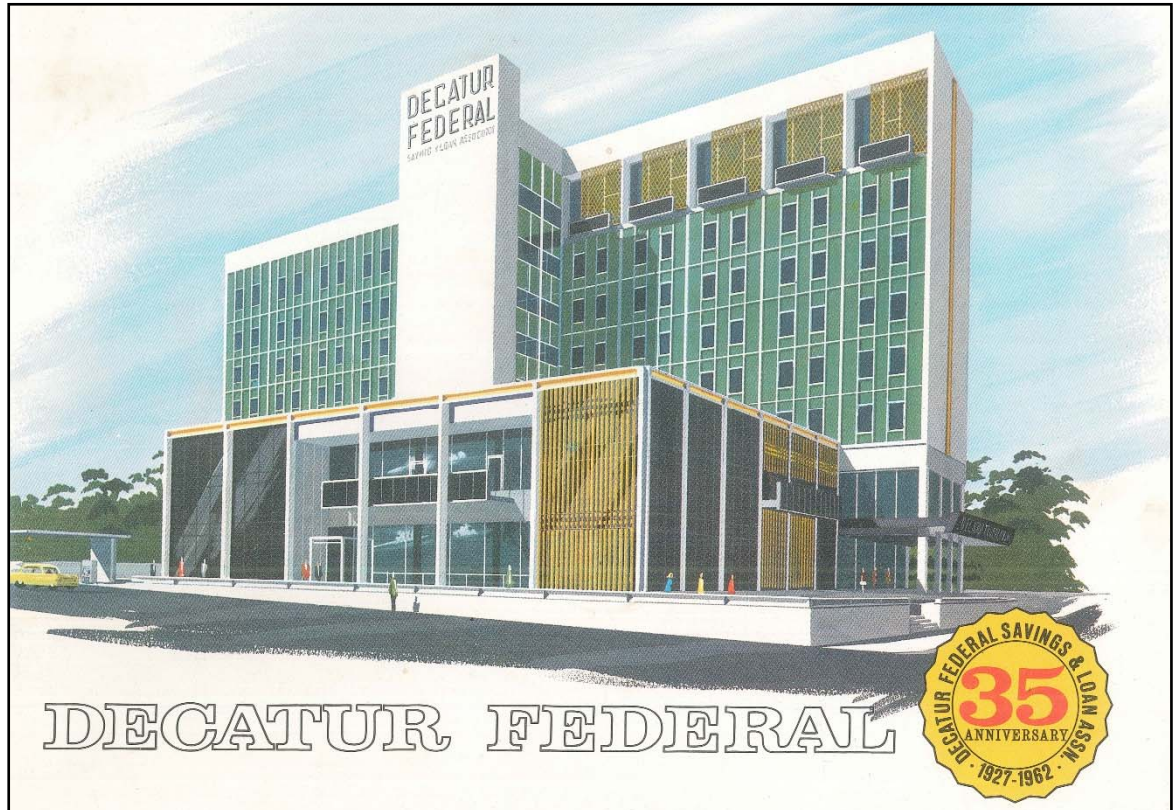


National Register News

The Decatur Federal Savings and Loan building (now Wells Fargo) was been found eligible for the National Register by Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office. It was designed by Pope H. Fuller, AIA, and opened March 9, 1962. The contractor was Pattillo Construction Company, and the interiors were done by Ray Lang, Inc.

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Architect's rendering of the Decatur Federal Savings and Loan building. In 1989, the pastel panels and windows were replaced to give the façade "a new smoked glass image."

DeKalb Traveler

By Marissa Howard

It may have been hot outside, but luckily for us the AC was working on our inaugural "DeKalb Traveler" outing. Spirits remained high throughout the day as we traveled down to Milledgeville and explored what the city had to offer. Milledgeville is a great day trip with plenty to see. Our first stop was Andalusia Farms, home of Southern Gothic writer Flannery O' Connor. After a tricky turn to get into the property (big props to our bus driver Brian), we arrived at this site. Andalusia has been brought to life by descriptions in

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Upcoming Events

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DHC Exhibits Open During the AJC Decatur Book Festival

Saturday, September 2, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and

Sunday, September 3, noon - 6:00 p.m.

Free & Open to the Public

Reclaimed by Nature: the Historic Davidson Quarries of Arabia Mountain;

Decorative Arts from the Permanent Collection;

Tears and Curses: A Human Focus on the Civil War; and

The Mid-Century Ranch House: Hip and Historic!

DeKalb Traveler

Monthly: September through November

\$5 per person per event; DHC members *only*

RSVP & Tickets required

The DeKalb History Center announces a new monthly series exclusively for members called "DeKalb Traveler." This series will include tours and meet-ups at different historical and tourist sites around the metro area. Such outings will include, the Waffle House Museum, CDC Museum and Fernbank Observatory. Groups will be limited in size to ensure quality programming. A nominal fee and registration will be required. Dates for DeKalb Traveler include:

Waffle House Museum—September 6 at 11:00 a.m.

CDC Museum—October 5 at 9:30 a.m.

Fernbank Observatory —November 2, time TBD

Guests must provide their own transportation. Contact Marissa Howard for tickets and information: 404.373.1088, ext. 20 or howard@dekalbhistory.org

The Historic Archives of Flat Rock September Lunch & Learn with Johnny Waits

Tuesday, September 19, noon - 1:00 p.m.

Free & Open to the Public

Johnny Waits developed the vision of an archives for the history of Flat Rock. In December of 2006 the Flat Rock Archives officially opened to the public. It is located in the ancestral home donated by Rev. T.A. Bryant and built by his father in 1917. The archives preserves the collections and tells the history of the Flat Rock Community. Johnny Waits is president of the archives and a descendant of one of DeKalb County's oldest families. He guides visitors through the compelling history of one of DeKalb County's oldest African American communities.

The Flat Rock Archives contains a wide range of historic materials, including genealogical records, photographs, maps, church and school records, and various artifacts relating to DeKalb's African American and Georgia history. The Archives also maintains the original Bryant farmland, barn, smokehouse, and outhouse that were built along with the home. ♦

Welcome Wednesdays!

“Welcome Wednesdays” Brings New Visitors to the DeKalb History Center

On Wednesday, June 14, we had an unusual sight at the Courthouse. Toddlers. Twelve of them, to be exact, and we had BLAST! For young children routine is such an important element in learning and development, and that is why every class will have the same routine. Each class focuses on a specific theme, and we explore that theme using math, science, art, and literature.

In the June 14 class our theme was *Colors*. We started by introducing different colors and practicing our matching skills. Next we did a science experiment by mixing colors. We saw what happens when we mix red-blue and yellow-red. Another component of the class is our museum activity, where we move around exploring our museum or just outside the building. We took a tour of the **The Mid-Century Ranch House: Hip and Historic** exhibit, looking for colors. We spotted a pink bathroom, blue glassware, and a green couch. After settling back down, we read *Pezzettino* by Leo Lionni. This story is the tale of a small orange square named Pezzettino (little piece in Italian) who thinks he is the missing piece of something larger. For our art project we used construction paper to create our own version of Pezzettino.

Another component of the class is a free-play opportunity. Children have a chance after the class is over to explore and play with things that reinforce the theme and skills learned. This is where we can play with shaving cream, blocks, or a ball toss. The surprise favorite activity was a ball-sort using two

large poster tubes with color-coded balls to toss into the tubes.

Our July class was about *Nature* where we focused on our sense of touch as we discovered the different textures of things around us in nature. August 16 will be about *Shapes*, all around us and at the Courthouse!

Additional programs are scheduled September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13. All are from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Reservations are not required, but to help us to better plan for the program, please RSVP to Marissa at 404.373.1088 ext 20 or howard@dekalbhistory.org ✦



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Decatur Federal

Continued from page 1

Since it was founded in 1927, Decatur Federal's officers and directors have included some of Decatur's most influential citizens including J. Robin Harris, Robert E. Rutland, Julius A. McCurdy, Scott Candler, Jr., Roy A. Blount, Nelson Severinghaus, and Julia L. Mitchell. The bank began in a one-room office in the Candler Hotel and moved to 103 Sycamore Street (formerly occupied by Decatur Bank & Trust Company) in the 1930s.

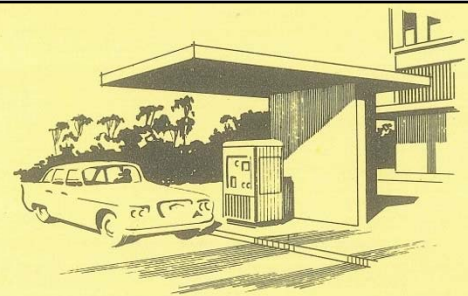
The bank's 1962 promotional booklet describes its new building:

"The Decatur Federal Building, eight stories high and the tallest in DeKalb County, creates an impressive landmark on the skyline of Metropolitan Atlanta. . . . In its sheer physical aspects alone, the Decatur Federal Building is breath-taking. It occupies the major portion of a seven acre tract with a building area exceeding 160,000 square feet. . . . The two story 'block' devoted exclusively to the Association's main offices is set apart by a background of black granite highlighted by the liberal use of crafted gold-anodized aluminum and stainless steel."

It was built with a community amenity which could accommodate up to 350 people. "Atop the Decatur Federal Building is the Sky-Room. High above the surrounding scene, it offers a breath-taking panoramic view of Metropolitan Atlanta. From the picture windows on the west the broad sweep of the city's skyline rises as a dynamic symbol of the growing South. To the east, stands Stone Mountain, a grey and majestic reminder of the bed rock strength that is the South . . . present . . . past . . . and future." The Sky-Room closed in 1992.

Decatur Federal also featured Georgia's first "futuristic two-way drive-in television hookup." The Atlanta Journal reported on the opening with an eight-page special section. This ultramodern drive-through system was a prominent feature, which employed a pneumatic tube system. "Right out of the pages of George Orwell's 1984 steps Tevematic, proof positive of Orwell's 'Big Eye' but with a wink and a smile. . . . You drive up to the Tevematic station; reach out the car window and press a button. Mrs. [Mary Nell] Smith hears your voice and sees your happy face on the television screen inside the building. "

The bank features elements of the International Style of architecture – it has scant ornamentation yet is very stately with its expansive marble and glass walls (which were altered in 1989). The lobby still boasts its gold-anodized aluminum ceiling as well as white



TV DRIVE-IN STATION

Transactions from the comfort of your automobile reach a new level of ease, speed and convenience. Two-way television and sound systems put you in direct, personal touch with a teller inside on the main floor of the Association. Passbooks, money and other items are transmitted rapidly and safely between you and the teller by pneumatic tube.

KATY

"Katy" is one of the Association's youngest but most ardent and active advocates. Seen frequently in the Association's advertising, she is a small, but highly independent saver who is remarkably knowledgeable in matters finan-

cial. She is ever alert to getting the best service and the largest return consistent with safety for her savings dollar. She has become one of the community's best known and most popular citizens.



Savings & Loan *(cont.)*

Alabama marble blended with Italian Arebescota marble. Interior finishes also included black marble, black granite, beige travertine, and black-and-white terrazzo flooring. The property retains its original site plan, including a parking garage, patio, and outdoor seating area. These outdoor features are somewhat hidden by later construction and mature vegetation. The building's subtle details are shown on its southern side. From East Ponce de Leon Avenue, you can see two railings that tie the architecture of the building into the streetscape. One railing is made of stainless steel and the other of concrete, both showcasing an inverse-chamfered design that appears elsewhere in stainless steel details. It has an original covered entrance on the eastern side with a curved cement "awning." The western entryway into the lobby is the one-story granite block with a mezzanine. Its covered entryway highlights the use of stainless steel and supports a balcony accessed from the mezzanine. The outdoor patio is tucked behind the lobby and it not visible from the street.

Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office found the property to be largely unaltered which allows it to "convey a sense of mid-twentieth century workmanship" and is still readily seen as an office tower.

In 1992 Decatur Federal Savings and Loan Association made national news when the U. S. Justice Department warned Decatur Federal that it had violated the Fair Housing Act of 1968. After a four-year investigation, the Justice Department alleged that the home mortgage lender had intentionally discriminated against black homebuyers. According to The Washington Post, the Justice Department said that Decatur Federal had repeatedly favored whites over blacks in home loans. This systematic racial bias was seen when comparing applications from blacks and whites who all had poor credit history. Most black applicants were turned down for financially sound reasons. The difference was that white applicants with similar credit histories or debt were approved. This was the first case of its kind to be brought forward

nationally, with the Justice Department alleging a broad pattern of discrimination by a lender. The Justice Department originally looked at 64 Atlanta banks but chose Decatur Federal for the investigation so they could develop a method for analyzing lending data. The case was settled in September of 1992. Decatur Federal denied all charges and signed a consent decree with a range of remedial measures, such as paying incentives to loan officers who signed up minority borrowers. The bank also agreed to pay \$1,000,000 to 48 qualified black applicants who had been denied mortgages. ✦



The lobby entrance and balcony on the western side of the building.



The original concrete and stainless steel railings.

DeKalb

Continued from page 1

the letters of Flannery O'Connor, collected and published in the book *The Habit of Being*. She is also well-known for *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* and *Other Stories* and her novel *Wise Blood*. The wooded areas of the property have been largely untouched for many decades, giving them a remarkably pristine appearance. O'Connor lived on this property from 1951 till her death from lupus in 1964. Our tour guide, Daniel, was a wonderful storyteller as he led us around the property.

The heat held off just long enough for us to enjoy a picnic lunch in the house's rocking chairs and on the lawn. I'll admit I could have spent a few hours with a good book under the many low-branching trees, but we had more touring to do.

We spent the next hour seeing the city from the comfort of our bus, our tour narrated by a volunteer from the Milledgeville Visitor Center before we were dropped off at the Old Governor's Mansion. The mansion served as the home of eight first families of Georgia (1839-1868), including most notably Civil War governor Joe Brown. The home has been meticulously restored to its 1851 appearance, including the furnishings. One of the most beautiful features of the home is an "architectural surprise" the architect Charles B. Cluskey designed in the form of a gold-layered dome. Completely hidden from the outside, the dome is visible from the inside. A marvel of design and craftsmanship and surprise to us all.

Our final destination was a drive through Central State Hospital. While the hospital has since shut its doors, the grounds are available to drive through. The magnificent early nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings are slowly succumbing to nature, but the grim history of this well-known asylum still remains. The hospital is huge, totaling 200 buildings housing 12,000 patients at its peak in the 1960s. Today the largest building on campus, The Powell Building (ca. 1883), with its white-washed exterior, dominates the vista as if still accepting patients. We drove back largely in silence, some quietly reflecting, others nodding off to the rhythm of the bus. It was a



The main house at Andalusia.



This structure was home to tenant farmers when O'Connor lived there.



Visitors gaze up to the hidden dome within the Governor's Mansion.

Traveler *(cont.)*



Left: Our tour guide on Andalusia's front porch.



Right: All the original keys to the Governor's Mansion.

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

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

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