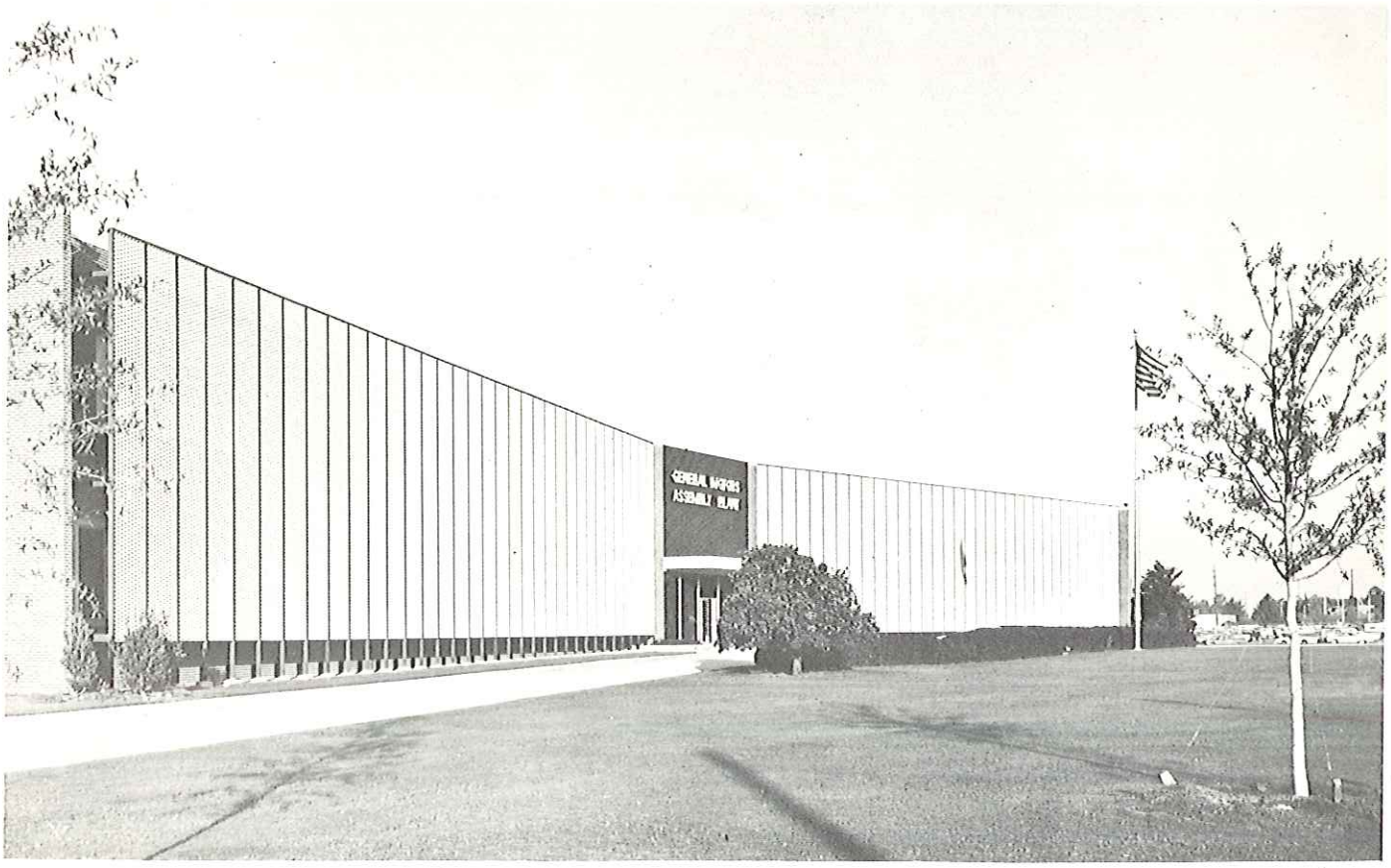
DORAVILLE PLANT

DORAVILLE, GEORGIA



GM Assembly Division

GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION

HISTORY OF THE DORAVILLE PLANT

The Doraville Plant was originally built as part of the Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac Assembly Division. It was constructed as a complete assembly unit for final production of Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac automobiles. Doraville was chosen as the site because of its metropolitan facilities and its strategic location among southeastern states.

The plant, originally occupying a 386 acre site, is located in DeKalb County on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard in Doraville, fourteen and one-half (14-1/2) miles northeast of Five Points, the hub of Atlanta.

Ground was broken on November 21, 1945 and construction was begun soon thereafter. The plans called for an initial building area of 985,450 sq. ft. The building and installation of equipment were completed by late 1947 with the total cost, including land, of $9,196,740.

The first automobiles were produced and shipped in November, 1947. Production had leveled off at 20 jobs per hour by June, 1948 with employes numbering 1,363.

General Motors' acquisition of the 386 acre plot played a dominant role in the development of the North DeKalb County industrial area. Subsequent to the purchase, construction was begun on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard which fronts the Doraville Plant and provides a four lane access

highway to downtown Atlanta. Other businesses soon joined General Motors in the area and they now number in the hundreds.

All of the original acreage was not required for auto assembly purposes and disposals were made by making available two acres to the Southern Railway Company for additional right-of-way, one hundred six acres for a housing development, eighty-two acres to Chevrolet Motor Division for a parts warehouse, thirty-three acres for other industrial development, and thirty-three acres were donated to the State of Georgia for highway and access road construction.

The growth of the Southeastern United States in the postwar era soon made it evident that the Doraville Plant, in its original size, could not supply the customer demand of the area. As early as 1950, less than three years after start of production, it was necessary to add 66,000 sq. ft. of floor space. This was only the beginning of an expansion program which saw the assembly building area increase from 985,450 sq. ft. in 1947 to 1,361,430 sq. ft. by December 31, 1962. In 1963, 50,750 sq. ft. were added to accommodate the addition of B.O.P. Doraville's fourth car line---1964 model Chevrolet.

Starting with 1964 model production, a new tri-level shipping facility was added, which makes available both rail and truck facilities to expedite the increased volume of automobiles to the dealers. The shipments are normally made to approximately ten southeastern and south central states.

Production capacity of the plant was increased during 1965 to 55 jobs per hour. Additional construction to accommodate this increase resulted in an Assembly Building area of 1,676,451 sq. ft.

A plant modernization program was under way at the end of 1965. Under this program, a completely new Paint Department was constructed and the entire plant electrical distribution system replaced.

The assembly of the Oldsmobile and Pontiac car lines was discontinued in December, 1965, leaving the Doraville Plant with two car lines---Buick and Chevrolet.

Another significant event during 1965 was our Divisional change in name from Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac Assembly Division to GM Assembly Division.

The production of the Oldsmobile was resumed with the start of the 1968 model in August, 1967.

The Doraville Plant is known not only for its assembly of fine quality automobiles, but also for its discovery and help in perfecting a new paint process which revolutionized the method of finishing an automobile. The unique method, called "bake-sand-bake," consists of placing the final coat of finish paint on the car and baking it at 160° F. The body is then lightly oil sanded to remove nibs or foreign particles. A final rebaking at 280° F completes the process and provides a much higher gloss and a more durable, sparkling luster. The

process was discovered through a series of tests and experiments. A white lacquer containing thermoplastic qualities was used for the experiments. It was discovered that under specific heat conditions it assumed reflow characteristics that obliterated all sludge, sand marks and sand scratch patterns. It also was found that the film surface flowed to a high gloss finish and, thus, a new paint process was developed.

During June, 1969, the Cushion Room was rearranged and modernized in order to accommodate added Cushion Room operations and to provide for future automation.

The assembly of the Oldsmobile car line was discontinued in April, 1970, and the Buick car line was discontinued in July, 1970. The assembly of the Pontiac car line was resumed with the start of the 1971 model in August, 1970.

Production capacity of the plant was increased to 55 jobs per hour at the start of the 1971 model year.

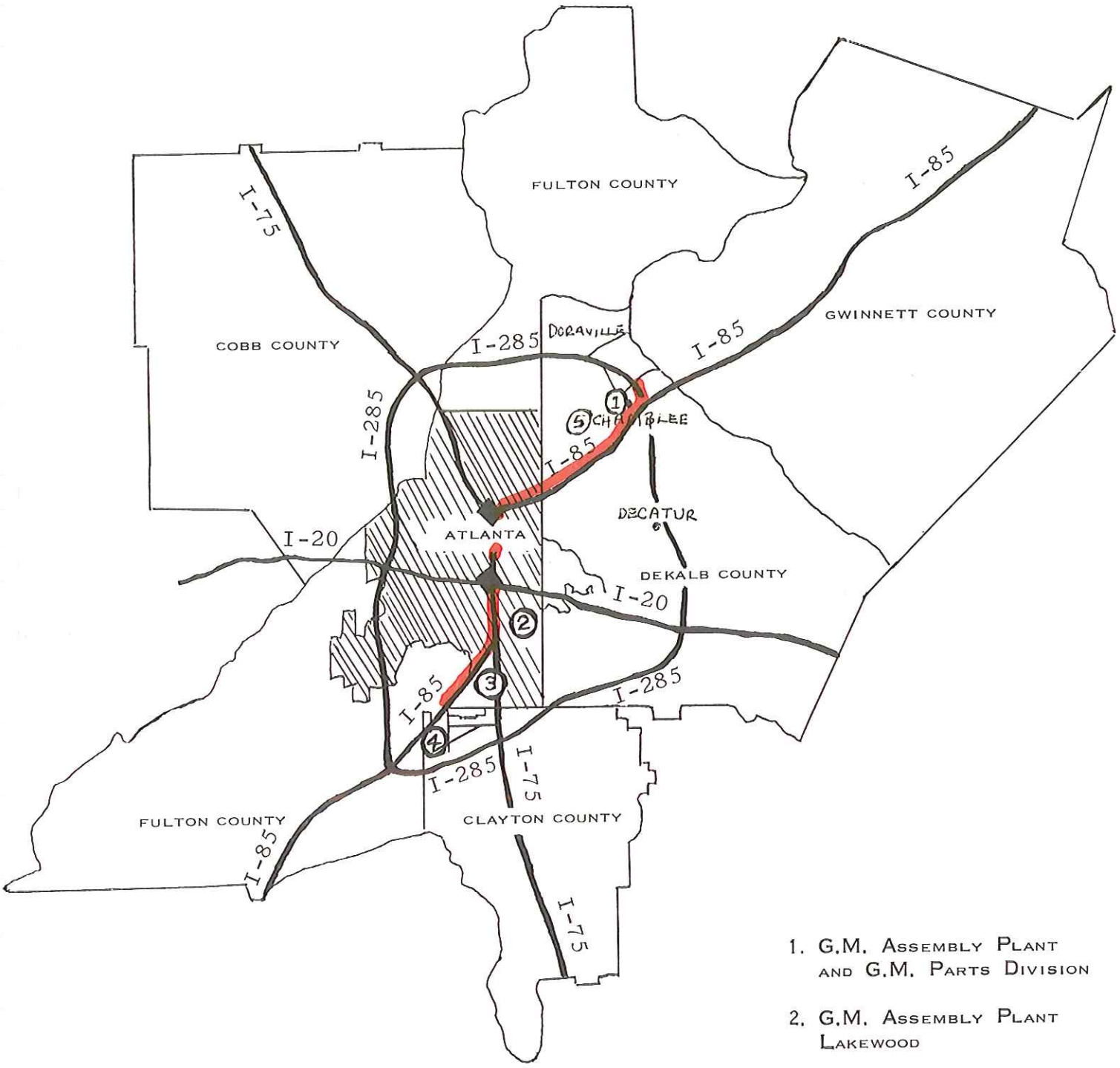
Construction was started in January, 1971, for a building addition of 32,400 sq. ft. The addition was intended for the "Plant Customer Quality Assurance Program." The building addition, which was completed in August, 1971, increased the total plant size from 1,861,414 sq. ft. to 1,893,814 sq. ft.

Production capacity of the plant was increased to 60 jobs per hour at the start of the 1974 model year.

Assembly of "B" body Chevrolet and Pontiac was discontinued in December, 1973. The assembly of "A" body Chevrolet and Oldsmobile began in January, 1974.

The remaining 2 bays of an 8 bay mobile equipment garage were completed in July, 1974. This addition increased charging spaces from 46 to 112 and added 16,200 sq. ft. to plant area.

An 8 bay, 16,200 sq. ft. material storage addition was completed in July, 1974.



1. G.M. Assembly Plant and G.M. Parts Division
2. G.M. Assembly Plant Lakewood
3. G.M. Training Center
4. Atlanta Airport
5. DeKalb Peachtree Airport