

DeKalb History Center

Historic DeKalb Courthouse
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Decatur GA 30030

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DeKalb History Center

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Times of DeKalb

Winter
2023

“But This is My Version:” What Oral History Can Teach Us About DeKalb, Past and Present

By Kathryn Turnbull, Archives Assistant

How long have you lived in DeKalb County? What do you remember about DeKalb from years ago? What things will you remember about today’s DeKalb in 50 years? In the early 1980s, the then-president of the DeKalb Historical Society, James Mackay, had the idea to ask these questions of longtime DeKalb residents in the historic courthouse before an audience and to record the incredible stories that came pouring out for later generations. Dubbed the “I Remember Hour (IRH),” the series would go on for nearly 20 years, documenting the lives and memories of DeKalb County’s public servants, business owners, educators, grandparents, and neighbors. Many of the folks who were interviewed at the close of the twentieth century were able to recall details of the DeKalb of their youth that are almost

unbelievable to today’s residents. For example, did you know that there were once 57 dairy farms between Panthersville Road and Decatur Square? (Mathis Dairy IRH, 7) Or that, in 1928, there were 12 grocery stores within a one-block radius of the Square? (Andy Robertson IRH, 5)

The DeKalb History Center’s foray into oral history did not end with the “I Remember Hour.” Far from it, in fact. These days, Safiyyah Shahid teaches at the Mohammed Schools of Atlanta, where she

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Ira B. Melton, Biloxi.



I Remember Hour with Reverend Ernest Moore.

has worked for close to 40 years. But as a young student at Spelman, she found a job through her church community as a babysitter for none other than Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King. Shahid spoke with DHC’s Marissa Howard earlier this year about her experience working for the King family:

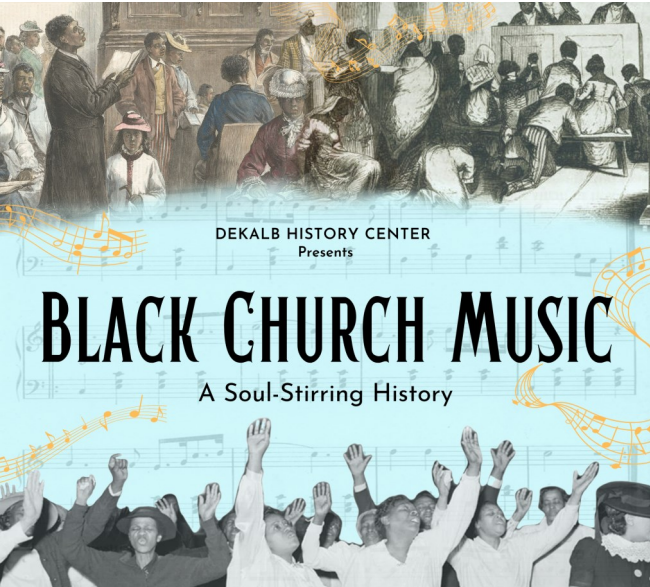
“I came in the afternoon, early evening, to, you know, sort of bathe the children, lay their clothes out, make sure they got their pajamas on...”

Shahid’s recollection of the King family is invaluable. Newspapers clippings do not reveal the dynamics within a family home... ✦

To view the full article,
visit our website or scan
here:



Black History Month Celebration



Join the DeKalb History Center for our 15th Annual Black History Month Celebration. This year’s program will be filled with soul-stirring gospel music by **Kenneth J. Lowe** and riveting talks by **Mrs. Velma Maia Thomas** and **Dr. Marva Carter** about the role Black Church music has played in Georgia’s social and political arenas. **DeKalb County CEO Michael L. Thurmond** will provide the Welcome.

Thursday, February 9
11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Historic DeKalb Courthouse
101 E Court Square
Decatur, GA 30030

Tickets are \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members, and both include lunch. Find out more at www.dekalbhistory.org

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We hope you enjoyed the winter 2023 issue of Times of DeKalb. Please consider making a financial contribution through joining, rejoining, or a one time donation. Your generous contribution to the DeKalb History Center will provide you with a year-long membership that includes our quarterly journal 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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Upcoming Events

FEB 7	<p>Westview Cemetery Abbey Tour, <i>DHC Member Exclusive</i></p> <p>10:00 am—12:00 pm</p> <p>Join fellow DHC members on a tour of Westview Cemetery’s Abbey Tour.</p> <p>FREE for Patron level (\$75) and above, \$5 for other levels.</p>
FEB 21	<p>Evening Book Launch—Woman With the Cure</p> <p>7:00—8:00 pm</p> <p>Author Lynn Cullen will be launching her new novel, <i>The Woman with the Cure</i>. This event is in collaboration with Eagle Eye Book Shop.</p> <p>Find ticket details at eagleeyebooks.com</p>
MAR 7	<p>Lunch & Learn: Fox Theater Institute</p> <p>12:00—1:00 pm</p> <p>Bring your lunch and learn about the Fox Theatre Institute and the work it does for performing arts venues across Georgia and the southeast.</p> <p>Free to attend.</p>
MAR 16	<p>Legacy Park Tour, <i>DHC Member Exclusive</i></p> <p>Time TBD</p> <p>Learn the history of Decatur's Legacy Park from Executive Director Lyn Menne and what the plans are today to make it a community driven urban oasis.</p> <p>FREE for Patron level (\$75) and above, \$5 for other levels.</p>
MAR 24	<p>A Historic Prom Night to Remember, Annual Spring Fling</p> <p>7:00—10:00 pm</p> <p>Join us for our annual Spring Fling—this year A Historic Prom Night to Remember. The event includes delicious bites from our preferred caterers, spiked punch, games, a silent auction, and dancing. Dress in your finest Prom attire—any decade! We will begin with our annual meeting where we elect Officers and Directors.</p> <p>\$30 Members / \$40 Non-members</p>
MAR 22	<p>Archives Research 101: Genealogy Workshop</p> <p>2:00—3:00 pm</p> <p>Learn the ins and outs of genealogy with Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.</p>

For more information on these events and how to attend, please visit dekalbhistory.org/programs

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Elizabeth “Betty” Mackay Asbury

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