

DeKalb History Center

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Times of DeKalb

A Quarterly Journal

Summer
2023

Digitizing the Archives

By Kathryn Turnbull, Archives Assistant

Greetings from the Archives! My name is Kathryn and this month marks my one-year anniversary of working at the DHC as the Archives Assistant. I received my degree in History from Agnes Scott College in 2022 and attended the 2023 Georgia Archives Institute. The majority of my work at the DHC relates to digitizing our existing collections. Digitization has a dual purpose; it can simultaneously improve the longevity of physical archival materials and increase public access to the archives when copies of records are made available online. Some items, including many of our subject files on churches, neighborhoods, businesses, and more, are already scanned and can be found on our website. Others, like the Guy Hayes Collection and DeKalb County plat maps, are currently being digitized and indexed for in-house research appointments only. So, what does this digitization process look like, and what are its goals?

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With approximately 11,000 negatives, calling the Guy Hayes Collection “vast” is an understatement. Hayes’ slice of life snapshots date from the 1940s to the 1980s, with the bulk of the collection from the 1950s and 1960s. He was a freelance

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Woman stands in front of First National Bank during 100 degree day, late 1950s or early 1960s. From the Guy Hayes Collection.



Glenncrest Garden Club Scrapbook, 1955-1956.

Garden Club Scrapbooks: Images from DeKalb Gardens

By Marissa Howard, Programs & Membership Coordinator

Garden Club scrapbooks are works of art. People have created scrapbooks for centuries; they are a way to document daily life, significant events, loved ones, personal memories, and more. Scrapbooks were the blogs and vlogs of their time.

The Ladies Garden Club, the first in America, was founded in 1891 in Athens,

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Digitizing the Archives continued

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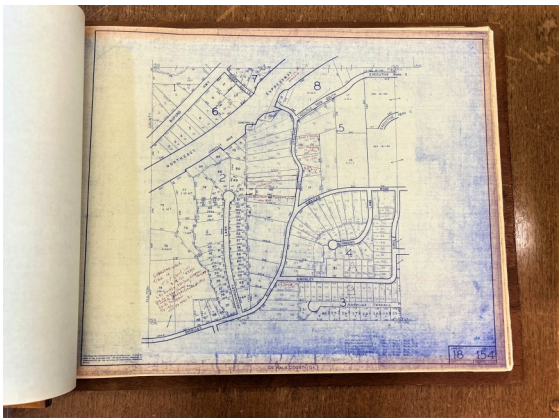
news photographer and the collection represents scenes of everyday life in DeKalb County, metro Atlanta, Georgia, and the Southeast. The collection is an invaluable source for understanding the twentieth century at a local and personal level. Most, but not all, of Hayes’ photos have been scanned and stored digitally in the past decade to preserve the images as the original negatives inevitably decay. Given the size of this collection, the ongoing project of tagging and describing these digital scans is time intensive on the front end, but worth the effort – it allows someone to search all of the digitized photos at once for images relevant to their research by keyword or subject. Descriptive names based on the context and content of the images helps to make research using this collection a bit less like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Once tagged, images of public figures, like Georgia Governor Carl Sanders, or specific locations, like Lake Lanier or the bygone Atlanta Municipal Airport, can both support ongoing and inspire future research. In order to identify the subjects and places of these photos, every detail of the image is inspected. Sometimes a just-legible nametag or product logo can be an opening into a new understanding of the who, what, where, and when of the image at hand. The following photos demonstrate the variety in Hayes’ photography. ✦



Miss Georgia contestants gather backstage, 1953.



Man feeding pigeons on a bench, 1950s.



Sheridan Road plat map. District 18, land lot 154. A plat map being digitized for in-house appointments.



Civil rights march down Forsyth Street.



East Lake Walking Tour

September 6, 6:00—7:30 pm
September 19, 5:30—7:00 pm *(with the Atlanta Preservation Center)*
October 4, 5:30—7:00 pm

Enjoy a stroll along Alston Drive in East Lake, learning the history of the homes, neighborhood, and East Lake Golf Club. Ticket required.



Brews + Buildings: Magical Mystery DeKalb Tour

September 7, 6:00—7:30 pm *(Stone Mountain Village)*
Join us for a series of magical and mysterious pop-up walking tours around DeKalb County. Participants will know when and where to meet, but the content will remain a mystery! Ticket required.

For more information on these events and how to attend, please visit dekalbhistory.org or scan here:



Join * Renew * Give

We hope you enjoyed the spring 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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To check out what we have in our archives, visit <https://dekalbhistory.org/dekalb-county-archives-research/> or by scan the QR code:



Upcoming Events



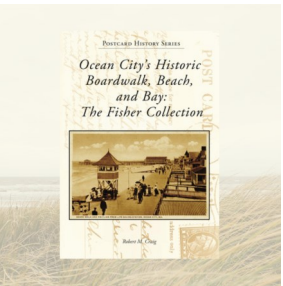
Decatur Architecture Walking Tour
August 8, 9:00 —10:15 am
September 13, 6:00—7:15 pm
October 10, 5:30– 6:45 pm
In this year’s brand new walking tour, come learn about the Architects and Architecture of Downtown Decatur. This tour will focus on commercial buildings spanning 1920 to 1970. Ticket required.



Archives Showcase: Back to School
August 8, 10:00 am—6:00 pm
August 9, 10:00 am—1:00 pm
Come to the History Center to explore yearbooks, scrapbooks, photos, and more that highlight the school experience in DeKalb County. Free to attend!
Archives Reading Room (1st floor of the Historic DeKalb Courthouse)



DeKalb Traveler: L.P. Grant Mansion (Open only to DHC members)
August 16
1:00—2:00 pm
Tour the L.P. Grant Mansion, used today as the Atlanta Preservation Center headquarters, and learn about L.P. Grants’ life, contributions to the city, and his home.



Lecture: History of the Postcard
August 22
6:00—7:00 pm
Learn all about the birth and evolution of the postcard with author Robert M. Craig.
Free to attend!

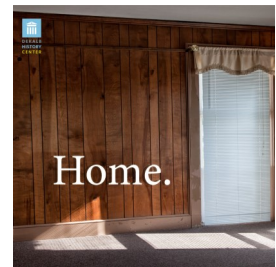


Exhibit Opening— Home: The United Methodist Children’s Home
August 31
5:30—7:30 pm
Free to attend! More information on page 3.

New Exhibit



Home: The United Methodist Children’s Home

Opening August 31, 2023

Standing as a beacon of hope for children and families for over 140 years, the United Methodist Children’s Home served as a place countless people called Home. Founded in 1871 in Norcross, Georgia, the Children’s Home was created to give children abandoned in the aftermath of the Civil War a place to be cared for. In 1873, the Home moved to Decatur and remained there until 2017.

Historic and contemporary photographs provide glimpses into the United Methodist Children’s Home, while first hand oral histories from past residents, employees, and volunteers detail life in the "Orphan's Home" from 1943 to 2019. This fascinating history was documented through interviews and photography by Beate Sass with interview assistance from Moira Bucchiarelli. Sass turned the combined work into a manuscript.

5:30—7:30 pm

Free to attend!

DeKalb History Center (located inside the Historic DeKalb Courthouse), 1st floor
101 E Court Square, Decatur GA 30030

Sponsorships available

To find out more about the exhibits currently on display, visit dekalbhistory.org/exhibits-dekalb-history-center-museum/ or scan the QR code:



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Kathryn Turnbull
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Garden Club Scrapbooks continued

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Georgia. Popularized all over the United States, garden clubs were manifestations of the broader social and political Women’s Club Movements of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The 1920s saw budding growth in local garden clubs that were in full bloom by the 1930s. Businesses began monetizing this opportunity and offered free classes to women. One was a series entitled the “Constitution’s Garden School,” which was sponsored by the *Atlanta Constitution* and featured fashion shows by Sears, and classes taught by Decatur horticulturist and businesswoman Fletcher Pearson Crown. These schools allowed women the space to make a career of homemaking, and impress their husbands.

Gardens have always been a projection of wealth, dedication, and creativity. The garden space was becoming a women’s domain.

The Garden Club Scrapbook Collection held by the DeKalb History Center, covers years from 1932 – 1972. Each club had a specific member in charge of scrapbooking. Careful consideration was put to artwork, decoration, and information provided in the club’s scrapbook. Each club had a specialty and focus,

often on specific flowers. Gardening trends are reflected in the landscaping and floral displays.

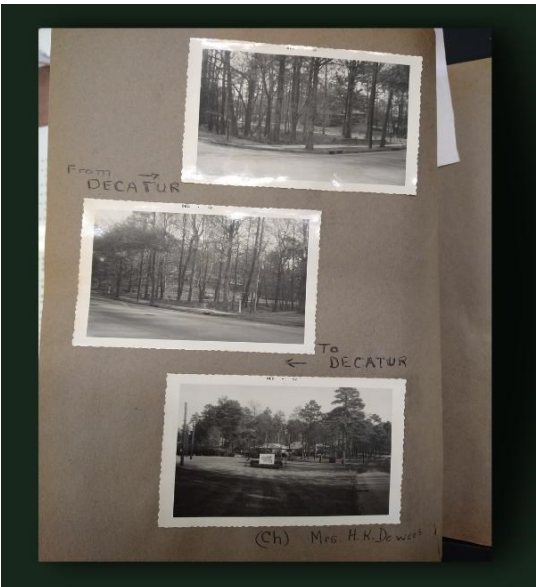
These clubs were all white and populated by mid- to upper-class women. There is a history of non-white garden clubs, however, resources on these are limited at the DeKalb History Center. To learn more you could explore the Cherokee Garden Library’s initiative: Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America.

The images in garden club scrapbooks tell the wonderful story of historical landscaping. An overlooked resource, these scrapbooks, and images, can help to tell the history of your property.

A Woman’s Touch

Beautification of civic spaces became the mission of these clubs, which were frequently praised by men-led business organizations for bringing charm and value to public spaces. ✦

To view the rest of this article, visit dekalbhistory.org/dekalb-history-center-blog/ or scan the QR code:



Parkwood Garden Club, 1962. Installation of the neighborhood sign and beautification of the triangle park on Scott Boulevard and W. Ponce de Leon.

East Lake Walking Tour

We have officially launched a limited walking tour of the beautiful and historic East Lake Neighborhood. Alston Drive was the home of poets, World War I nurses, horse racing entrepreneurs, and of course, golf legends!

To many, Alston Drive is hallowed ground in the story of Bobby Jones. In his autobiography published in 1927, Jones describes his summers learning to golf while staying at a small summer cottage a short putt away from East Lake Golf Course. Jones would later recall his very first makeshift par 3 course he would play from the cottage that ended in the ditch along Alston. Decades later he would remark his only hole-in-one was from the cottage on Daniel Avenue to the ditch.



Bobby Jones and Alexa Sterling, circa 1923.

Remarkably, we can still see that summer cottage.

Alston Drive in 1910 was also home to other well-known figures outside of golf. We see glimpses of Mirodella, the summer cottage of poet Henry Elliott Harmon.

Continuing down Alston Drive we see the childhood home of Alexa Sterling. She was Bobby Jones's childhood golfing partner, dubbed the “**First Lady of Eastlake.**” Alexa won her first title at Eastlake at the age of 12. In 1916, at 19, she won the first of her three US women's amateur championships. Sterling was later inducted into the U.S. and Canadian Golf Hall of Fame.

The most famous stop on the tour is the home of Robert Alston, or Meadow Nook. Meadow Nook, built in 1856 is one of the oldest remaining structures in Atlanta. Colonel Robert Alston built his Georgian Cottage on what was then Fayetteville Road. The interior features a central hallway with a spiral staircase and marble fireplaces throughout.

Robert Alston returned from the Civil War, and worked in publishing, eventually entering state politics. His life came to a tragic end in 1879 at the State Treasurer’s Office.



Meadow Nook, circa 1920s .

Alston fought against the convict-lease system, in which the state would provide convict labor to private parties for a price. Edward Cox, who leased prisoners, was angered by Alston's stance and confronted him in the State Treasurer’s Office in the state Capitol. Both men fired at the same time, but Alston was fatally wounded. It was described as an “eerie scene” after the violence, with two wounded men and “blue gunsmoke floating along the ceiling of the capitol.”

His widow remained at Meadow Nook until the surrounding 300 acres were parceled off and sold, becoming the neighborhood we now know as East Lake. Meadow Nook was named after the meadow along Doolittle Creek, which was eventually dammed, creating a sizeable man-made lake.

Many more stories are told during this limited edition walking tour of East Lake. ✦



East Lake Walking Tour Group, July 2023.



East Lake Garden Club.
(top) Mrs. Keith Conway's Garden on Glenwood Ave across from East Lake Golf Club.
(bottom) A central focal point, mass plantings, and hard brick border are pictured in Lucy Swanson's garden at 246 Daniel Avenue.