

Vanishing DeKalb

editors note:

VANISHING DEKALB is a regular feature of your Newsletter. If you know of a bit of history in danger of being buried by progress let us know. It need not be a great monument, perhaps one of the reminders of everyday life. We print good news, too! A home restored or an historic building recycled is news.

Durand Farm By: Gerry Crocker

In this age of "Vanishing DeKalb" it is good to know that there still remains an old farm of 35 acres which has remained in the same family for six generations. This is the Durand Farm, originally known as the Hawthorne Farm, located off of Ridgewood Drive Northeast. Mrs. Jane Durand Williams Jones (Mrs. Sam Jones, Jr.) recently inherited this property, once a tract of 400 to 500 acres which embraced all the real estate south of North Decatur to Briarcliff Road.

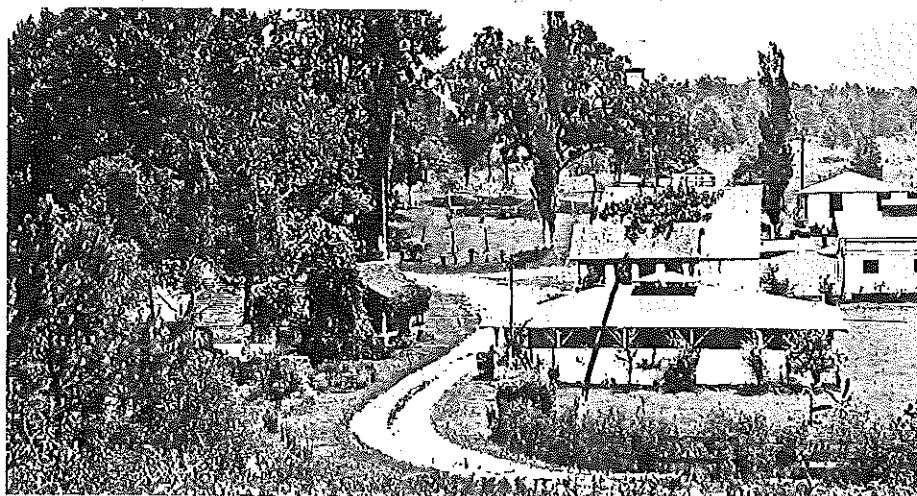
It is said this land was purchased by Samuel A. Durand before 1860 from a man who purchased it from the Indians. Samuel was indeed a busy man for he had a grist mill, chair factory and farm here but he was also an insurance claims adjustor and travelled as far afield as Brunswick, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida. The chair factory and grist mill have long since succumbed to old age. An interesting record shows that in 1891 Samuel Durand sold a right of way through his vineyards to the Georgia Central and Northern Railroad (now

the Seaboard Airline Railroad) for \$2,378!

The present house, which was built in 1933 on the same site as that used by the original owner in 1860, is reached by a long winding drive bordered by land once used as a dairy farm which later became pastures and meadows where Mrs. Jones' father (Samuel Taylor Williams, Jr.) raised horses. Only a pump house is still standing, built in 1909, surely one of the oldest in the state. Of the few tall old trees remaining, one is a cedar planted by Samuel Durand which still stands by the kitchen door. The one-acre lake was drained in Mrs. Jones' childhood because it was believed too dangerous for the children.

The property was most active during the early 1900s when Henry Durand, son of Samuel, supplied his three downtown restaurants with milk and produce from the farm. The farm then maintained its own blacksmith to shoe the horses that hauled the big cans of fresh milk all the way to Atlanta in the 1880s.

One of his restaurants, located at Edgewood and Peachtree, was considered "one of the finest in Atlanta." This became the Peacock Cafe. Henry Durand was a noted Atlantan, a director in many leading institutions and a respected philanthropist. His daughter, Fanny May Durand Williams and her husband, James Taylor Williams, were famous as host and hostess in the early 1900s as "Hawthorne" was "the scene of continuous week-end house parties."



The Durand farm, circa 1915, when it supplied three downtown family restaurants with produce and milk. The pump house, to left, still stands.

Come Hear Tucker Memories

Kent Randolph, long-time Tucker resident, will be the speaker for the "I Remember Hour" oral history program, Thursday, February 23, at 4:00 p.m. in the Old Courthouse.

Retired from Southern Bell after 36 years with that company, Mr. Randolph first came to Tucker as a boy in the 1930s. "It was still largely a community of one- and two-horse farms then," he recalled. "In the 30s the young people started going to Atlanta to take jobs and leave the farms.

"There are still some of the old landmarks left like Cofer Brothers store, founded in 1919, Fountains' Drug Store and Newsome's Drug (now Carr's). It had a lot of community pride and was a close knit little town then. Decatur was 'big city' to us. The 'Hello World' service station is another landmark that must have stood on the Lawrenceville Highway for 30 years but is now gone.

"My father came to Tucker as a school teacher but worked for some time with Cofer's, then a big country general store that sold everything from sausage to horse collars. He later became the Tucker postmaster."

Mr. Randolph went through the local schools and served three years with the military, part of it in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. After graduating from Erskine College in South Carolina he taught and coached there for a year before coming to Atlanta with Southern Bell.

He met and married Frances Hagy in Atlanta and worked for a short time in New York before settling again just a couple of miles from his boyhood home in Tucker. There the couple have raised their two sons, Mark and Chad.

Following the program there will be a social hour in the old Superior Courtroom with Belva Cleveland and Ruby Zumbrook as hostesses. The Remember Hours are video taped for the Oral History archives of the Society.

At the March 23 Remember Hour, George Dillard, Decatur's City Attorney for many years, will be the speaker.

Have you renewed your membership to DHS for 1989? And how about bringing in a friend?