

Single-Family Residential Development

DeKalb County, Georgia
1945-1970

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REPORT AUTHORS

Kimberly Burton

Susan Conger

Rebecca Crawford

Elisa Graf

Paul Graham

Debye Harvey

Nathan Jordan

Courtney Lankford

Molly Leatherman

Elizabeth Morris

Chris Mrocza

Maysyly Naolu

Zack Ray

Luis Rodriguez

Anthony Souther

David Westbrook

Caitlin Zygmunt

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I. Introduction

Purpose, Methodology and Organization

The focus of this study, completed by graduate students in Georgia State University's Heritage Preservation program, is on suburban residential developments in DeKalb County, Georgia, between the end of World War II and 1970. The residential subdivisions and housing types that were developed during the mid-twentieth century have reached the pivotal fifty-year benchmark for potential eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. The report will illustrate national as well as local influences that coalesced to completely transform this formerly rural county situated immediately adjacent to a burgeoning metropolitan Atlanta.

The overall purpose of this report is to provide a historic context to better understand DeKalb County's transformation after World War II within a larger social, economic, and cultural framework. The intention is also to elevate awareness and appreciation for the characteristic features and typology of domestic architecture, landscaping, and subdivision planning during this period. The major themes presented will provide a foundation for further exploration and research, including possible nominations of individual homes or entire residential districts for the National Register.

The study period begins with the conclusion of World War II during the summer of 1945 and extends through 1970. Although the financial and oil crises of 1973 were a major national turning point, particular events and trends in DeKalb County helped establish 1970 as the end of the study period. Interstate 285 was completed in 1968 and county-wide building permits declined in 1969 for the first time in twenty years. In 1970, DeKalb County enacted a new countywide zoning ordinance to bring the county into compliance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, signed into law the year before. Development became increasingly dense through the late 1960s and Gwinnett County was drawing more residents to cheaper land. More than one-third of new houses in 1971 were two stories, signaling the decline of the ranch house. The 1970s also saw a significant increase in the size of new residential developments, and the decade's first year brought the first planned unit development, a form of land use planning that allowed developers to propose mixed-use projects that did not fit with existing zoning.

This introductory section includes a broad overview of residential development in DeKalb County from 1941 to 1970 based on Geographic Information System (GIS) data. The balance of the report was compiled primarily based on archival research, site visits, and informal "windshield surveys" of selected subdivisions in the county. Oral interviews also served as a source to validate findings as well as infuse a personal perspective on this unique period of DeKalb's history.

Section II looks briefly at nationwide trends impacting residential development after World War II. The policies and initiatives of the federal government, in particular, greatly influenced both housing and transportation advancements during this time. Technological

innovations also came into play. Of course, the automobile had long given Americans unparalleled personal mobility, but the availability of new pre-fabricated building materials also made home building quick and inexpensive. Over time, these forces contributed to a new “suburban lifestyle”, often considered synonymous with “The American Dream,” reflecting the sentiment that home ownership and ready access to social status were the right of every citizen. In essence, the report captures a snapshot of the prevalent social and cultural trends in domestic architecture and landscaping during the study period.

The next section provides an overview of DeKalb County’s developmental history. It includes highlights of the early population centers during the late nineteenth century as well as war-related commerce which foreshadowed a dramatic increase in industrial presence in the years to come. The focus then turns to local politics and the leadership of Scott Candler, Sr. who, even today, is remembered as “Mr. DeKalb.” Candler was the mastermind behind the county’s successful investment in infrastructure improvements such as transportation and public utilities as well as promotional efforts to attract industry and young families to DeKalb. Land use planning is covered in detail with explanations of the symbiotic relationship between DeKalb County and the metropolitan Atlanta region. The section closes with a demographic profile of DeKalb as well as highlights of key themes that characterized the period including “White Flight” and the “Baby Boom.”

Section IV and Section V provide specific information about residential development in DeKalb County during the study period. An overview of the types of subdivisions is followed by an architectural description of the Ranch house in DeKalb. Selective examples of professionals including land developers, builders, architects, designers, and bankers that contributed to the industry are reviewed. Neighborhood amenities such as school facilities and community organizations are briefly addressed. Finally, profiles of thirteen subdivisions across DeKalb are provided to illustrate the housing types, subdivision arrangements and landscaping practices of the period.

Section VI concludes the report with a forward-looking perspective on the future of the ranch house and its importance as a historic resource.

Geographic Overview of Residential Development in DeKalb County 1941 -1970

DeKalb County, Georgia, lies to the east of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta. Today, a portion of west-central DeKalb County is part of the incorporated City of Atlanta. In the decades prior to World War II, most suburban residential development in DeKalb County occurred within and just outside these two cities, in areas such as Kirkwood, East Lake, Avondale Estates, and Scottdale. Pine Lake, an enclave for Atlantans seeking escape from the city, also took shape during the Depression years.

During World War II, new house construction dropped precipitously. Most of the housing built from 1942 to 1944 was for officers stationed at the Naval Air Station, now DeKalb-Peachtree Airport. These houses are located on the west side of Clairmont Road across from the airport. Beginning in 1945, new house construction expanded dramatically (Image 1).

Three areas saw the most development. South Decatur, in the areas along Candler Road, Memorial Drive, and Glenwood Avenue, within the boundaries of what would become Interstate 285, has the densest concentration of post-World War II subdivisions in DeKalb County. New subdivisions were also developed north of Decatur and in North Druid Hills. The third area of high development immediately following the war was between Buford Highway and the under-construction Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Additionally, individual houses were built in scattered locations around the county. A phenomenon of this period was the construction of houses side by side facing major roads leading into existing towns. This is most dramatically illustrated along the roads leading into Tucker.

Subdivision development exploded during the 1950s (Image 2). The vast majority of houses during this ten-year period were constructed within the boundaries of what would become the circumferential highway, Interstate 285. South of Decatur, residences filled the Gresham Park, Candler-McAfee, and Belvedere Park areas. Hundreds of new houses were built in Avondale Estates. North of Decatur, subdivisions appeared off Scott Boulevard, Clairmont Road, LaVista Road, and Briarcliff Road. In the north part of the county, development surged around the new industrial section that includes the General Motors plant, along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Buford Highway. From 1961 to 1970, subdivisions continued to fill residential areas within the perimeter highway that was under construction (Image 3). Development also expanded into areas served by Interstate 285, which was completed in 1968.

II. Post-World War II America: National Trends

After World War II, several national trends in housing and residential development as well as in transportation significantly affected DeKalb County. This section briefly reviews those trends to provide a backdrop for the rapid and thorough transition of DeKalb County from a rural, agrarian landscape to one that became largely industrialized and suburbanized between 1945 and 1970.

Federal Housing and Transportation Initiatives

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was created as part of the National Housing Act adopted on June 27, 1934. Its primary purpose was to alleviate unemployment, but it was also designed to “encourage improvement in housing standards and conditions, to facilitate sound home financing on reasonable terms, and to exert a stabilizing influence on the mortgage market.”¹ The FHA mortgage insurance program was a significant change from previous mortgage programs because it insured mortgages requiring only a ten percent down payment instead of the standard thirty percent required by the private lending industry (Image 4). In pamphlets like *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods*, published in 1938, the

¹ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 203.

FHA encouraged the piecemeal application of elements of the holistic plans for garden cities developed by Ebenezer Howard and Frederick Law Olmsted, such as curvilinear streets and organically shaped lots. Through the promotion of new neighborhood developments, FHA programs hastened the decline of inner-city neighborhoods by luring away middle-class residents. The 1939 *Underwriting Manual* published by the FHA encouraged against creating diverse environments by not allowing the dwellings it insured to be used for multiple purposes, such as residential space being located above commercial space.

In 1940, the FHA established standards and recommendations for subdivision design and printed them in a series of circulars including *Subdivision Development, Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses, Planning Profitable Neighborhoods*, and *Successful Subdivisions*.^{2 3} Minimum requirements for new subdivisions were established (see box).

In addition, the FHA issued a set of "desirable standards," which, although not strict requirements, were factors that influenced the approval by the FHA of a mortgage for any residential construction project. Many of these "desirable standards" are present in the subdivisions built

throughout the country at this time, and are visible in the developments reviewed in DeKalb County, Georgia. The "desirable standards" included:

- Careful adaptation of subdivision layout to topography and to natural features
- Adjustment of street plan and street widths and grades to best meet the traffic needs
- Elimination of sharp corners and dangerous intersections
- Long blocks that eliminated unnecessary streets

FHA Seven Minimum Requirements for a New Subdivision²

1. Location exhibiting a healthy and active demand for homes.
2. Location possessing a suitable site in terms of topography, soil condition, tree cover, and absence of hazards such as flood, fog, smoke, obnoxious odors, etc.
3. Accessibility by means of public transportation (streetcars and buses) and adequate highways to schools, employment, and shopping centers.
4. Installation of appropriate utilities and street improvements (meeting city or county specifications), and carefully related to needs of the development.
5. Compliance with city, county or regional plans and regulations, particularly local zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the neighborhood will become stable (and real estate values as well).
6. Protection of values through "appropriate" deed restrictions (including setbacks, lot sizes, minimum costs of construction).
7. Guarantee of a sound financial set up, whereby subdividers were financially able to carry through their sales and development program, and where taxes and assessments were in line with the type of development contemplated and likely to remain stable.

² David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), 48.

³ Also, the practice of rating neighborhoods based on age and ethnicity of residents among other factors—known as "red-lining"—began in the 1930s with the establishment of the Home Owners Loan Corporation. This practice was not found to impact the subdivisions researched in DeKalb County, Georgia, during the established timeframe of review so it will not be further discussed in this report.

- Carefully studied lot plan with generous and well-shaped house sites
- Parks and playgrounds
- Establishment of community organizations of property owners
- Incorporation of features that add to the privacy and attractiveness of the community.⁴

Following World War II, the National Housing Agency predicted that the United States needed more than five million new housing units due to the shortage caused by the collapse of the housing industry during the Great Depression and the restriction on unnecessary construction during World War II. Several federal initiatives were introduced to address this need. The federal government established the Veteran's Mortgage Guarantee Program, part of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the "G.I. Bill of Rights" which allowed veterans to secure a loan for the full appraised value of a house with no down payment. The government also made it easier for non-military families to buy houses by introducing easily-attainable, low-interest loans through the Federal Housing Administration.

As Americans began to increasingly rely on the automobile for transportation, residential development moved further from the central city, creating suburban "bedroom communities." The term "bedroom community" designates a residential area with no significant commercial components such as offices or large retail areas, emphasizing the continuing trend toward the separation of life at home from life at work. By 1951, every major city in the United States was working on extending the highways central to its transportation network to improve the connection between the suburbs where people lived and the city where they worked, as well as between cities. Therefore, another important factor in the development of suburban neighborhoods after World War II was the passage of the Interstate Highway Act in 1956, which provided federal funding for ninety percent of the development of the interstate highway system and imposed a limitation of building 41,000 miles under the program. By the late 1950s, the interstate highway system began to significantly influence patterns of residential development outside the urban centers. In these suburban subdivisions, residents relied solely on the automobile for transportation. However, by 1960, commercial and office space began to relocate near the suburban residential areas, further decentralizing the American city.

[The Suburban Lifestyle](#)

World War II had changed America. That change brought new lifestyles, new technologies, and new architectural forms and ideals. Americans were eager to cast off the old, which reminded them of the less happy times of deprivation and war, and take up the new, with its bright promises for the future. New homes were being built with new technologies and materials that were purely American in style, catering to post-World War II families, as vast areas of undeveloped land became residential subdivisions. New financing methods provided the opportunity for homeownership for the masses instead of just for the well-to-do. New ideas about work, family, neighborhood, education, recreation, and transportation

⁴ Ames and McClelland, 49.

informed the American lifestyle after World War II. Nothing signified the new period of prosperity and hope to America more than the new suburban lifestyle, typified by a new type of house: the California-inspired ranch.

Residential Architecture in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Construction of new homes slowed in the late 1920s. Few homes were built during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Following the Depression, materials and manpower were monopolized by the federal government for the World War II effort and were not available for building new homes. As soldiers came home from World War II, housing was in short supply, and new homes were in high demand. Banks made loans for the construction of ten million houses between 1946 and 1953. The Federal Housing Administration created pamphlets like the 1938 *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods* to promote single family homes and new housing developments, and sold the idea of home ownership to the public as the “American Dream.” New lending practices made the “American Dream” accessible, and new designs made more single-family homes available than ever before. These houses crossed social and economic boundaries, and new technologies allowed them to be built all over the country despite climate differences.

One of these house types is the “American Small House” defined by the Georgia Historic Preservation Division as:

[a] compact one-story house. It contains from three to six major rooms along with a bathroom and closets. Optional features include small porches, stoops, dormers, and garages (Image 5).⁵

These homes were especially popular as the first house type used in Levittown, New York developed by architect Alfred Levitt. Levitt designed a small, single family home that could be mass produced and assembled on site. The first houses built at Levittown were American Small Houses in the Cape Cod style.⁶

Split-level homes were a house type from the early twentieth century that became widely constructed after World War II. The Georgia Historic Preservation Division defines the split level as:

A house which consists of three levels, two of them stacked and the third to one side, raised above the lowest level but below the highest level. The main doorway is near the center in the middle level and a garage is typically in the lowest level (Image 145).⁷

The most iconic house type from the period between the end of World War II and 1970 was the “ranch house,” typically a single-story, rectangular building. Private spaces like

⁵ Georgia Department of Natural Resources: Historic Preservation Division, “The American Small House,” <http://gashpo.org/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=415> (accessed February, 12 2008).

⁶ “A Brief History of Levittown, New York,” *Levittown Historical Society*, <http://www.levittownhistoricalsociety.org/history.htm>, (accessed March 3, 2010).

⁷ Georgia Department of Natural Resources: Historic Preservation Division, “House Types in Georgia,” <http://www.gashpo.org/assets/documents/housetypes.pdf>

bedrooms were grouped at one end of the house, and common spaces like the living room and kitchen were on the other side of the house. As automobiles became more common, garages or carports became prominent. Although originally a detached structure set back from the house, by the late 1950s garages were frequently attached to the house, adjacent to and accessing the common spaces, and, during the 1960s, detached garages became very rare. A variety of window sizes and types were used, usually corresponding with room function. Living rooms featured large picture windows while bedrooms featured smaller windows that allowed for light and air flow but usually not much of a view.

Although private spaces were clustered together, they were enclosed and separate from each other. Common spaces, on the other hand, featured open floor plans that also incorporated the outdoors especially rear yards (Image 6). Large windows and sliding glass doors led from the kitchen or dining room to a back patio or deck and into the back yard or courtyard. The back yard became a new “room” in the house where the family could spend time together or entertain guests (Image 7).

The ranch house was influenced most visibly in style and form by the structures from Southwestern United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The early precedents for the ranch house came about from a combination of styles. Before the Spanish colonial period in the southwest the native people were building homes and structures of adobe, dried clay bricks. The Spanish would bring their European styles to the region and combine their aesthetics with the local materials during the Spanish colonial period (c. 1609-1821). The combination of native and Spanish influences that occurred after Mexico won back its independence in the nineteenth century would be most influential on the ranch house design. “Californio” architecture, as the evolving style came to be called, achieved widespread popularity in the late nineteenth century. Modern versions of this ranch house were being designed by a few architects in the early twentieth century, but it was architect Cliff May that brought the ranch to the masses in the 1930s in San Diego. His design of individual homes, over fifty by 1937, resulted in the Riviera Ranch subdivision in Hollywood, California. This was one of the first subdivisions in the United States that was built around the ranch house and the post World War II lifestyle.

The ranch house type spread across the country. Popular national magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Sunset* were promoting the national ranch trends while local periodicals would endorse the same trends but adapted to meet regional styles and needs. Richard Cloues, Section Chief & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office, addressed these styles in his presentation *The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House: Mid-20th-Century Ranch Houses in Georgia* (2010) which promoted the preservation of the ranch house. Styles were sometime named for the developer who first utilized them in neighborhood developments, like the Eichleresque ranch named for Joseph Eichler (Image 8). Others were named after their floor plan. The rambling ranch, for instance, broke the rectangular mold and was arranged much like a jigsaw puzzle. Each new architect and developer took the basic ranch house form and molded it to meet the needs of the local families and the aesthetic of their region.

Social and Cultural Influences on Suburban Housing Design

Residential development in the United States after World War II was highly influenced by the desire of many Americans to return to the traditional gender roles that had dissolved, out of necessity, during the war. With men fighting overseas, women were left to run homes, businesses, and factories in the absence of their fathers, husbands, and brothers. Now that the men had returned from war, and the baby boom was beginning, the focus of the home became the family as a unit. In her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan hypothesized that men in post-World War II middle-class suburban communities turned to their wives for mothering, and the architecture that developed during this time reflected the attitude that a women's role was motherhood. Thanks to the ranch house and the open floor plan which often combined kitchen and living spaces, women were able to simultaneously be in the "private" traditional role of women as cook and caretaker of children and the "public" role of socializing and entertaining.

The ideal of separate spheres developed in the early nineteenth century along with the growth of the upper and middle-classes. This ideal created two separate worlds, one where men worked outside the home, earning money, and another where women worked in the home, caring for the needs of the family. The ideal also defined women as the weaker sex and emphasized women's supposed inherent moral superiority. This ideal was accepted throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. During World War II, middle and upper-class women found that they were capable of succeeding in the public world as well as the private world as they undertook jobs formerly held only by men. However, after World War II, women were encouraged to go back to homemaking once the men returned from war in order to reestablish the traditional gender roles thought necessary for the proper functioning of families and society. A *Ladies' Home Journal* article from March 1949, attempted to assure women that being a housewife was a worthy and fulfilling occupation for the modern woman. To assure a friend of her worth as a person, the author writes, "to do what this woman did with her husband's modest income was a feat of management, showing executive ability of a high order."⁸ By using the language of the business world to describe the role of women in the home, the author is encouraging women to see the role of housewife as a meaningful and fulfilling job. By helping women see their value as housewife and mothers, the author is also encouraging the postwar return to traditional family roles.

Post World War II architecture adapted itself to fit into and encourage the modern family. Gathering inspiration from earlier forms of architecture, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses, ranch house architects such as Cliff May created a new form of dwelling. The Usonian home was typically a small, single-story home with a combined living-dining-kitchen area.⁹ In more traditional homes, the kitchen was built as a separate room, connected to the living and dining areas only by doors. Wright is credited as the first architect to open the kitchen up to the integrated living-dining room. Wright had observed an evolution in the

⁸ Nancy A. Walker, ed., *Women's Magazines 1940-196: Gender Roles and the Popular Press* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1998), 163.

⁹ Leslie Sharp, "Women Shaping Shelter: Technology, Consumption, and the Twentieth-Century House". (PhD diss., Georgia Institute of Technology, 2004), 144.

way households were being handled and designed his Usonian houses to be affordable and efficient. Families no longer depended on servants to do the housework as many middle-class families could not afford them. The architects of the ranch house drew upon Wright's ideas of affordability and efficiency when designing their ranch houses. Cliff May, who is considered the father of the California ranch house, was an acquaintance of Wright's and is known to have visited him at his home in Arizona. By adapting Wright's more modern designs to suit more conservative American tastes, May was able to design a style of home that was affordable, popular, and efficient.

Wright held a traditional view of women. He believed that a woman's place was in the home. He saw this way of life as a positive influence on the family and wanted to make women's work as efficient as possible by combining both public and private spaces. Although he is often criticized for these traditional views of women, it was the woman's role in the home that most influenced the evolution of his interior spaces.¹⁰ There is no doubt that the women who were running the homes greatly benefited from these improvements as middle and upper-class women began having less help in the house with laundry, cooking, cleaning, and childcare duties. By moving the kitchen into the public realm of the home, women were able to accomplish more tasks simultaneously - they could cook and provide childcare at the same time. This new public kitchen "represents changing views of the domestic sphere, including the glorification of homemaking and the work it entailed, increased standards of cleanliness, the professionalization of home economics, and the changing role of women from producers of goods to consumers."¹¹

Other housekeeping advances provided additional housekeeping assistance without servants. Appliances such as the washing machine and the automatic dishwasher allowed women more time to devote to other projects without the need for household help. For instance, women did not have to make daily trips to the grocery store because electrical refrigeration kept milk and produce fresher for longer periods of time, nor did they have to spend hours washing pots, pans, and dishes, because the electric dishwasher could do the job for them (Image 9). Significantly, however, the more "timesaving" devices the American housewife acquired, the more time she spent doing housework because the standards of cleanliness and good housekeeping rose along with the number of devices available to accomplish it.

Although women made up only a small percentage of American architects during the post-World War II period, it was the woman's role in the home as wife and mother that had the greatest influence on the interior design of the ranch house. Wright's ideas about efficiency and the role of women as mother and caretaker were adapted by architects like Cliff May and were made easily available to all Americans. The popularity of the ranch house and the connected living-dining-kitchen area proves that homeowners enjoyed and appreciated the efficiency and community that this design provided.

¹⁰ Ibid, 136.

¹¹ Ibid, 147.

Landscape Design

Landscaping is an important part of suburban residential design. A study of the history of various landscaping movements provides a context for features that, over time, coalesced into normal practice within suburban neighborhoods.

The Picturesque movement of the early nineteenth century reacted against the extreme formality of the past, and called for a stronger appreciation of nature. For instance, Andrew Jackson Downing, arguably the most influential proponent of this movement, believed that homes needed to harmonize with their natural environments (Image 10). He taught homeowners how to do this through a series of architectural pattern books that included advice on how best to landscape around residences using a more informal approach to placement and massing of trees, shrubs, and groundcover.

Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the “Father of American Landscape Architecture,” built on the works of Downing and others with his designs, including Central Park in New York City in 1857 and Riverside in Chicago in 1869. Riverside was one of the first gated suburban communities in this country. In both designs, Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, provided long, winding walkways, lakes, boundary plantings, flowers, and various types of green spaces (Image 11). In essence, they sought to provide the visitors to Central Park and the residents of Riverside with a bit of the country with proximity to the city.

Ebenezer Howard, a nineteenth century British urban planner, sought to lessen the negative effects of an industrialized world by establishing balance in the lives of city residents. He proposed the construction of self-contained cities with carefully zoned areas of living, working, and recreating, all surrounded by vegetation. In this way, residents enjoyed country living while taking full advantage of amenities provided by the city. Howard’s ideas engendered the Garden City Movement.

A number of garden cities and “garden suburbs” (garden cities restricted to residences only), were built in the United States in the decades before World War II. Some of these included the Forest Hills Gardens neighborhood in Queens, New York (c. 1908), the Radburn community in the Fair Lawn borough of New Jersey (c. 1930), and the Lakeshore neighborhood in New Orleans, Louisiana (c. 1938).

Radburn was originally designed as “a complete, automobile-oriented city.”¹² This was the first subdivision in the United States in which the designers consciously took into account the fact that many residents would own automobiles. Looking for a way to control traffic flow, Radburn’s developers used the concept of the cul-de-sac (Image 12). This was, in essence, a dead end street located in a suburban neighborhood that limited traffic, noise, and presumably even crime. The Radburn plan, though not always successful in controlling traffic, influenced countless planners. Today, the cul-de-sac remains a prominent feature in suburban subdivisions.

¹² George R. Tobey, Jr., *A History of Landscape Architecture: The Relationship of People to Environment* (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1973), 192.

Beginning in the 1930s, Thomas Church, a landscape architect based in San Francisco, popularized more relaxed, informal and natural gardens,”¹³ outdoor rooms that had no walls, flowing freely into homes. A longtime contributor to popular magazines like *House Beautiful* and *Sunset*, Church designed over 4,000 mostly residential gardens in his forty year career, and influenced countless landscape architects, real estate developers, and home owners with his “California Style” of landscaping.

Although the Great Depression and World War II forced many Americans to curtail their plans for private home ownership, this changed after the war. With easy access to privately-issued home loans backed by the FHA and Veterans Administration (VA), the returning veterans and their families finally had a process through which they could realize their dreams. Americans took full advantage of this newly available money, and the country’s strong economy supported a rising standard of living. Young couples began buying houses as fast as they were built. Although the majority of these were located in neighborhoods constructed by developers, builders, and architects who were influenced by the earlier planning movements, they were probably more concerned with making money. Many developers of postwar neighborhoods received their design inspiration indirectly through one government agency, the Federal Housing Administration. Seward Mott, head of the FHA’s Land Planning Division from 1934 to 1944,¹⁴ was greatly influenced by the Garden City planners of the early 1900s and the nineteenth-century Picturesque Movement, and he used his position to move the nation’s city planners away from the more traditional rectilinear grid to the curvilinear street plans these movements advocated.

After World War II, neighborhood developers built to FHA standards for two reasons – with FHA approval, the developer could qualify for FHA- or VA-approved construction loans of up to 90 percent of the build cost, and the homebuyers could qualify for home loans from 90 to 100 percent of the home’s appraised value. Building to FHA standards required less up-front capital from the developer, and it insured the homes were financially attractive to the new homebuyer. For these reasons, “by the late 1940s, the curvilinear subdivision had evolved from the Olmsted ... and Garden City models to the FHA-approved standard,”¹⁵ and was being incorporated into new suburban subdivisions all across postwar America.

Although the post-World War II suburban neighborhoods that were developing nationally may have been removed from the traditional urban city center, they still had ready access to jobs, government facilities, shopping and recreational areas through a quickly expanding national, state and county transportation system that was developing throughout America. (Refer back to the previous “Land Use” section and its description of watershed style transportation planning.) Nationally, suburbs were tending to develop as “bedroom communities” where the residents worked and shopped in town, but lived in suburban areas. In contrast to this national trend, the DeKalb County government and the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce actively sought not only neighborhood developers, but also commercial business development and large industry. The newly arriving residents to

¹³ Raymond Hardie, “He Changed the Landscape,” *Stanford Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2003.

¹⁴ Marc A. Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 68.

¹⁵ Ames and McClelland, 51.

DeKalb County worked, shopped and lived within the county – the county saw itself not as Atlanta’s bedroom, but its commercial and industrial equal.

Nationally, these newly developing neighborhoods, in conforming to the FHA guidelines, were carefully laid out on partially-cleared land, with multiple homes sitting within prescribed lots, surrounded by trees and other types of natural vegetation. The residents accessed the neighborhoods through a series of curvilinear streets. Many streets ended in traffic-calming cul-de-sacs, and, within many subdivisions, there were bodies of water, green spaces, and “parks” for recreational use. All these features, though easily recognizable today, resulted from the extended period of landscaping philosophy already discussed.

Residential Landscape Style

The residential landscaping styles found in mid-twentieth century suburban neighborhoods resulted from historical landscape philosophies but had other influences, including geography, climate, suggestions from developers, builders, and architects, popular magazine publications like *House and Garden*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Southern Living*, local garden clubs, the homeowner’s personal taste, and landscaping practices around the neighborhood itself. Though landscaping choices differed, they also shared eight components.

One of those components was suggested by Cliff May in his seminal 1946 book *Western Ranch Houses*:

Gardens are places to live in. They must be more than stage sets made up of flowers, vines, shrubs, and trees – stage sets wherein you and your friends are merely the audience . . . gardens must be usable, workable, and livable. If stage sets give you pleasure, keep them under control so that they won’t interfere with the use of the garden.¹⁶

For May, a garden was actually a “room,” to be used similar to living, dining, and family rooms. The interconnection between these rooms was another component, as clearly illustrated by Alan Hess in his book *The Ranch House*. In this book, Hess provided visuals of twenty-six houses indicating how internal and external areas flowed together through the use of open floor plans, large windows, French doors, porches, patios, and decks, most of which were located primarily in the rear of residences (Image 13). Sometimes, as in the “May-Wagner” house designed and built by May in 1939 in Los Angeles, California, the garden “room” and the entire house were one and the same. The outside was allowed to grow inside, completely erasing all architectural dividers (Image 14).

In addition to the functionality of landscaping designs and the connection between different living areas, another important component was the concept of a common space. As with the kitchen, outdoor areas like porches, patios, and decks served as gathering places for families and friends (Image 15). These areas often had weather-resistant furniture, encouraging visitors to sit and relax. They also had plants either grown in pots and planters or in the ground close to the outdoor areas. These plants were strategically located to maximize the view while maintaining an open feel, a connection with nature.

¹⁶ Cliff May, *Western Ranch Houses* (San Francisco: Lane Publishing Co., 1947), 27.

Another common outdoor space was located at the front of the residence. The walkway to the front door connected all visitors to the residence (Image 16). Reminiscent of winding country roads, civic boulevards, and especially grand lanes on wealthy estates, the walkway was often emphasized on either side by short edging plants, or rows of taller shrubbery and even trees.

Foundational planting was an important component (Image 17). The main purpose was to hide unsightly foundations and outdoor utilities located close to the base of residences. The choice of plants varied, but they had to be tall enough to serve their purpose. Shrubby, trees, and even taller flowers sufficed.

The lawn served as the canvas on or around which a homeowner practiced landscaping (Image 18). It is striking that lawns became prominent in the United States after World War II, a time when many young couples enjoyed home-ownership for the first time. This recalls eighteenth and nineteenth century homeowners who measured their wealth based on the size of their lawns. The smaller the areas they used to grow food, the wealthier they were. Post-World War II lawns surrounded suburban residences.

Suburban neighborhoods were either carved out of forested areas, or constructed on cleared farmland, fields, and meadows, then replanted with trees, shrubs, and other vegetation. This resulted in residences surrounded by trees and other plants, especially around the periphery of a homeowner's property (Image 19).

Geography and climate combined to dictate plants used in landscaping. For instance, the horticultural zone for large areas of the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arizona, Louisiana, and Texas is usually defined as zone eight (Image 20) in garden books and garden plant selection manuals. Homeowners in these areas were more likely to use plants that grew successfully within their zone. As the horticultural zone number increased (moving further into Florida and the Gulf of Mexico) or decreased (moving toward Minnesota and other northern states), homeowners typically chose plants according to their zone. Quite often, plants specific to local zones were the ones available in local nurseries or through mail-order houses.

Finally, personal taste, cultural traditions, and even neighborhood practices mattered. Individuality characterized suburban neighborhoods as much as homogeneity did (Image 21). Even though developers had specific landscaping schemes and planting manuals recommended specific plants for certain zones, homeowners were free to impose their unique visions on their landscapes. The eight general national components applied to the southern United States and to DeKalb County as well and will be discussed in Section V.

III. Post-World War II DeKalb: “The American Dream”

Developmental History

Pioneer Settlement and the Nineteenth Century

The land that makes up DeKalb County, Georgia, has a long history of human activity dating back to prehistoric times. Prior to white settlement, mound building tribes as well as Cherokee and Creek Indians all had a presence in the county. By the late 1700s, European settlers began to arrive in the area. These early pioneers built shelter, planted crops, and traded with Native Americans and one another. After the Revolutionary War, the number of white settlers increased and by the nineteenth century tension between the United States and Indian Nations began to escalate significantly. In 1821, the Creek Indians ceded the land that would become DeKalb County by signing the Indian Springs Treaty, and, in 1822, DeKalb County was incorporated. The county was named in honor of Johann de Kalb, a Revolutionary War hero famed for his courage on the battlefield. Decatur was founded in 1823 as the county's permanent seat of government. In 1853, the county was split in half with the formation of Fulton County to the west.

At the time of its incorporation, the estimated white population of DeKalb County was 2,500. The early work of the newly-formed county government consisted of building roads, many of which followed the path of Indian trails, and constructing bridges. The first school, the DeKalb Academy, was built in 1825, and the first brick courthouse was built on the Decatur Square in 1829. In 1836, the state of Georgia chartered Georgia Railroad and Banking Company to construct a rail line to connect with existing rail lines in Tennessee. The people of Decatur did not want the trappings of a railroad terminal, which was eventually located on the most topographically suitable land, lying six miles to the west of Decatur. The small town grew rapidly and was incorporated as Marthasville in 1843. DeKalb County continued to grow at a steady pace, and by 1850 had a population of 14,398. However, due to the rapid growth of Marthasville the state of Georgia divided DeKalb County down the middle in 1853 to form Fulton County to the west, significantly reducing its population. The county seat of Fulton County was located in Marthasville, which had been renamed Atlanta by that time.

The arrival of the Georgia Railroad spurred the development of the agriculture and quarrying industries in DeKalb County. In 1846, the first agriculture fair, organized by the Southern Central Agricultural Society, was held in Stone Mountain. The purpose of the fair was to showcase DeKalb County farmers, their products and livestock, as well as farmers throughout the region. The agriculture fair became a major event for the county, even attracting the Ringling Brothers Circus one year. In addition to agriculture, quarrying of the county's granite began during the late 1840s. Quarries in Stone Mountain and Lithonia were most productive, shipping paving blocks and curbstone for streets all over the county. Major quarrying of Stone Mountain granite began in 1869 with the founding of the Stone Mountain Granite and Railway Company, which was operated by the Venable brothers.

In the later part of the nineteenth century, the county continued to grow at a steady rate, doubling its population from 10,014 in 1870 to 21,112 by the turn of the century. However,

it did not grow as rapidly as adjacent Fulton County. Besides quarrying and agriculture, other industries in the county in the late nineteenth century included grist and lumber mills located on the banks of the many creeks. In 1887, the county established the Department of Roads and Revenue to oversee road construction and maintenance. The first institution of higher learning in DeKalb County was Agnes Scott College, founded as a woman's seminary in Decatur in 1889.

Twentieth Century DeKalb

At the dawn of the twentieth century, DeKalb County was largely a rural, agricultural county. As the city of Atlanta grew, it provided a ready market for DeKalb farmers; later, the growing city spurred major industrial development. The transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy was slow in the early part of the twentieth century, and the shift did not fully accelerate until the end of World War II. One of the major changes in the agriculture industry occurred with the arrival of the boll weevil around 1920, which destroyed the cotton crops being grown in Georgia at the time. As a result, farmers expanded into other crops such as apples, peaches and garden vegetables. However, the most dominant form of farming that arose was dairy farming. This was due to several factors, such as DeKalb County's relatively sparse population and abundance of open space for pastures, new technology, and its proximity to the Atlanta market. With the advent of automobiles, electricity and refrigeration, dairy farmers were able to prolong the shelf life of their product and deliver it to more distant markets. The transition began quickly. As early as 1922, dairymen of DeKalb County began to organize and decided to grow their own feed for livestock instead of paying for it to be delivered by rail. It was estimated that the industry could save \$175,000 by growing feed locally. By 1939, DeKalb County was home to four of the twelve Certified Grade-A dairies (the highest quality established by the Federal standards) in the southeast and two hundred dairies operated in the county by that time. Dairy farming was by far the largest farming-based industry in the county in the early part of the twentieth century. At one point, all undeveloped land in the county was zoned for dairy farming. However, as the population of the county grew, the open farmland provided the space for the large post-World War II housing boom that engulfed the county.

The county received another economic boost in 1917 when the United States government purchased 2,400 acres of land for Camp Gordon, a military cantonment to train infantrymen for World War I combat. Camp Gordon was a massive development in the small town of Chamblee, boasting 1,635 buildings and able to house 46,612 people. The impact on Chamblee, the town closest to the new military facility, was extraordinary. It grew from a small town with just two stores and a post office to a thriving community with amenities such as movie theaters and hotels virtually overnight. However, the prosperity was relatively short-lived: the base was abandoned at the end of World War I. Plans to build an airport on a 300-acre portion of the base languished for many years until 1940 when construction finally began. The area once again received attention from the military in 1941, when the U.S. Navy leased a portion of the airport for Naval Reserve training. When the United States entered World War II, the Navy greatly expanded its operation at the site, turning it into a full-scale naval air station. Upon the end of the war, the Navy moved its operations to Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta, and DeKalb County converted the base at Camp Gordon to a public

airport in 1959. Today, it is known as DeKalb-Peachtree Airport and is the second busiest airport in Georgia.

In addition to the military installations during the early and mid 20th Century, DeKalb County also witnessed major growth in higher education. In 1915, Emory University relocated to the county from Oxford, Georgia, on land donated by Asa Candler, and Oglethorpe University was re-chartered and began construction on its current campus in Buckhead. The concentration of institutions of higher learning produced an educated work force and attracted a diverse population to the county.

Early Population Centers

Early centers of population in DeKalb County include Decatur, Stone Mountain, Lithonia, Standing Peachtree, Panthersville, Brookhaven, and Scottsdale. The first post office in the county was established in Standing Peachtree in 1825 and is the site of the early white settlement in the county. Standing Peachtree was an Indian trading post and later a military fort, which became a popular area for whites to settle after the Creek Indians ceded their lands to the United States. These early settlements were founded for a variety of reasons. Some were located at the intersection of Indian trails or were the sites of former Indian settlements while others sprang up around creeks or rivers that provided water and energy for a mill. In the mid-1800s, with the arrival of railroads, towns such as Chamblee and, most notably Atlanta, came into existence. In the early twentieth century, DeKalb County also featured the first planned urban development in the Southeast with Avondale Estates. In 1924, George F. Willis purchased land that he developed into Avondale Estates, which included commercial and recreational amenities.

Conclusion

DeKalb County was poised for significant population growth after World War II. The county enjoyed rich natural resources, which gave rise to the early agriculture and quarrying industries and provided jobs and a way of life for its early settlers. It also had many creeks to operate grist and lumber mills and irrigate crops. It prospered after the Civil War from quarrying and agriculture and began to thrive in the early twentieth century with the location of institutions of higher learning, a large military installation and a thriving agricultural economy within its borders. All of these factors, combined with the fact that it was located directly next to a rapidly growing commercial center, Atlanta, contributed to the development of the county and positioned it to become the urbanized county it is today.

The location of major industries and funding for major infrastructure projects did not occur by sheer luck. The leaders of the county possessed vision and were well-connected to local leaders as well as to government officials in Washington. The county's most phenomenal transformation took place under the leadership of Scott Candler, known as "Mr. DeKalb," who served as the county's sole commissioner from 1939 to 1955.

Politics and “Mr. DeKalb”

Like many communities in Georgia and the rest of the nation, DeKalb County had a single Commissioner in the early part of the twentieth century.¹⁷ In DeKalb County, this type of government structure was created in 1906 by the state of Georgia General Assembly.¹⁸ The commissioner “had exclusive control over all phases of county operations” within DeKalb. For sixteen years, between 1939 and 1955, responsibility as Commissioner of Roads and Revenue belonged to Scott Candler, Sr. – in essence, Candler was the government of DeKalb County (Image 22). As stated by author Morris Shelton in his work *Mr. DeKalb*, “[t]o the extent that the county had legislative powers, they were exercised by Candler”.¹⁹ Candler firmly believed in the single-commissioner form of government as he believed “it was an important factor in attracting industries and making decisions” and he used his power to take swift, decisive action on issues.²⁰ In a biographical file on Candler, held by the DeKalb History Center, it is stated, “he (Candler) was called many things – benevolent dictator, master architect of DeKalb’s growth...and like other powerful politicians, he had his share of controversy and criticism.”²¹

Scott Candler, Sr. was born in Decatur, Georgia, in 1887, and graduated from Atlanta Law School in 1912. On both sides of his family, Candler came from “a long line of distinguished ancestors” making the family well connected within politics, local, state and nationally.²² He was also connected to the business world through his powerful family connections, one being Asa G. Candler of Coca-Cola. This lineage would give Candler a strong leadership background with which to build on in the future. After a short teaching and law career, Candler joined the U.S. Army when the United States entered World War I. He was awarded the Order of the Purple Heart, two Silver Stars, and five other decorations for participation in action during the war. In addition to being the Commissioner of Roads and Revenues for DeKalb County, Candler held other important positions, such as Decatur City Commissioner (1921), mayor of Decatur (1922 to 1939), Secretary of Georgia Department of Commerce (1955 to 1959), Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors (1950), and General Manager of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association (1958 to 1963).

Many consider DeKalb Waterworks, now the DeKalb County Department of Watershed Management, as the crowning achievement for Candler and the reason for the county’s explosive growth. The county’s geographic location, nestled so closely to the booming Atlanta metropolitan area, put it in line for huge opportunities for growth. Candler began working on the waterworks project in 1933, while mayor of Decatur, but it would not be until 1941 that the project would finally get underway. The City of Decatur had its own waterworks and agreed to connect into the new county system upon its completion. The availability of federal loans and Works Progress Administration workers to construct the

¹⁷ Morris Shelton, *Mr. DeKalb* (Atlanta: Dickson’s Inc., 1971), 15.

¹⁸ DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, “Board of Commissioners History,” DeKalb County, <http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/boc/history.html> (accessed March 26, 2010).

¹⁹ Shelton, p. 44.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Scott Candler, Sr. Biographical Information May 1993, Scott Candler, Sr. subject file, DeKalb History Center Archives, DeKalb History Center, Decatur, Georgia.

²² Shelton, 37.

facility would allow the project to progress, but the problem was financing. Candler began with the sale of \$1,000,000 in water certificates to be financed by the sale of water and \$500,000 from the federal government. However, Candler understood this would not be enough: finding enough customers in a rural community to support the development of such a large project would be difficult, and, without customers, the system would not be able to support itself. A possible solution came from the proposed inclusion of the Druid Hills neighborhood into the planned water system. This populous and affluent neighborhood located in DeKalb County drew its water under a contract with the city of Atlanta's waterworks. It became apparent that DeKalb County would have to "hijack part of Atlanta's water system" to fully fund the project.²³ Construction on the new waterworks began and water lines began to be laid through the county and connected, but not turned on, to Druid Hills. The City of Atlanta immediately filed suit against DeKalb County. The judgment went against Atlanta, which immediately appealed, but, on June 12, 1943, the Georgia Supreme Court upheld the original ruling, ordering "Atlanta to surrender its precious Druid Hills water customers to DeKalb County on the grounds that DeKalb was legally entitled to serve and derive revenue from all patrons in its domain."²⁴ By this time, the DeKalb Waterworks and the Decatur waterworks system had been merged together and a few weeks after the ruling in favor of DeKalb County, water was being supplied to the Druid Hills neighborhood via the new DeKalb Waterworks. Despite significant opposition, Scott Candler's foresight, conviction, and persistence ensured the facility was finally built.

To many in DeKalb County, Scott Candler was the reason for its extensive growth from small family dairy farms to a county of subdivisions and industry. Vivian Price states this in her work, *Historic DeKalb County*, when she writes, "Scott Candler was the architect of many milestones of progress, including developing the county's infrastructure."²⁵ Without the established and growing infrastructure that Candler implemented during his tenure as commissioner, he would not have been able to court and persuade industry to invest in his county for the long term.

Another DeKalb entity that was heavily involved in the economic development of the county was the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce. Established in 1938, then known as the DeKalb County Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, the organization focused on bringing in new business and industry to the largely rural county. The 1962 Annual Report to Members includes a timeline of projects assumed by the Chamber to advocate for DeKalb within the state and across the nation. This advocacy mainly appears to have consisted of promotion through literature, several movies, and provided funds for members for travel to promote the county face-to-face with the decision-makers of industries in other parts of the country. The 1962 timeline states that "15 county ads [placed] in national publications read by major business and industrial executives" and that a "four-color brochure entitled "DeKalb-Atlanta"... will be mailed and delivered to choice prospects for new DeKalb industries... throughout the nation."²⁶ In a 1962 news release by the Chamber of Commerce,

²³ Shelton, 45.

²⁴ Ibid, 49.

²⁵ Vivian Price, *Historic DeKalb County: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio, Texas: Historical Publishing Network, 2008), 31.

²⁶ "For Release: Thursday February 1, 1962," DeKalb Chamber of Commerce subject file, DeKalb History Center Archives, DeKalb History Center, Decatur, Georgia, 5.

then-General Manager, F. William Broome, states, “new industries are choosing DeKalb County at the rate of one a week” and that “this is some measure of the response to DeKalb County ads and promotional efforts.”²⁷ The news release goes on to discuss the 25-point betterment program to ‘Keep DeKalb County Ahead’ that assisted in the 1957 “upsurge in industrial development” within the county.²⁸ The DeKalb Chamber of Commerce heavily promoted the suitability of DeKalb County to industry and business as an environment of new growth and opportunity. Through the use of advertisements in industrial magazines and journals, such as *Manufacturing Record*, were geared towards the executives of the nation’s leading manufacturing companies (Image 23). In 1962, the Chamber was claiming that the “growth and gains” within the county were “promoted and publicized by the Chamber staff and members” and that this had been recognized by outside media.²⁹

The political atmosphere within DeKalb County allowed for the phenomenal growth it experienced. Scott Candler was a driving force behind the improvements to infrastructure that allowed for the growth of industry and population in the county, but also provided improved services to residents. The Chamber of Commerce provided the necessary promotional materials in print and film to heavily promote the county to the rest of the nation. All combined the efforts provided an environment for heavy growth and made DeKalb the third largest county, by population, in the state of Georgia, according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Infrastructure and Planning

To support the tremendous residential growth experienced by DeKalb County after World War II it was essential for the county to have an efficient network of transportation and utilities. In addition, DeKalb County through strategic planning efforts and zoning policies guided the development of their county to maximize its growth potential. Throughout the twentieth century DeKalb County recognized the importance of transportation, utilities, and effective planning strategies as important factors to attract residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Transportation

An extensive and efficient transportation system was necessary in DeKalb County to serve the phenomenal increase in residents and industries that occurred in the county between World War II and 1970. Fortunately, DeKalb County already had an established transportation network. Indian trails provided prime locations for early dirt roadways, which formed the backbone of the county’s paved roadway network of the early twentieth century. In addition, during the nineteenth century, four railroads were constructed through the county, spurring industrial and community development. Also, trolleys along planned streetcar lines served the commuting needs of the early suburban DeKalb County residents of

²⁷ Ibid, 3.

²⁸ Ibid, 3.

²⁹ Ibid, 4.

the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in cities such as Decatur. To continue effectively serving DeKalb County residents and industries after World War II, the well-established, county-wide transportation network needed an upgrade. This upgrade came in the form of additional roadways, bridges, and a freeway system.

Indian Trails

In the early 1800s, Indian trails crisscrossed DeKalb County. Indian trails were typically located along the highest ridges, avoiding waterways except at appropriate crossing points of rivers and streams. Therefore, numerous Indian trails in the county became the paths for the first county roads. The most famous Indian trail was the Hightower Trail, which served as DeKalb County's eastern border with Gwinnett County. The Echota Trail, which connected to the Hightower Trail, had two branches: Stone Mountain-Sandtown Trail and Stone Mountain-Standing Peachtree Trail. Today, MARTA's east-west line in DeKalb County follows the Stone Mountain-Sandtown Trail route. The Stone Mountain-Standing Peachtree Trail connected the two Creek Indian towns of Sandtown and Standing Peachtree, both settlements predating Decatur by about 300 years, and followed the alignment of what is today Rock Bridge Road and Nelson Ferry Road. The historic courthouse in Decatur stands near the intersection of the Echota Trail and the Shallowford Trail. Traveling north from the historic courthouse along Clairmont Avenue, which becomes Clairmont Road at Scott Boulevard, and then eastward along LaVista Road follows the alignment of what once was the Shallowford Trail. The Etowah Trail later became the primary transportation corridor between Decatur and Five Points in downtown Atlanta and eventually was named DeKalb Avenue.

Early Roadways

After DeKalb County was established in 1822, one of the first tasks of the new county government was creating and maintaining roads for wagons and stagecoach traffic. On May 20, 1823, the Inferior Court of DeKalb County appointed road commissioners and issued two orders. The first order designated the roadway from Standing Peachtree to Gwinnett County, which was then called Hog Mountain Road, as a public road to be maintained by the county. This roadway had been cut through the woodlands in 1814 for travel between two United States Army forts. The second order was for the construction of an additional county road. On July 28, 1823, the Inferior Court issued additional orders for roads to be constructed to the new county seat of Decatur. Roadways created from this order were Rock Bridge Road, Montgomery Ferry Road, Fayetteville Road, Shallowford Road, Covington Road, and Decatur-McDonough Road. The court also called for the establishment of ferries, the first of which was Nelson's Ferry, located near where Bankhead Road currently crosses the Chattahoochee River. Throughout the 1800s, the Inferior Court continued its practice of issuing orders for roadway, bridge, and ferry construction. Fines were issued to the commissioners if they neglected their duty to maintain roadways within their jurisdictions. By the mid-1800s, various roadways radiated from Decatur to county seats in adjacent counties (Image 24) including Lawrenceville (Gwinnett County), McDonough (Henry County), Marietta (Cobb County), and Covington (Newton County). By 1915, DeKalb County boasted of over 115 miles of paved or hard-surfaced roads connecting Decatur to all areas of the county.

Railroads

In 1845, the Georgia Railroad from Marthasville (Atlanta) to Augusta was completed. The alignment for the Georgia Railroad (Image 25) passed through DeKalb County just south of Decatur. At this time, Decatur was an established county seat, and Marthasville was just a village where three railroads were proposed to intersect. Due to the intersection of these railroads, however, Marthasville grew into the city of Atlanta and later the state capitol, and Decatur essentially became its suburb. Vivian Price, in her book, *The History of DeKalb County, Georgia: 1822-1900*, quoted from an *Atlanta Journal* article, stating:

Decatur was at the time a proud, prosperous and aristocratic village. It is said that her inhabitants refused to allow the train to make its terminal there, claiming that the noise, smoke and general commotion that it created would prove a nuisance, in that the train would frighten the cows and chickens, thereby reducing the fine quality of milk, butter and eggs, as well as the quantity; and, last but not least, would disturb the early morning slumbers of its people.³⁰

In opposition to this argument, Price's book also captured a quote from Charles Murphy Candler's 1922 "Historical Address," which, in reference to the Georgia Railroad, stated

"the Georgia Railroad did not run through Decatur, but just outside its southern boundary, not because citizens objected, but solely for topographical reasons... The railroad in passing Decatur followed the backbone of the ridge dividing the waters running in the north to the Gulf, and in the South to the Atlantic, and avoided cutting through hills and crossing valleys as much as possible".³¹

Either way the Georgia Railroad, as well as additional railroads, played a major factor in the development of DeKalb County.

By 1899, DeKalb County had twenty-one towns and villages and four railroad lines traversing the county (Image 26). DeKalb County significantly benefited from its proximity to Atlanta because these four railroads destined for Atlanta passed through the county. Of the twenty-one towns and villages, fifteen of them were stops along a railroad line. Only two of these stops, Decatur and Stone Mountain, predated the 1845 Georgia Railroad. Although the Georgia Railroad did not bisect Decatur, its train station was located on the southern limits of the town within one mile of the historic courthouse square. The Georgia Railroad also passed through Clarkston, Stone Mountain, and Lithonia.

In 1901, the other three railroads were the Southern Railway, Seaboard Air Line Railway and East Tennessee, Georgia, & Virginia Railroad, although two of them had a prior railroad origin. The Atlanta and Charlotte Air-Line Railway became the Southern Railroad in 1894 and passed through Chamblee and Doraville. The Georgia, Carolina & Northern Railway merged into the Seaboard Air Line Railway in 1901, and this railroad alignment ran through Tucker. The East Tennessee, Georgia & Virginia Railroad traversed the extreme southwest corner of DeKalb County.

³⁰ Price, 218

³¹ Ibid

The railroads required depots where they could obtain wood, coal, and water. Therefore, new communities developed in the county along railroad lines and were planned around the railroad depot. In 1856, the one-half mile corporate limits for Lithonia were centered on the Georgia Railroad depot. When New Gibraltar, which was a pre-railroad town, was re-incorporated in 1847 as Stone Mountain, it re-centered its city limits at one-half mile from the railroad depot. The railroads contributed significantly to the success of DeKalb County's timber, cotton mill, and quarrying industries because the finished products could be easily shipped to Atlanta or anywhere across the country by rail.

Street Cars/Trolleys

Before the Georgia Railroad was built Decatur was a stop along a stagecoach route than ran from Lawrenceville to Atlanta and onto Newnan. In 1835 with the building of the Georgia Railroad DeKalb County citizens could commute to and from Atlanta by railroad on scheduled trains. In 1891 the first street car railway between Atlanta and Decatur began operations. The first street car was termed a "dummy" street railway because one steam engine car would push additional cars. The "dummy" street railway was operated by the Metropolitan Street Railway Company. In 1892 this street railway car line was acquired by Joel Hurt and the Atlanta Consolidated Street Railway Company, which became the Atlanta Railway and Power Company. Around 1894 the steam engine powered cars were converted to electric cars. By the late 1890s the Atlanta Consolidated Street Railway Company owned almost every street railway line in Atlanta. The lines they didn't control were owned by the Atlanta Rapid Transit Company. In 1902 the two competitors essentially merged to become the Georgia Railway and Electric Company. At this time there were three separate lines of electric street cars running between Atlanta and Decatur. Through electric street car lines and the Georgia Railway and Electric Company DeKalb County continued to develop. By 1913 the Stone Mountain Street Car line was in service with stops in Atlanta, Decatur, Scottsdale, Clarkston, Mt. Zion, and Stone Mountain. In 1914 when lack of gas connections was hindering county growth and development the Georgia Railway and Electric Company assisted by constructing gas mains. In addition by 1923 there was forty-three miles of high tension wires bringing power to Decatur and other DeKalb County areas. By 1923 DeKalb County boasted thirty-six miles of electric street car railway lines.

In 1946 the electric street car lines began converting to a trackless trolley system, which was still powered by overhead lines. By 1963 the trackless trolley system was phased out and replaced by the buses of the Atlanta Transit System. During 1972 the Atlanta Transit System was acquired by Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in Atlanta's efforts to implement a rapid-rail transit system supported by bus service.

The street car rail lines contributed to DeKalb County residential development by supplying residents an efficient mode of transportation from their homes into the city of Atlanta. The street car rail lines took the place of the commute on the railroad and predated the age of the automobile, which further contributed to the outward growth of DeKalb County. The original steam powered street car lines and electric street car lines paved the way for DeKalb County suburban development.

Twentieth Century Transportation

By 1945, DeKalb County had an extensive network of state routes and county roads connecting residents to all areas of metropolitan Atlanta. In addition, a significant portion of this roadway network was paved. Major paved state routes in the county included Buford Highway (SR 13/US 23), SR 8/US 29 (near Decatur, it transitioned to Scott Boulevard), SR 10/US 78, Covington Highway (SR 12), Briarcliff Road (transitioned into SR 42), and Flat Shoals Road (SR 155). Buford Highway was a major north-south roadway in the northeast corner of the county. SR 8/US 29 extended from Decatur to Lawrenceville and travelled through Tucker. SR 10/US 78 was a major east-west roadway from Atlanta to Snellville that went through Decatur and Stone Mountain as well as serving the Avondale Estates community. SR 41 entered the county from Atlanta and linked with SR 10/US 78 east of Decatur. Covington Highway connected Atlanta to Conyers along a route just south of Lithonia. Briarcliff Road was a north-south county road that transitioned to SR 42 near Decatur and, from that point, continued south along the Fulton-DeKalb county line to Stockbridge. Also, Flat Shoals Road carried traffic from Decatur to McDonough, traveling through Panthersville.

In addition to state routes, numerous paved county roads throughout the county supported local traffic. These major county roads included Ashford-Dunwoody Road, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Peachtree Road, Clairmont Road, Rockbridge Road and LaVista Road. Ashford-Dunwoody Road was a north-south roadway in the northwest quadrant of the county. Both Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Peachtree Road supported traffic in Chamblee and Doraville in addition to being major north-south roadway connectors for the General Motors plant located in Doraville. Clairmont Road served as the primary connector roadway between Buford Highway and Decatur. Both Rockbridge Road and LaVista Road were major east-west county roads.

In essence, by the mid-twentieth century, there was a complete paved roadway network throughout DeKalb County, which supported the commuting needs of its residents. Also, all major towns within the county including Decatur, Tucker, Chamblee, Doraville, Stone Mountain, Clarkston, and Lithonia had a paved state route or primary county road traversing through the town. This established roadway network connected DeKalb County and its residents to adjacent cities and towns such as Atlanta, McDonough, Stockbridge, Snellville, Norcross, and Conyers (Image 27).

In a 1952 newspaper article from *The DeKalb New Era*, DeKalb County claimed to have over 1,800 miles of roadway, with 700 of those miles paved. However, one major complaint about the roadways from local residents was the significant number of potholes on these roads. Officials attributed these potholes to the tremendous amount of new traffic generated by DeKalb County's growth in addition to the numerous trucks carrying lumber, bricks, and gravel along local roads to construction sites within the county. The 1951-1952 fiscal year annual report for the State Highway Department of Georgia recorded that DeKalb County had 129.24 miles of state routes and 698.59 miles of county roads. In addition the annual report stated that the total expenditure on roads and bridges for DeKalb County between 1940 and 1950 was \$4,614,948. Based on this dollar amount, DeKalb County was second in the state only to Fulton County in construction of roads and bridges.

Under DeKalb County Commissioner of Roads and Revenue Scott Candler, a bond issue system was created during the 1940s to pay for roadway and transportation infrastructure improvements throughout the county. Funds for new bridges and overpasses were needed for major roadways at intersections with existing railroad tracks. In 1954, DeKalb County teamed with the State Highway Department for over \$200,000-worth of transportation-related contracts. Projects from the agreement included straightening a curve along LaVista Road, paving Panthersville Road, and constructing a bridge near Tucker over the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. DeKalb County's portion of the costs was paid through an approved \$1,000,000 bond issue for road improvements. In October of 1961, a ten-point bond program was approved totaling \$22.9 million. Through this, \$8,210,000 in bond funds were dedicated to roadways and traffic safety issues. Sample projects included bridges, sidewalks, and new roads.

By 1965, additional state routes had been designated throughout the county. These include Memorial Drive and Glenwood Avenue. Glenwood Avenue paralleled Memorial Drive south of Decatur and connected to Covington Highway east of Decatur. This gave southern DeKalb County residents an additional east-west connection into Atlanta. In this same time period, the Chamblee-Dunwoody Road connected Dunwoody to Chamblee, providing an additional major north-south roadway in the county.

The opening of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) in November, 1949, served as a great example of how DeKalb County, through its roadway network, attracted and supported local industries. The newly-constructed PIB was three-and-one-half miles long and four lanes wide and ran past the General Motors Assembly Plant to Buford Highway. The roadway cost \$1,000,000 to construct and had two underpasses, one under the Southern Railway and the other beneath Peachtree Road. The federal government paid for half the construction cost of the roadway and the entire cost of the underpass underneath the railroad. The state of Georgia paid half of the general construction cost and for the underpass below Peachtree Road. It was important from a safety and efficiency standpoint that the new roadway be grade-separated from the railroad. The roadway would serve numerous industries in the corridor and handle a significant number of large trucks. The underpasses allowed the large trucks to avoid the railroad on their way to Buford Highway. DeKalb County paid for and obtained the right-of-way for PIB and the relocation and widening of Peachtree Road.

According to a November 27, 1949, *Atlanta Journal* article describing the new roadway, General Motors, in relocating to Doraville had required that "adequate highway be built." The construction of PIB met these terms. W.H. Bolte, manager of the Atlanta plant of General Motors, was quoted in the newspaper article as saying, "We look forward to opening of the road from the standpoint of pride and progress.... It will be a great convenience to our employees in getting away quickly and comfortably after work hours." In addition, the roadway would serve numerous other industries in the area, including Westinghouse Electric Corporation, General Electric, American Hospital Supply, and United States Envelope Company. The November *Atlanta Journal* article included a map highlighting PIB and Peachtree Road accompanied by a legend depicting sixteen separate industries in the area the roadways would serve (Image 28). Along with these industries came a high demand for

residential housing in the Chamblee and Doraville area (Image 29), whose residents would also find the new roads useful in accessing places of employment, shopping, and recreation.

In 1946, the “*Highway and Transportation Plan for Atlanta, Georgia*” was prepared by H.W. Lochner & Company in association with De Leuw, Cather & Company for the State Highway Department of Georgia and the Public Roads Administration (also known as the Bureau of Public Roads). From the study came the acclaimed “Lochner Plan.” In essence, the study conceptualized the interstate configuration existing in Atlanta today by incorporating the five interstate routes radiating from the heart of the city as recommended by the Interregional Highway Committee. The proposed links from the center of Atlanta were directed towards Greenville, S.C (I-85 North), Chattanooga, TN (I-75 North), Montgomery, AL (I-85 South), Macon, GA and Florida (I-75 South), Birmingham, AL (I-20 West), with a sixth link to Augusta, GA (I-20 East) recommended by the Georgia Highway Department. The study concluded that expressways were “utilitarian highways to serve primarily the traffic moving about the metropolitan area or traffic with either origination or destination in the urban center.” Basically, the goal of the expressway was to serve the central business district of Atlanta by transporting vehicles to and from downtown as safely and efficiently as possible.

Under the Eisenhower administration, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 was passed, creating the Interstate Highway system. Numerous factors drove the passage of the act. There was significant city and suburban development occurring after World War II, and a highway system was needed to serve that growth. Cities were experiencing a common trend of “white flight” as white families moved to the suburbs but still drove into the city to work. In addition automobile sales skyrocketed in the 1950s with a record 7.4 million vehicles purchased in 1955 while other urban public transportation options were abandoned in some cities.

Due to Atlanta’s proactive transportation planning approach, the city was able to link its proposed freeway vision, derived from the Lochner Plan, with the interstates being constructed across the country by the federal government. By 1969, interstates had been constructed across Atlanta and DeKalb County. At the time, these included Interstates 85, 285, and 20. As with the construction of railroad lines to Atlanta, DeKalb County was fortunate to receive an extensive network of interstate roadway due to its proximity to Atlanta (Image 30).

Interstate 85 (I-85) closely parallels Buford Highway on its route from downtown Atlanta to the South Carolina border. In the 1950s, I-85 was designed to carry 55,000 vehicles per day. By 1975, at a point along I-85 just south of North Druid Hills Road (in DeKalb County), 72,400 vehicles per day was recorded. Within DeKalb County, the heavily-traveled roadways of North Druid Hills (SR 42), Shallowford Road (SR 155), Clairmont Road, and Chamblee Tucker Road have interchanges with I-85.

Interstate 20 (I-20) travels east-west across the southern portion of DeKalb County. There are interchanges along I-20 located at Glenwood Avenue (SR 260), Flat Shoals Road, Candler Road (SR 155), Wesley Chapel Road, Panola Road, and Turner Hill Road. Interstate 285 essentially bisects DeKalb County in its circumnavigation of Atlanta. As a result, many

roadways within DeKalb County have interchanges with I-285 including Ashford Dunwoody Road, Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (SR 141), LaVista Road (SR 236), Lawrenceville Highway (SR 8), Stone Mountain Freeway (US 78), Memorial Drive (SR 10), Covington Highway (SR 12), Flat Shoals Parkway (SR 155), and Moreland Avenue (SR 42). In addition, I-285 intersects with both I-85 and I-20 within DeKalb County.

As a result of this extensive interstate network, almost every residential home, business, shopping center, or industrial area in the county is located within a few miles of an interstate interchange and is, therefore, effectively linked by freeway to anywhere within the metropolitan area. Residential growth within DeKalb County from 1940-1970 consistently expanded outward from Atlanta. In the 1950s, DeKalb County's ever-growing roadway network contributed to this outward movement, but, by the 1960s-1970s (see I.C Map 3 1960-1970), the majority of this new residential development was located either along the interstates or outside the perimeter of I-285, away from Atlanta. In addition, retail and commercial strip centers followed the residential development along the interstates and into the suburbs, creating a suburban landscape dependent on the automobile for everyday life. In the 1960s and early 1970s, indoor shopping malls were constructed in DeKalb County near interstate interchanges. These indoor shopping malls included South DeKalb Mall (1968) near I-20 and Candler Road interchange, Northlake Mall (1971) near LaVista Road and I-285 interchange, and Perimeter Mall (1971) at the I-285 and Ashford Dunwoody Road interchange. North DeKalb Mall (1965) was built where Stone Mountain Freeway (US 78), a limited access freeway, transitioned into Lawrenceville Highway (SR 8) and Scott Boulevard.

In addition, the interstate system allowed for industrial businesses, which needed large tracts of land close to a transportation network, to locate outside Atlanta, in DeKalb County along the interstates. In 1968, DeKalb County roadway maps showed large industrial areas zoned near the highway interchanges along I-85, I-20, and I-285. Also truck traffic, which had been a major factor contributing to the deterioration of DeKalb County roads, could now be diverted off state and county roads and onto the interstate system.

I-675 was completed in 1987 as a ten mile six-lane freeway connecting I-75 with I-285 east of Moreland Avenue. Construction of I-675 began in 1982 and the project was estimated at \$40 million. The interstate was completed five years late at a cost of \$53 million. Only two miles of the interstate is located in DeKalb County, but it would help relieve congestion along I-285 as well as provide future economic development in the southwestern part of the county. Also, it would provide access to the interstate system for trucking companies based in southwest DeKalb County. In addition the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce supported the new interstate because they viewed it as opportunity to promote growth in that area of the county.

Airports

DeKalb-Peachtree Airport is Georgia's second busiest airport (based on number of flight operations per year). The airport was built on the former location of Camp Gordon, which was a World War I Army training base. After World War I the camp property was sold at auction to T.R. Sawtell. After the purchase a number of local aviators banded together to

form the Atlanta Aero Club and asked T.R. Sawtell to set aside 300 acres to potentially develop an airport. In 1940 DeKalb County bought the land and with assistance through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) the county built an airport. Then in 1941 the United States Navy first acquired a piece of land at the airport and later in the year leased the entire airport. The field was officially commissioned as a U.S Naval Reserve Base. At the time the airport property was approximately 333 acres and the U.S. Navy leased the land from the county for \$18,000 a year plus maintenance costs. After World War II the U.S. Navy continued to use the airport, but the business, industrial, and private aviation needs of DeKalb County began to increase. In 1959 DeKalb County resumed control of the entire airport and it was opened to the public. Due to increased flight operations in 1963 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) took over control of the air traffic. In 1972 there were over 300 aircrafts based at the airport and by 1975 this number had climbed to over 400 aircrafts. During 1977 there was 259,314 flights recorded at the airport, which ranked DeKalb-Peachtree Airport as the 71st busiest airport in the United States out of approximately 15,000 airports.

Stone Mountain Britt Memorial Airport was opened in the 1950s and operated continuously into the 1990s. The airport had a single 3,000' runway. In 1985 it was bought by a team of 34 pilots for private flight operations. In 1990 the airport had twenty hangers and one-hundred and fifty light aircraft. The airport was closed in the summer of 1996 and the property was leased to Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) for Olympic purposes. Following the Olympics the airport was not reopened and the land was utilized as a parking lot for an adjacent tennis center.

Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

On June 30, 1979 the first Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) train went into operation. The first established MARTA route was the East Line, which operated trains between Avondale Station (DeKalb County) and Georgia State University Station (City of Atlanta). In 2010 there are nine MARTA stations located within DeKalb County including Edgewood/Candler Park, East Lake, Decatur, Avondale, Kensington, and Indian Creek Stations along the East Line and Brookhaven, Chamblee, and Doraville Stations along the Northeast Line. In June 1993 when the Kensington to Indian Creek alignment was completed in DeKalb County it marked the first time that MARTA had rail service station outside of I-285. DeKalb County also had MARTA rail stations along the Northeast Line. A station at Chamblee was completed in 1987 and was followed by a station at Doraville in 1990.

What eventually became known as MARTA was originally conceived by Atlanta transportation planners in the 1950s. A city and county wide controversy over where MARTA would be located and who would pay for it raged throughout the 1960s. Also, the idea of a rapid-rail system was being pushed by Atlanta's white business elite because they believed it would enhance Atlanta's image to the nation and world despite transportation studies indicating that due to the city's low population density it would be more efficiently served by a coordinated bus service. DeKalb County found itself in the middle of this controversy.

Originally rapid-rail transit was to serve the five primary Metro Atlanta counties of Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Clayton, and Gwinnett. In 1965 MARTA was established by the Georgia General Assembly, but in a referendum vote (including the City of Atlanta in addition to the five counties) to fully constitute MARTA only Cobb County voted against it. Cobb County residents feared MARTA would bring inner-city crime into their county. Then in 1968 a referendum to fund MARTA through a bond issue was defeated by the voting jurisdictions. The vote was closest in DeKalb County with 48.9% of votes in favor of the bond issue. The primary reason for the defeat of the bond issue was because African-American leaders were discouraged by the planned lack of service options by MARTA for the African-American communities. In DeKalb County MARTA's proposed East Line would serve the white community of Avondale Estates and operate along an east-west alignment that would further define a boundary between white neighborhoods north of the tracks and African-American neighborhoods south of the tracks. In 1971 there was another referendum vote. This time it was for a 1% sales tax increase to fund MARTA. African-American leaders had worked in compromises for MARTA service in exchange for their support. In DeKalb County a bus line that ran parallel to Moreland Avenue was promised to provide service to black communities located south of the proposed East Line. As in the 1968 referendum vote all counties and the City of Atlanta voted individually. The referendum was passed in DeKalb County by 3,358 votes, but failed in Clayton and Gwinnett Counties. In addition, it passed in the City of Atlanta, but failed in the area of Fulton County outside the city. Although, since the sales tax would be county wide the votes for the City of Atlanta and part of Fulton County located outside the city were counted together and as a result the referendum passed for Fulton County as a whole. The vote failed in Clayton and Gwinnett County because the proposed rail service was limited in these counties and these counties had primarily white suburban communities that were afraid the rapid-rail would bring in African-Americans and crime.

Utilities

Public utilities were an important part of DeKalb County's residential growth. With a growing population, the need for expanded utilities such as waste management and street lighting became necessary. The DeKalb Waterworks water treatment plant in Doraville reflects the progressive nature of the leadership of DeKalb County by Scott Candler that subsequently attracted both commercial and residential development.

Water

During World War II, DeKalb County authorized the construction of a new water treatment plant in Doraville. Construction of the water works began in December 1941, and it became operational on October 1, 1942. It was officially dedicated two days later. The facility was constructed by Roberts & Company, Inc., Architects-Engineers, of Atlanta under the direction of R.G. Hicklin, consulting engineer (Image 31).

At a cost of two million dollars, the state-of-the-art water treatment facility was intended to meet the residential and commercial demands of DeKalb County for the next twenty years. Water was drawn from a pumping station located approximately two and a half miles away on the Chattahoochee River. The facility had a filtration capacity of eight to twelve million

gallons daily. Once filtered, the water was stored at four sites: an onsite reinforced concrete reservoir and three elevated steel water tanks on Clairemont Avenue, West Howard Street, and at City Hall in Decatur. Their capacities were a million and a half gallons, one million gallons, five hundred thousand gallons, and eighty-five thousand gallons of water, respectively. This ensured a reserve of over three million gallons of pure water. The plant was equipped with three Dayton-Dowd electric pumps with a pumping capacity of eighteen million gallons per day. As a precaution, a gasoline-powered pump with a three million gallon a day capacity was installed for backup. A thirty-inch main carried water over twelve miles from the Doraville plant to Decatur. In addition, a nineteen-mile length of thirty-inch main reached the southern part of the county.

The DeKalb County population grew faster than expected. In 1953, the water treatment plant was expanded to fill the increasing needs of residential and commercial development. The one million dollar expansion included a thirty-three percent increase in filtration capacity as well as the laying of water lines from McAfee Tank to Clarkston and Peachtree Road (Image 32). Scott Candler also approved plans to increase the available water supply with the addition of two new water tanks in Avondale Estates and the South Side (Image 33). The fourth water tank at Avondale Estates had a one million gallon capacity while the fifth water tank at South Side had a three million gallon capacity. All of the water tanks were built by the same contractor, R.D. Cole Manufacturing Company of Newnan, Georgia. The Avondale Estates water tank reflects the state-of-the-art technology utilized by DeKalb County. It was an all-welded construction that incorporated specialized aluminum paint for steel surfaces.

In 1961, voters approved a \$1,250,000 bond program for expansion of the water system. By 1963, ten projects were completed; most were in the Stone Mountain area. They included the installation of 4,300 feet of twelve-inch pipe along East Ponce de Leon Avenue to Stone Mountain. In addition, 8,000 feet of eight-inch pipe was laid from Memorial Drive to Stone Mountain Park. A 27,000 foot sixteen-inch main was installed from Henderson Mill Road to Hugh Howell Road. A booster station was installed on Midvale Road to improve water pressure in the Tucker area. 15,800 feet of 24-inch main was placed from Memorial Drive to Covington Highway and then along Covington Highway to Wesley Chapel Road.

Overall, the availability of water utilities was an important draw for both residential and commercial development in DeKalb County. In comparison to other counties, DeKalb's water system was technologically advanced, and had the capacity to meet future demands.

Electricity

Upon the conclusion of World War II, DeKalb County was mostly a rural environment. Equipped with new power generating stations, Georgia Power began the electrification of rural areas including DeKalb County. The impetus was that rural citizens should be equipped with the means to elevate their lives and have access to the same amenities of their urban counterparts. The use of electricity was considered a measure of the standard of living. In 1944, Georgia Power launched the Georgia Better Home Towns Program which sought to improve the living conditions in Georgia. It encouraged progress in towns and cities across

Georgia. By encouraging progress, it was hoped that industry and tourism would be drawn to Georgia. The program was considered a success.

Public street lighting was a growing part of DeKalb County's utilities. In 1960, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners approved street lighting for unincorporated areas of the county. Residents could petition the Board of Commissioners for street lighting in their area. The Georgia Power Company was contracted to install the street lights and provide power to them; DeKalb County was responsible for assessing the fees to the property owners.

Sewer

Under a Works Progress Administration project, Atlanta, Decatur, DeKalb and Fulton County built a metropolitan sewer system in 1939. Prior to this joint venture, each of the aforementioned municipalities was responsible for the maintenance and operation of their respective systems. As a result, there was frequent overlap and conflict with the adjoining municipalities. Under a renewable five-year contract, Atlanta was given complete control of the sewage treatment plants and responsible for the maintenance and repair of sewer pipes. DeKalb County agreed to pay Atlanta a fee for use of the system. In the same fashion, Decatur would pay DeKalb County a fee. Due to the growth in demand in DeKalb County, a new contract was signed on April 24, 1944. Prior to 1945, there were only 100 miles of sewer lines in DeKalb County.

In August, 1962, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners approved the use of temporary sewage disposal plants in subdivisions. This was done to improve public health and save home owners money. Health officials noted that the saturated soil from septic tank usage posed a health hazard in many areas of the county and recommended the use of temporary sewage disposal plants. The temporary plants eliminated the need for septic tanks and disposal fields and spared home owners the future cost of connecting to sewers. Measuring sixteen feet by eight feet, these self-contained plants could serve up to fifty homes. This technology was a stop-gap measure until the county's sewer lines reached the neighborhoods. Costing between \$30,000 and \$50,000, each unit would be purchased by the developer but operated by DeKalb County under a dollar-a-year lease. Once sewer service became available, the temporary disposal plants could be removed and reused at another development.

Originally named the Snapfinger Sewerage Disposal Plant, the Snapfinger Creek Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility was put into operation in 1963. Its original filtration capacity was two million gallons a day, and its operation is well-illustrated in the following image (Image 34).

Waste Management

Initially named the DeKalb County Sanitary Department, the DeKalb County Sanitation Department began in 1937 with one driver and three trash collectors. Later, Scott Chandler instituted a countywide sanitation service which included garbage service twice a week and weekly trash pickup. Very few municipalities in the nation offered this level of service in the 1940s. The Sanitation Department used a 150-acre landfill located off of Memorial Drive to dispose of garbage. Landfills utilized large ditches where trash was dumped and covered

with a thin layer of soil. The process was repeated until the ditch was filled. Landfills were practical as long as large tracts of land were available and not in close proximity to residential areas. With the population generating 400 tons of garbage each day, DeKalb County's landfills were rapidly reaching capacity by the late 1950s. A practical solution to trash disposal was needed. One proposal was the construction of a two-million-dollar, high-temperature incinerator with a 500-ton capacity. Unfortunately, it was voted down in a bond referendum in 1959. In an effort to raise public awareness of the pressing situation, the Sanitary Department printed 54,000 booklets titled "How Your Garbage is Now Disposed." Finally, bitter protests to a landfill in Stone Mountain prompted the DeKalb County Commission to vote on preliminary plans for an incinerator. In May, 1962, construction of the incinerator, located between Memorial Drive and Kensington Road, began. Roberts & Company Associates of Atlanta was the architect and also the same company that built the DeKalb County Water Works. The contractor was the Ross Corporation of New Orleans. Interestingly, the DeKalb Commission requested an incinerator with parts that were interchangeable with Atlanta's incinerator. This would enable the county to save money by carrying a lower inventory of parts but allow for the transfer of parts from Atlanta in emergencies. On October 22, 1963, the incinerator was activated (Image 35). It featured two 300-ton rotary kilns which gave the incinerator a 600-ton capacity. The incinerator was kept in constant operation five days a week by a crew of twenty-eight who worked three eight-hour shifts. The incinerator's chimney was 200 feet high and twenty feet wide at its base, tapering at the top (Image 36). The incinerator eliminated the need for landfills. At the time of its activation, 1,000,000 pounds of trash were being delivered to DeKalb's landfills each day. In comparison to other communities, DeKalb's incinerator was technologically advanced with respect to its output. However, its location was poorly chosen. It was located in close proximity to I-285 and was a constant eyesore to commuters and the surrounding community (Image 37).

Telephone

In November 1945, Southern Bell announced that it was expanding its telephone service in DeKalb County by enlarging the telephone exchanges and other facilities within the county. The \$400,000 to \$500,000 cost was to be shared between the county and Southern Bell. Direct Distance Dialing (DDD) was introduced to DeKalb County on October 2, 1960. It enabled telephone customers to place long distance calls directly without the aid of an operator. It also eliminated long distance charges for calls made from the Atlanta area to twelve adjoining communities. This change was made possible by Centralized Automatic Message Accounting (CAMA), a new electro-mechanical accounting system. Named "Tucker 938", Southern Bell opened an office in Tucker on June 18, 1961. It housed central office equipment and recentering cables.³² With respect to telephone service, DeKalb County was on par with the rest of nation by the late 1960s. Expansion was sometimes delayed by equipment shortages.

Gas

As a utility, gas was introduced to Atlanta in the mid-nineteenth century and was used initially for lighting. It is important to know that gas and natural gas are not interchangeable terms. Gas was produced by coal whereas natural gas was extracted from the earth during oil

³² "Telephone Building Completed At Tucker," *The DeKalb New Era* March 9, 1961. p. 5.

drilling. With this in mind, gas was first introduced to DeKalb County in Decatur in 1913. It was marketed as a competitor to electrical utilities. In 1929, the Atlanta Service Center was constructed at 1219 Caroline Street in the Little Five Points area. It was operated by the Atlanta Gas Light Company which was a subsidiary of the Central Public Service of Chicago. By 1947, natural gas was available in Avondale Estates, Chamblee, and Doraville. Until natural gas lines were installed in DeKalb County, compressed propane and butane gas were marketed as alternatives. Both gases were available in bottles or tanks which could be installed above or below ground. In the summer of 1947, the Community Gas Company constructed the largest plant in the South in Tucker, Georgia. The company advertised the many applications of these systems. They included residential, farming, and industrial uses (Image 38). The Adair-Weatherly Gas Inc. built a propane plant in Stone Mountain in 1947. Expansion of natural gas lines was hampered by a national steel strike in late 1949. Again, another steel strike in the summer of 1952 slowed the installation of natural gas lines.

Land Use

Land use planning in DeKalb County during the peak of ranch house development, 1940-1970, underwent a rapid transformation. Before 1940, county-wide land use planning in DeKalb County was limited to basic infrastructure planning such as roads and utilities. As a primarily agricultural county, DeKalb had little need to extensively organize land uses in a county with a small population distributed in clusters and a few incorporated towns. After World War II, DeKalb County became an integral part of new plans to utilize Atlanta as a regional metropolis interconnected to the former agricultural counties surrounding the city. DeKalb County became the location for the first wave of regional growth into suburban areas outside Atlanta. First industry, then automobile transport infrastructure, followed by inclusive planned neighborhoods, and finally commercial and park infrastructure continued to expand primarily along interstate highways in DeKalb County into the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, national environmental legislation, a more diverse range of voters, ample highways, and expansive industrial parks forced DeKalb County to control land uses. The ranch house, as a major component of single family neighborhoods built in DeKalb County during the 1950s and 1960s, were a side effect of the exhaustive population growth and regional economic expansion of the period.

With a history of overlapping boundaries, DeKalb County and Atlanta became increasingly regionally linked after World War II. A western section of DeKalb County, including the towns of Eastlake and Kirkwood along the Georgia Railroad line and streetcar line linking Atlanta to Decatur was annexed by the City of Atlanta in the 1920s. With annexation of some of DeKalb County's highest population areas, the City of Atlanta had land use jurisdiction over much of DeKalb County's population and corresponding residential areas. Population growth in unincorporated DeKalb County in the 1950s began to bypass incorporated population. Until the 1930s, DeKalb County's unincorporated land was planned for agriculture and largely undeveloped, allowing large-scale residential and industrial growth outside older towns.

Atlanta area regional land use planning was enacted in the late 1940s by the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). DeKalb County leaders, specifically the DeKalb Chamber of

Commerce and Scott Candler, DeKalb County's representative member of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, supported the MPC's regional planning role and federal grant leveraging function. Regional comprehensive planning, aimed primarily at increasing industrial output and transportation infrastructure to move goods and people out of central Atlanta, emerged to utilize the Atlanta region. The first regional land use plan, titled *Up Ahead: A regional land use plan for Metropolitan Atlanta*, 1952, initially encompassed the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County. The comprehensive plan proposed new industrial centers, population shifts to suburban areas primarily in DeKalb County, high capacity roads, regional parks, and model neighborhood designs supported by the Federal Housing Administration. Business leaders in commissioner roles working from a regional perspective led the push to transform DeKalb from a rural county to a modern, interconnected, regional center for industry, commerce, residential development, and transportation.

DeKalb County relied on regional plans, including *Up Ahead* published in 1952 and *Now for tomorrow: a master planning program for the DeKalb-Fulton Metropolitan Area* published in 1954, until 1956, when the county passed its own comprehensive land use plan and zoning ordinance. During a period from the late 1930s to 1956, all of DeKalb County, excluding incorporated cities, was unofficially zoned business or residential and dictated by the DeKalb County Planning Commission, a branch of the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce. A comprehensive land use plan was adopted in 1956 with revisions in 1962 and 1970. With Scott Candler's departure from Commissioner of Roads and Revenue in 1955, land use planning was under more political pressure from a board of county commissioners representing separate districts of DeKalb County. Regional plans advocated a metropolitan buildup in the form of interstate highway linkages to industrial centers and a blend of commercial development and multifamily housing facing highways with single-family neighborhoods behind multifamily housing. Development and population was to be distributed evenly across DeKalb County. As DeKalb population grew and developed, multifamily housing and industry encroached upon single-family neighborhoods. The development community and the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce wishing to create more business and tax base helped pushed through the DeKalb County Planning Commission a greater variety of zoning classes in the zoning ordinance revisions of 1962 and 1970. By the early 1960s citizen opposition was building against allowing zoning variances for multifamily housing. Attempts to appease citizens by greatly diversifying zoning classes did not succeed. With the continued development of I-285 as a beltway around Atlanta through DeKalb County in the late 1960s, Gwinnett County's undeveloped farmland was able to duplicate the suburban atmosphere of 1950s DeKalb County. Desegregation of the school system in 1966 further encouraged white migration into Gwinnett County and away from integrated parts of DeKalb County.

Comprehensive plans created by the MPC specifically dictating industry and transportation planning were carried out in DeKalb County throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Land uses were placed according to MPC maps promising financial support through federal grants especially for interstate highway construction. Federal grants acted as subsidies for linear development along the planned interstates. Infrastructure such as exit ramps and utilities could be built along the interstate corridors to easily develop accessible undeveloped land.

The large-scale highway transportation infrastructure planned and developed during the 1950s and 1960s largely determined the location and quantity of DeKalb County's residential growth. Land located in a linear pattern along interstate highways was zoned industrial, commercial, or multifamily. Everywhere else, land was zoned single family or duplex with agricultural zoning on the outskirts of the county.

DeKalb County used the 1952 and 1954 MPC regional plans to guide land use planning until the late 1960s. Specifically, the nexus of Interstate 85, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Buford Highway, and Interstate 285 were zoned industrial with large areas of undeveloped land in linear pattern along the highways and emanating outward zoned as residential. A similar pattern was true of the area around Tucker, Scottdale, and the proposed linkages of Interstate 20 and Interstate 85 with Interstate 285. Commercial areas were planned linearly as strip malls along the proposed interstate routes especially at intersections with local collector roads such as North Druid Hills Road and Shallowford Road (Images 39 and 40). The DeKalb County amended zoning ordinance of 1970 coincided with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970. Concern over the impact of development on DeKalb County's environment along with compliance with NEPA for federal transportation funds pushed DeKalb to enact an amended countywide zoning ordinance. Competition with Gwinnett and other counties for a tax base and infrastructure balance made DeKalb County concerned about its future as the preferred place to live for the white, middle-class population. As its population grew and development became denser, DeKalb County became less desirable than Gwinnett County as a residential area for white middle-class homeowners interested in single-family detached neighborhoods. Inexpensive, undeveloped land in Gwinnett County was available with growing industry and connections to interstate highway I-85, which began to attract populations beyond the borders of DeKalb County.

Residential areas were built along the new highways using watershed style transportation planning. Watershed style transportation planning uses a system of branch, collector, and freeway type roads to funnel traffic from primarily residential areas to service and employment areas. Smaller roads trickle into larger roads in multiple tiers flowing traffic toward a destination. A key feature of watershed transportation planning and the mid-century development of DeKalb County was an increasing separation of housing and employment. Residents moved into new residential areas separated from services and employment by new highways. The car became necessary to travel around the new land use patterns.

Land use policy in the DeKalb County seat and largest city, Decatur, focused on converting residential areas close to the central historic courthouse to larger-scale commercial and office buildings. In an attempt to modernize the downtown area for more automobiles and greater commercial capacity, a downtown parking plan was enacted along with an attempt to create a downtown center of high-rise structures. Decatur was planned to become a major regional center to compete with central Atlanta in scale and modern design. Residents rejected many of the downtown redevelopment plans including demolition of the historic courthouse and attempts to build high-rise apartments. The downtown parking plan from 1953 resulted in demolition of historic downtown structures to create parking decks and lots, many of which were in the historic African-American neighborhood west of downtown.

DeKalb County's African-American population after World War II was very small and located in very specific areas, principally Decatur, Stone Mountain, Lithonia, Clarkston, and Scottdale. Decatur's African-American population lived just west and south of downtown Decatur off Trinity Avenue. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, parts of this neighborhood were demolished and replaced with public housing. During the 1950s, further efforts were made to commercialize downtown Decatur and move the African-American population to Scottdale. A county park, school, and recreation center was built in Scottdale in the early 1960s by DeKalb County to equally serve the African-American population living there. Decatur, wishing to utilize African American residential areas for high-rise commercial buildup in the downtown area, attempted to use federal urban renewal grants to relocate the African-American residents to Scottdale under county services. Decatur never completely realized the large-scale downtown commercial center that was planned, but the African-American neighborhood was mostly demolished for city parking with a small section converted to public housing. Like other higher density residential areas in DeKalb County, Decatur encouraged relocation of residents from older town centers to "greenfield" (newly built on a previously undeveloped site) neighborhoods for population dispersion across the region.

Land Use Timeline of DeKalb County 1940-1970

1940: Intersection of rail line, Buford Highway, and former World War I airfield selected as the site for the new Naval Air Station and hospital. A new water works, in the northern section of DeKalb County, is designed to spur industrial growth.

1942: DeKalb Chamber of Commerce supports the idea of county-wide land use planning and creates a DeKalb County Planning Commission composed of DeKalb Chamber of Commerce members.

1942-45: World War II industrial production spreads across DeKalb in the form of canned farm products, hospitals, airport, steel products, and road transportation linkages. As Atlanta becomes more regional, DeKalb becomes more competitive and attractive due to ample developable land. The DeKalb Planning Commission focuses on increasing industrial capacity of the county. Zoning is not adopted through an ordinance, but unincorporated DeKalb County is zoned business or residential. Industrial areas developed for World War II are expanded, and preexisting industrial sites are encouraged to expand; industrial areas are focused on proposed I-285, I-85, I-20, and railroad interchanges. The most concentrated area of industry at this time is the Seaboard Air Line Railway, I-85, Buford Highway, I-285, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridor in northwest DeKalb.

1947: Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) is formed with Atlanta, Fulton, and DeKalb Counties. DeKalb County's single commissioner, Scott Candler, has a seat representing DeKalb County on the MPC. The MPC receives federal funding to create planning for the region.

1952: Slum clearance program continued for African-American community in Decatur to plan downtown Decatur redevelopment. Code enforcement and zoning ordinance used to bring legal action against ‘slum’ dwellings. Decatur zoning ordinance amended to greatly expand commercial zoning in the downtown area. Competition from suburban areas is apparent to the City of Decatur and business owners. Citizen group pushes the concept of countywide zoning. Industrial and other development has become apparent to citizens familiar with DeKalb as an agricultural county. Citizen concern over land uses and uncontrolled growth is expressed. The Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta creates a City and Regional Planning masters degree program for education in new regional planning ideas. MPA releases *Up Ahead; a regional land use plan for metropolitan Atlanta*. The plan addresses DeKalb County and its potential for industrial development, residential areas, and proposed location for regional highway system. The Metropolitan Planning Commission creates a plan for a ten-mile radius from the center of Atlanta with a proposed interstate highway plan as the primary transportation system. Undeveloped areas in DeKalb County are selected for residential development inside an outer ring highway (proposed I-285 but unnamed) designed for industrial development. Firm border of plan is ring highway proposed I-285. Population change by Atlanta regional area is depicted. The darkest section representing the highest growth is in north DeKalb County (Image 41). The written section describes blight as a problem in the region and how to build new to avoid blight. The Atlanta Region in 1952 is depicted with imminent expansion along planned interstate highways (Image 42). Atlanta Regional Generalized Land Use depicts basic land uses and available vacant land (Image 43). This map dictated DeKalb County’s single-family detached residential development throughout the 1950s into the white regions. Proposal for Future Industrial Growth shows industrial transportation networks in the Atlanta region (Image 44). DeKalb in 1952 was scheduled for the heaviest regional industrial growth. Facsimile Map of Proposed Regional Land Use Plan accentuates the Atlanta region as connected like spokes in a wheel (Image 45). Decentralization would result in an orderly and efficient medium population density across the region connected by modern highways. DeKalb County was not designated to be built out with only single-family residential neighborhoods. A multiphase plan was put in place to modernize the whole region into a metropolis. Neighborhood designs were included in the 1952 regional plan to encourage modern, federally supported, designs (Image 46). Neighborhoods were designed to be self-sustaining units of industry, commercial, multifamily housing, single-family housing, and highway transportation linkages. The physical results of neighborhood plans separated land uses due to pressure from citizens. DeKalb County voters opposed multifamily housing or industry next to their single-family neighborhoods. Top Priority Industry Program proposed immediate industrial expansion areas in the Atlanta region with DeKalb County receiving the two largest (Image 47). Ideal neighborhood designs depicted would be built next to the industrial sites equalizing the region politically and demographically.

1953: A new parking master plan is adopted for downtown Decatur. Merchants need parking to alleviate on-street congestion and compete with suburban merchants with ample parking. DeKalb Planning Commissioners negotiate for connection to planned freeways to be built through the Atlanta region. The DeKalb Planning Commission, composed of DeKalb Chamber of Commerce members, want as much interstate access as possible for economic expansion.

1954: MPC publishes *Now, for tomorrow: a master planning program for the DeKalb-Fulton Metropolitan Area*. The regional plan specifically plans regional connections between the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County. The National Housing Act of 1954 supports urban renewal in Decatur and Atlanta in addition to encouraging new neighborhood development in greenfield areas (Image 39 DeKalb County section of *Now, for tomorrow* Facsimile Map of Trafficways Plan shows how industry, commercial, and residential development will follow proposed interstate and state highways into less developed areas. Work Areas represent industrial areas. Image 40 depicts Residential Program Districts in DeKalb County. Population in centers including Atlanta and Decatur were to be redistributed into undeveloped areas. Renewal areas represented ‘slum’ districts, which, though not directly referenced, were primarily in African-American neighborhoods. Large sections of Edgewood, Decatur, and Scottdale were to be renewed with modern public housing and industrial or commercial expansion).

1956: DeKalb County Planning Commission hires the planning firm of George W. Simons Jr. to conduct a planning survey of DeKalb County for a new county-wide zoning ordinance. The focus is on industrial capacity and expansion of land uses including multifamily housing. A concurrent study is being conducted by the same firm for Fulton County. A comprehensive land use plan and zoning ordinance passed August 1956 for DeKalb County. It corresponds with the regional plan in *Now, For Tomorrow* published in 1954.

1960: A major park development program is initiated by DeKalb County and based on previous MPC plans. Parks are ranked as Major Parks, Community Parks, and Special Parks. Major Parks are regional parks and Community Parks serve multiple neighborhoods with recreation facilities. Most parks are designed to be accessible from interstate highways under construction in DeKalb County (Image 48 DeKalb County Parks Plan adopted by the DeKalb Planning Commission in 1960. Image 49 - Rendering of proposed Shallowford Park complete with manmade lake off Shallowford Road in north central DeKalb County. The lake was never built, but represents the modern scope and great scale of anticipated development in DeKalb County in 1960).

1962: The MPC was expanded to include the City of Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton Counties. It had a new logo and created a new set of plans that expanded into the five counties. The five-county plan expanded on proposed and under construction interstate highways I-85 and I-20. Mass heavy rail transit was proposed which eventually became MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Agency). Industrial, commercial, and residential zoning expanded on previously zoned areas in DeKalb County. DeKalb County was less a focus for growth than in 1954. Greenfield areas in other counties had become cheaper and were accessible to the interstate system still under construction. The five-county plan is an indicator of how fast the region was growing outward. DeKalb County land use plan is amended over citizen concerns from overdevelopment of apartments and industry near their neighborhoods. An important feature of DeKalb County’s amended land use plan is a new zoning ordinance creating new zoning classifications to speed development of agricultural land at the periphery of DeKalb County. The new zoning ordinance and land use plan is completed for inclusion in MPC’s new Regional Development

Plan for 1962: *Land Use and Transportation for the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, DeKalb County, Gwinnett County, Cobb County, Clayton County* (see image 50 - Interstate highway financing dictates where interstates are built and subsequent industry and residential development, image 51 - Population is distributing along proposed and active interstate highways with single family residential development filling in greenfield areas between interstate highways, image 52 - vacant land availability in Atlanta region in 1961, Image 53 - In 1962 the MPC used this map to show the influence of interstate highways on development in the Atlanta region. Ranch house development is prominent in the green areas).

1968: Highway maps of DeKalb County are published by the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce that depict large industrial-zoned areas along under-construction and proposed interchanges of I-285, I-85, I-20, and rail lines.

1969: DeKalb County building permits drop for first time in twenty years. County zoning under pressure to allow variances for apartments under citizens' objections. Gwinnett County is mentioned as new, white, middle-class housing area. Citizens fear DeKalb County will become overdeveloped with rental housing and minority groups. Citizens claim overdevelopment is a problem.

1970: DeKalb passes amended county wide zoning ordinance and new land use plan. Zoning is more stratified, but basically expands on existing uses. Larger-scale greenfield development moves into Gwinnett County resulting in devaluation of DeKalb County single family neighborhoods. Apartment complexes comprise a much greater percentage of residential development (see Image 54 and Image 55 - 1950s and 1960s regional planning has resulted in decentralization of the historic cities of Atlanta and Decatur. White-collar office parks have located along the reaches of Interstates 85 and 75 just north of Atlanta and the northern arc of Interstate 285 connecting I-75 in Cobb County to I-85 in DeKalb County. Industrial centers are located primarily south of the City of Atlanta along I-85, I-75, and I-285 and northeast of the City of Atlanta along I-85 and I-285 stretching through northern DeKalb County and Gwinnett County). The MPC is renamed the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and includes the City of Atlanta, DeKalb County, Fulton County, Gwinnett County, Clayton County, Rockdale County, Cobb County, and Douglas County. DeKalb County has been regionally bypassed for new industrial and single-family residential growth (see Image 56 - the new ARC seven county region in 1974).

Conclusion

Residential single-family housing in DeKalb County followed new and proposed interstate highways into rural areas with expectations of modern suburban amenities to come. The Buford Highway corridor became an anchor for industry, transportation, commercial, and residential development in the late 1940s (*DeKalb New Era*, 1954). In a similar linear pattern throughout the 1950s and 1960s, development occurred along the new interstate highways of I-20, I-85, I-285 and the industrial boulevards encircling the county seat of Decatur and stretching into Gwinnett County to the east.

Demographic Profile

In 1940, the demography of DeKalb county residents began to foreshadow the coming boom period. DeKalb County was then largely rural, except for the portion of west DeKalb County that was the City of Atlanta and its immediate environs and small towns such as Decatur, Stone Mountain, and Lithonia. The federal census for DeKalb County in 1940 registered 86,942 inhabitants, making it the third most populous county in the state after Fulton and Chatham counties. About 16% of the population, a total of 13,963 people, was African-American. The other 84% of the residents were registered as white. No other races or ethnicities were enumerated in DeKalb County, although about 1% had been born in another country.

Census tracts are subdivisions within each county designated for census statistical reporting purposes. As the population grows, census tracts are further subdivided, becoming smaller and more numerous. Review of census returns for individual census tracts within DeKalb County allows for more detailed analysis of the demographic complexion of the county. African-Americans in the county were mostly concentrated in the Kirkwood and east Edgewood neighborhoods between College/DeKalb Avenue on the north, Memorial Drive on the south, 2nd Avenue on the east, and Whitefoord Avenue on the west, part of DeKalb County within the city limits of Atlanta, where they were between 71% and 90% of the population. Another cluster of African-Americans occurred in the area of Decatur known as “The Bottom,” which was included in the census tract that cut across the center of the city from Howard Avenue to the intersection of Scott Boulevard and Clairemont Avenue. This tract, which includes half of the central business district of Decatur, registered a percentage between 21% and 50%, the same concentration as a much larger census tract in southeastern DeKalb County (Image 57).

DeKalb began to experience increased in-migration by 1950. Almost 13% of the county's population had moved to DeKalb from a different county, state, or country in the previous year, while 73% of the population had not moved in the previous year. The remaining 14% were living in a different house within DeKalb County the previous year. By 1950, the total population was recorded as 136,395, an increase of nearly 57%. However, the percentage of increase of African-Americans was less than 3%, a net gain of about 400, for a total African-American population of 14,361, representing only about 10.5% of the total population. While the percentage of African-American concentration remained fairly constant in Decatur, it decreased in the east Kirkwood/east Edgewood area to between 50% and 70%. The southeast census tract of DeKalb County acquired so many white residents that African-American residents did not even show up as a percentage in the tally. Instead, an area immediately north of this tract, bounded on the south by what is now Interstate 20, and south of College Avenue, parts of southeast Decatur, Scottdale, and unincorporated areas eastward gained enough African-American residents to register but at less than 20% African-American (Image 58). In addition to increasing in numbers, DeKalb County residents in 1950 were more educated than those in 1940: its population with at least partial college education more than doubled, ranking second in the state behind its neighbor, Fulton County.

Between 1950 and 1960, the total population of DeKalb County increased by a whopping 88% to 256,782. The immigrant population increased to 4.6%, although the immigrants were still classified as “white.” Of note, 69.1% of DeKalb residents were living in their state of birth in 1960, the lowest percentage of any Georgia county not located along the border of another state. This indicates that DeKalb County had a higher rate of in-migration from other states and foreign countries than other counties not bordering another state, where cross-migration was prevalent. The African-American population of DeKalb County grew to 22,171, an increase of over 54%, but that still represented only 8.6% of the total population. While the African-American population percentage in “The Bottom” area of Decatur still lingered between 21% and 50%, the influx of whites into South Decatur eradicated any percentage of gain and caused the African-American population to drop off the charts there.

A similar change occurred in Kirkwood and east Edgewood, but the concentration of African-Americans south and west of their original enclave increased the percentage there to between 91% and 100%, especially in west Edgewood between Whitefoord and Moreland Avenues and south of Memorial Drive to Glenwood Avenue. This trend continued north along Moreland Avenue and north of DeKalb Avenue into Candler Park, which became nearly 20% African-American in the census tract south of Ponce de Leon Avenue and west of Oakdale Road. It should be remembered, however, that this census tract included the string of unoccupied parks along Ponce de Leon Avenue and the large lots and homes along Ponce de Leon Place, south of Ponce de Leon Avenue, so the increase in African-American population in this area was actually south of North Avenue. In addition, an area along the DeKalb and Fulton County lines in the Brookhaven area also began to approach 20% African-American residency, and another area north of Ponce de Leon Avenue east of Scottsdale became between 71% and 90% African-American (Image 59).

Due to the huge increase in the white population, the percentage of the population in DeKalb County that was African-American fell by nearly 50% between 1940 and 1960, even though the total number of African-American residents increased by an aggregated 63% (Image 60).

In 1970, “more Americans lived in suburbs than in cities,” and DeKalb County is a good illustration of that trend.³³ In the 1970 federal census, the total population of DeKalb County was 415,387, an increase of nearly 62% more than the decade before. The non-white population was 57,869, but whites and African-Americans were no longer alone in DeKalb County; residents from a number of other races and ethnic groups were enumerated in the census that year, so whites made up a total of 86% of the population, and the percentage of the total population represented by African-Americans and other ethnic groups was 14%. Of these numbers, the amount of increase of whites caused by in-migration from other counties, states, or countries was 42% over the previous year, but in-migration of African-Americans and other ethnic groups into DeKalb County was 125% more than in 1960. In 1970, all of the city of Atlanta south of DeKalb Avenue that was within the limits of DeKalb County was between 21% and 100% African-American. This trend continued eastward along Howard/College Avenue, where the population in south Decatur ranged between 21% and 90% African-American and held steady in “The Bottom” at between 21% and 50% African-

Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005), 274.

American. The percentage of African-Americans in the area along Ponce de Leon east of Scottdale increased to between 71% and 90% (Image 61).

Thus, in the twenty-five years between the end of World War II and 1970, the population of DeKalb County tripled.³⁴ Three primary causes of this rapid increase in the population were: the accelerated population increase after World War II known as the “Baby Boom” experienced by the nation as well as DeKalb County; “white flight” from cities such as Atlanta and Decatur to the suburbs as a result of the dismantling of the segregationist policies of the South and of government programs of “urban renewal” in these cities’ poorest neighborhoods; and increased employment opportunities in manufacturing and service industries that drew workers and their families from other states, often Northeastern and Midwestern states where workers were leaving the “Rust Belt” of aging factory towns for the “Sun Belt” of newer manufacturing areas such as DeKalb County.

The “Baby Boom”

DeKalb County experienced the same population pressures as the rest of the nation at the end of World War II. There was an increase in marriages at the beginning of the United States’ involvement in World War II and a subsequent increase in births during the early part of the war, but it was small compared to the population increase that came after the war. As soldiers and their support personnel (including women) came home to their waiting spouses and families, the nation experienced a significant increase in the birthrate that lasted through the mid-1960s, a phenomenon known as the “Baby Boom.” This created a greater demand for residential housing, which was in short supply at the end of the war due to the lack of materials and laborers and the ban on non-essential construction during the war.

A good indicator of the impact of the “Baby Boom” on the existing population was the pressing need experienced by school systems for additional classroom space. Between 1950 and 1970, national elementary school enrollment increased by an average of one million students every year. One estimate was that, to accommodate the influx of school-aged children, even small school systems across the nation needed to have one new classroom “ready for occupancy every third day just to keep up with fresh enrollments.”³⁵ DeKalb County was not immune from this phenomenon. For instance, between 1955 and 1966, the city of Decatur, with a total population of about 25,000, found it necessary to build three new elementary schools and two new high schools. The DeKalb County school system built about one hundred new schools between 1945 and 1970.

Due to laws prohibiting African-Americans from attending the same schools as whites, school systems in the South, including in DeKalb County, operated schools specifically for white students and schools specifically for African-American students. Separate educational facilities had been constructed in the South before 1896, when the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that separate facilities for the two races were constitutional

³⁴ University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, “Historical Census Browser.” University of Virginia Library, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus.html>, (accessed March 2, 2010).

³⁵ Amy F. Ogata, “Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 67, no. 4, (2008): 562.

if they were equal facilities (known as the “separate but equal” doctrine). R. O. Johnson commented that Georgia “did not adopt as its social policy the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ until 1949 [and] there is no evidence that Georgia ever made any effort to provide equality....”³⁶ Even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education* that the “separate but equal” doctrine was unconstitutional, Southern states, including Georgia, continued to build separate facilities but made a greater effort to make them appear equal to white facilities. The separate schools for African-American students are known today as Equalization Schools because of the notion that they were built to equalize the educational experiences of the two student populations.

In 1944, there were seventeen African-American schools operated by DeKalb County, and one operated by the Decatur school system. The seventeen African-American schools operated by DeKalb County served 1,500 students with 36 teachers. Twelve of the schools were not located in their own facilities; classes were conducted in lodge halls and churches. The Decatur school system’s single school for African-Americans did have its own facility, built in 1913. By 1949, the number of students in the DeKalb County schools for African-Americans had risen to 1,972, taught by 49 teachers, but the number of schools had not increased.

In 1949, the Georgia state legislature passed the Minimum Foundation Program for Education act, which “provided for a considerable increase in state appropriations for education.”³⁷ However, this act was not implemented until 1951, when Georgia passed its first sales tax of 3% for the express purpose of funding education in Georgia. The state also set up a State School Building Authority, a public corporation charged with selling bonds to construct urgently-needed school buildings. By 1956, the investment in school buildings in the state was double that of 1954, and six times the amount invested in 1946. Operating funds for schools in Georgia also tripled between 1946 and 1954, with the state providing 72% of the funds and the county and city governments providing 28%.

Until 1965, all the schools constructed were still segregated. Therefore, of the three elementary schools built in Decatur between 1954 and 1965, one was for African-Americans and two were for whites. Of the two new high schools, one was for African-Americans, but the other one, completed in 1965, became the first school in Decatur to be integrated.³⁸ The sales tax passed by the Georgia legislature funded the construction of the new schools in Decatur and the many others built in the suburban areas of DeKalb County after 1951. In fact, the minutes of the Decatur City Council for the early 1950s indicate that the Council wanted to lose no time in taking advantage of the new funds available from the state for school building construction. Fortunately, DeKalb County had a large supply of rural land available for development, so the demand for new housing and schools could be, and was, met through an enormous amount of suburban development beginning in the 1950s and continuing well past 1970.

³⁶ R.O. Johnson, “Desegregation of Public Education in Georgia – One Year Afterward,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 24 (1955): 228.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Decatur City Commission Meeting Summaries, on 4x6 cards on file at Decatur City Hall, Decatur, Georgia. Years 1940 – 1970 reviewed 2009.

“White Flight” and Urban Renewal

Racial segregation in DeKalb County was still a fact of life, as it was in the rest of the South. Some of this separation was by custom, but most of it was by law. For example, the Georgia State Constitution provided for the separation of the races in public schools. In 1896, this practice had been validated by the U.S. Supreme Court in its *Plessy v. Ferguson*, decision in which the Court opined that the provision of “separate but equal” railroad cars on intrastate trains in Louisiana was constitutional. Building on this decision, states across the South enacted “separate but equal” legislation that regulated race relations in all public facilities, including schools, parks, and public swimming pools. The facilities were always separate but rarely equal. In Georgia, only the “separate” part of the “separate but equal” doctrine was codified into law. For instance, of the seventeen African-American schools operated by DeKalb County in 1944, only one had running water, none had indoor toilets, no bus service was provided, and all school materials, including books, were handed down to the African-American schools when the white schools upgraded theirs. Teachers had to supply their own chalk for the chalkboards and fuel, either coal or wood, for the stoves that heated the African-American schools.

However, in 1950, DeKalb County, at least, added the “equal” part of the “separate but equal” doctrine to its educational system management strategy. It was the first county in Georgia to provide bus transportation for African-American students and to pass laws equalizing African-American teachers’ salaries with those of white teachers and providing funds for school custodians, fuel for the wood and coal stoves, and school supplies. As part of the continuing the effort to keep a segregated educational system, between 1951 and 1955, the county also consolidated the seventeen African-American schools it operated into six schools and constructed six new school buildings, using the latest paradigm in design and construction of educational facilities. The six schools were: Bruce Street School in Lithonia, Robert Shaw School in Scottdale, Victoria Simmons Elementary School in Stone Mountain, Hamilton High School in Avondale, Lynwood Park School and County Line School in rural DeKalb County. Narvie J. Harris commented on the effect of the new school amenities on the students:

Pupils were fascinated with flush toilets; they were often found flushing the water to see and hear this new thing. Cafeterias were in all buildings. Fluorescent lights, venetian blinds, tiled floors, teachers’ lounge and principal’s office were in all schools. It was truly a new day.³⁹

Laws restricting access of African-Americans to common civic amenities were also passed. For instance, one Georgia law rescinded tax exempt status “for private schools that did not abide by the state’s policy of segregation.”⁴⁰ While this did not make it specifically illegal to admit such students, it made admissions economically problematic for the institution. Another law revoked state financial support for any school that accepted students of both

³⁹ Narvie J. Harris and Dee Taylor, *African-American Education in DeKalb County, From the Collection of Narvie J. Harris* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 78.

⁴⁰ Johnson, p. 238.

racess, and a law passed in 1955 made it “a felony for any school official to spend tax money for public schools [even local tax money] in which the races [were] mixed.”⁴¹

After World War II, population pressures affected the African-American community in DeKalb County as well as the white community. African-American families looking for housing began to press the borders of their segregated neighborhoods outward into surrounding white neighborhoods. White homeowners reacted by moving away. In large numbers, they sold their urban homes to African-Americans and moved into the surrounding suburbs of north and east DeKalb or to white enclave towns like Stone Mountain. Entire city blocks changed in a matter of months, or even weeks, from majority-white to majority-African American, a phenomenon known as “white flight.”

The Kirkwood neighborhood in southeast Atlanta, part of which is inside the boundary of DeKalb County, is a good case study for the demographic restructuring that occurred in DeKalb County after World War II. Kevin M. Kruse, in his book, *White Flight*, profiled the Kirkwood neighborhood (and, by association, the Edgewood neighborhood). According to Kruse, “surveys from 1957 showed that more than three-fourths of the [the residents of Kirkwood] had lived on the same block for more than five years, [and] many had been there much longer, some since the 1910s”⁴² Additionally, the white, working-class residents of Kirkwood often worked for the same firms close to the neighborhood, such as the Fulton Bag Mill and the Atlanta Joint Terminal for the railroads.

To the northwest, around the connection of the Central of Georgia Railroad with the A. & W. P. Railroad, and to the northeast, between the rail lines of the Central and Boulevard Drive, lay separate settlements of African-Americans. In 1954, African-Americans began looking at homes in the eastern half of Kirkwood, west of Moreland Avenue in Fulton County, an area known as Moreland Heights, raising alarm among the residents of Kirkwood. Despite exhortations by local ministers and civic leaders to “keep Moreland Heights white,” sales to African-Americans by the largely-older population of Moreland Heights (or their heirs) had begun by 1957, and, by 1960, three-fourths of the homes were occupied by African-Americans. Charges of “selling out” flew, but sellers countered that they had been unable to sell their houses to whites due to the fear of African-American “infiltration” and so had made the best deal they could.⁴³

The racial transformation of Moreland Heights increased the alarm, the rhetoric, and the potential for violence in working-class Kirkwood. These blue-collar workers saw their homes as their only investment of worth and viewed racial transition as a threat to property values. Consequently, they took action when they felt this investment was threatened. When an African-American family bought a house on Woodbine Avenue, arsonists set fire to it before the family could move in, and a sign was erected in the yard next door that read simply “WHITE AREA.”⁴⁴ When an African-American mother and her daughter actually

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 239-240.

⁴² Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight – Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 87.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 89.

moved into a home on Woodbine Avenue a few weeks later, they found the street, as well as the entire neighborhood plastered with huge signs stating, “This is a White Area.” Shortly after the moving van arrived, white people began to gather on the sidewalk in front of the house, and, after sunset, a caravan of cars cruised onto the street, swelling the crowd in front of the house to several hundred people. “Mostly young married couples and teenagers, they shouted insults for hours at the blacks inside. Only after someone shattered the kitchen window with a rock did the police finally order the crowd to disperse.”⁴⁵

Confronted with the fact of African-American home ownership in formerly all-white neighborhoods, the reaction of the neighborhood residents depended in large part on proximity to the transitional area. Those closest to the front lines of African-American expansion opted to flee; those farther away wanted to fight. Sellers accused the hold-outs of preventing them from realizing the highest possible returns on their sale through intimidation of potential house buyers. Those hoping to prevent African-Americans from moving into their neighborhood accused the sellers of betraying the community and “undermining their collective security.”⁴⁶ Out of all this, only one thing was certain: neither wished to live next to, or even on the same block as, an African-American family. To that end, residents of Kirkwood, turned to Eastern Atlanta, Inc., “a corporation formed to [purchase] homes and keep ‘undesirable neighbors’ out of the area.”⁴⁷ Despite this effort and a concerted campaign by a coalition of local pastors, the pressures behind African-American expansion were too strong to resist. By late 1964, the area was already becoming almost completely an African-American community. While the purchase program may have delayed the transition, it could not stop it.

“White Flight” accelerated after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that the provision of “separate but equal” school facilities was unconstitutional, largely based on the fact that the separate facilities were not equal. Southern governments, including DeKalb County, first responded to this ruling by accelerating construction of separate facilities that might actually be considered equal, but this attempt was unsuccessful from the perspective of the federal government. In 1966, Congress threatened to withhold funding from any school system that did not desegregate immediately. Over a weekend in 1966, schools across DeKalb County became at least ostensibly desegregated, and “For Sale” signs went up all over the county in neighborhoods served by schools that were to become racially mixed. At that time, students generally attended the schools nearest their homes, so white parents sold their homes in neighborhoods abutting African-American neighborhoods that, thus, would share schools, and moved to neighborhoods that consisted only of white homeowners, thereby assuring their children of an education in a whites-only school.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling accelerated the out-migration of white homeowners from Atlanta, Decatur, and parts of unincorporated DeKalb County close to the city of Atlanta border into the suburban developments of DeKalb County, as well as into other counties surrounding Atlanta. However, it should be noted that the increased white population of DeKalb County should not be attributed solely to “white flight.” During the

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 90.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 91.

1960s, although “some 60,000 white residents fled [Atlanta]...the counties encircling it added 360,000 newcomers in all [and] census data demonstrates that half of those new arrivals...came from outside metropolitan Atlanta.”⁴⁸ This indicates that the majority of new population in DeKalb County came from outside the metropolitan Atlanta area, not predominantly from whites fleeing the city.

Government programs of urban renewal (often called “Negro removal” in the affected African-American communities) also contributed to white migration out of the cities, despite the stated aim of improving housing and living conditions in the poorest neighborhoods of the cities. Urban renewal mostly displaced African-American families, forcing them to relocate and seldom accommodating their return. This was an additional push sending middle-class African-American homeowners into surrounding white neighborhoods looking for suitable housing. The resulting expansion of existing African-American neighborhoods, or the creation of new ones, sent white homeowners in the vicinity straight to the realtor’s office in search of homes in the suburbs.

As white residents moved eastward into DeKalb County, they sometimes overtook small, rural, African-American communities, which struggled to retain their community cohesion. Two such communities were Oak Grove and Mt. Zion located along LaVista Road. Oak Grove was a rural, African-American farming community that evolved into a residential neighborhood as the majority of working men gave up farming to work at automobile plants to the north. Many of these families owned their own homes. During the 1960s and 1970s, when factory work provided upward mobility, these owners sold their homes to move into better housing elsewhere. Through such sales, tracts were eventually combined into one large tract on which the Oak Ridge Condominiums were built. In 2000, all that remained of the original African-American community of Oak Grove were about twenty residential homes and the Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, which is shared with the Mount Zion Community.

The Mount Zion Community, settled soon after the Civil War, is a small African-American enclave located on the northeast side of LaVista Road. The Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, established in 1870, has been a remarkable agent of cohesion in a neighborhood struggling to survive in the years following emancipation. The congregations of Mount Zion A.M.E. and Zion and Saint Paul Baptist Church have served as a bonding place for members of the community, and the congregations has helped to protect and preserve the rich heritage of the Mount Zion Community.

The Mount Zion community exemplifies a phenomenon that occurred in many parts of the county, in which agricultural land owned by several families was gradually sold off, and small subdivisions were developed (Image 62). The name of several streets in the community originated with William Nelms, who owned a sizable farm off Lavista Road in DeKalb County in the 1920s. In the community’s formative years during the nineteenth century, the Nelms family provided charismatic and important leaders in the area, and continued to do so into the twenty-first century. Edgar Rowe, who owned a substantial amount of land in the area in the late 1800s, was also influential in the community’s history.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 245.

In these early years, the Mount Zion Community was a rural, farming community that raised chickens, livestock, geese, and crops.

The community changed dramatically during the twentieth century, with family property changing hands and burgeoning suburban development occurring. In the mid 1940s and 1950s, much of the African-American population moved away in hopes of making a better living elsewhere; another wave of residents left in the 1980s and 1990s. As one group left, another arrived, and the consequent rapid development brought permanent changes to the close-knit community. Those who left often sold their land to developers, who then built small subdivisions and condominiums. Yet, as condos and cul-de-sacs became permanent characteristics of the area, those who remained in the community tried to keep their land out of the hands of developers in order to retain their cultural heritage.

Although there are several historic structures still standing in the Mount Zion Community, a majority have not survived. Wallace Nelms, one of ten children, was taught how to farm as a youth in the 1930s. In the milieu in which Nelms grew up, nearly everyone in the area, African-American or white, was striving to maintain a successful family farm. However, Nelms explains the lack of surviving historic structures: “Back then, people were just one generation out of slavery. They couldn't build houses with any permanence. They had to take what little pieces of wood they could... and the elements just destroyed it. And so, as soon as somebody else came along, they wanted to tear that old place down and build something better for their children”⁴⁹ (Image 63).

In other areas of DeKalb County, small African-American communities vanished in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of being deliberately zoned for commercial uses by the county and converted into shopping centers by developers.⁵⁰ For instance, the Mt. Moriah community once existed in the vicinity of the intersection of Druid Hills Road and Briarcliff Road that is now the location of Loehmann's shopping center, several office parks, and other retail establishments. In addition to residences, the original community contained one of the seventeen African-American schools in the county, the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, and several small businesses. Research has not been located to determine what became of the residents of such communities, but the residents that replaced them were, until well beyond the 1970s, white.

Employment Patterns

Despite its proximity to the growing urban area of Atlanta, in 1940 the county still boasted the remnants of a thriving agrarian culture with a total farm population of 11,315, a larger percentage of the population than the two larger counties in the state. The DeKalb residents who worked on farms represented almost 6% of the employed population, also a much higher percentage than its contemporary counties. Very few of DeKalb's population contributed to the manufacturing industry; DeKalb ranked eighteenth in the number of manufacturing establishments statewide in 1940. Only 4.5% of the county's employed males were in

⁴⁹ Wallace Nelms, Interview by Rebecca Crawford, June 2009.

⁵⁰ Larry Keating, *Atlanta – Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (Philadelphia: University Press, 2001), 50.

manufacturing jobs. Instead, people in the county engaged in other employment pursuits. The largest percentage of the employed male residents, 24%, worked in the clerical or sales force, with almost 40% of the female workforce employed similarly. Of note, 28.5% of DeKalb's female population was employed, second only to Fulton County with 34%. Only 8% of the working population was considered professional workers, only 2% higher than those who worked on farms.

Between 1940 and 1950, the employed population in the county increased from just over 32,000 workers to over 53,000 workers, an increase of 62%. The total number of farms in the county decreased from 1,841 in 1940 to 1,125 in 1950. Accordingly, the percentage of employed residents working on farms dropped to 1.5%, and the value of crops harvested decreased by 71%. With the decline of agriculture, DeKalb's white residents found work in other fields, the most predominant being sales, clerical, government, and professional trades, while the majority of the African-American population migrated to factory work and other unskilled labor. The Scottdale Cotton Mill employed mostly male African-American workers, which accounts for the high concentration of African-Americans in that area throughout the study period. The Charlie Davidson quarry near Lithonia also provided non-agricultural employment for African-Americans living in Lithonia and Redan. With the establishment of the General Motors Plant near Doraville in 1947, manufacturing was on the rise. Frito-Lay, Eastman Kodak, and General Electric all established offices and manufacturing plants in Chamblee, and Kraft Foods built a plant near Decatur, contributing to the increase in migration to DeKalb County from outside the state, especially from Northeastern and Midwestern states.

Conclusion

The twenty-five years between 1945 and 1970 encompassed a significant growth period for DeKalb County development. The increase was facilitated by the amount of land available and a series of forward-thinking government decisions. Development was across all economic sectors: residential, commercial, manufacturing, educational, transportation, and military. It was further fueled by the increase in population experienced by the United States as a whole after World War II and the migration of new residents leaving the aging manufacturing centers of the “Rust Belt” of the Northeast for the new “Sun Belt” of the South.

IV. Suburban Residential Developments in DeKalb County after World War II

Subdivision Design

The terminology of residential development is important to understand. The word *subdivision* refers to a tract of land divided into lots. A plat, recorded at the county courthouse, is used to define the boundaries of the tract and lot. The plat also assigns a name to the subdivision. *Development* is associated with subdivisions but is not as clearly defined. As a noun, development can refer to a residential subdivision or a commercial node. As a verb, it refers to the process of improving raw land for a new use. *Neighborhood* is often used as a synonym for subdivision, but is often not the same. Neighborhood names and identification come from the people who live in an area. A neighborhood may include one large subdivision, or encompass many smaller subdivisions. They may also be a smaller part of a larger subdivision. Neighborhoods are self-defined and the boundaries can change over time. Developers often seek to achieve the “neighborhood” label for an area by arranging streets and amenities to maximize cohesive community interaction.

Residential development patterns in DeKalb County following World War II flowed from pre-war land ownership patterns. Farms in the county averaged about fifty acres each, the lowest average acreage in Georgia. The creation of a subdivision began with the purchase of one of these individual tracts of land, and, in DeKalb County during this period, developers rarely combined multiple tracts into one larger tract. Based on tax assessor data, there are almost 1,300 subdivisions in the county of five or more lots where more than seventy percent of the houses were built from 1945 to 1970. Fifty of those subdivisions are greater than 220 houses, and none exceeded 900 houses in total size. The vast majority of subdivisions were less than fifty houses each. Financing also played a role in subdivision size, with local banks unwilling or unable to fund large, speculative projects.

Before World War II, subdivisions were characterized by rectilinear arrangement. Streets formed a grid pattern. These types of subdivisions can be found within and on the periphery of the cities of Decatur and Atlanta in west-central DeKalb County (Image 64). East Lake is the most prominent subdivision of this type. Curvilinear subdivisions such as Parkwood began to appear in the 1920s and early 1930s. However, the Great Depression and World War II brought building to a halt. Following the war, building in these areas was renewed, and empty lots were filled in.

In addition to the enclosed subdivision, development also occurred along main roads leading in to towns. There are three forms of house arrangement in these areas. Houses were built individually, each on a large tract of land. These were typically associated with a small farm. In other areas, land owners sold off multiple individual lots along the corridor, resulting in a string of houses facing the right-of-way. In these areas, setbacks often vary substantially from house to house. Finally, houses were developed along corridors in what is called a linear subdivision. A linear subdivision is a series of lots platted together and all facing the

main road (Image 65). Setbacks are uniform. Lot sizes for most houses along corridors are large, allowing for septic systems. Development of significant numbers of houses on corridor roads in DeKalb County began in the 1920s and faded by the late 1950s as the curvilinear subdivision came to dominate the landscape. The best examples of corridor development in DeKalb County are found in the area around Tucker, on roads like Chamblee-Tucker Road, Lawrenceville Highway, LaVista Road, and Idlewood Road, all leading into the center of Tucker. These roads contain all three types of corridor construction.

The curvilinear arrangement became the dominant type of subdivision following World War II (Image 66). This can primarily be attributed to FHA design standards, which were followed in order to obtain government-backed loans. In DeKalb County, curvilinear subdivisions were moderately sized, with numbers of houses ranging from twenty to fifty in most areas. Immediately following World War II, curvilinear subdivision development occurred in three primary locations: Belvedere southeast of Decatur, North Decatur, and along the Buford Highway and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridors. Streets were laid out to maximize space utilization. Lot sizes followed the predominant patterns in an area, generally falling into zoning categories requiring 100-, 85-, or 75-foot frontage on the street. Areas subject to flooding or otherwise unusable were turned into buffer zones or small parks and recreation areas. According to former developer John Thibadeau, the county wanted every subdivision to have an entrance and an exit. Dead ends were minimized and only used on short streets. This was done for emergency planning. Curvilinear subdivisions are characterized by uniform house orientation, deep building line setbacks, and side yards. Street layout depended heavily on topography and geology. Underlying granite formations in DeKalb County frustrated some developers, and geological surveys were an important precursor to choosing a tract of land to develop.

A subtype of the curvilinear subdivision is the single-street subdivision (Image 66). Found throughout the county, single-street subdivisions were developed on small tracts of land. Generally they appear at the boundary between commercial and residential zones near major intersections. These are often the first residential development tied to a commercial node. Single-street subdivisions are also found between substantial curvilinear subdivisions. These locations appear to be the result of land owners choosing not to sell their land as the surrounding area was developed. When they eventually sold the small tract, there was limited remaining space and a single street was the result. The earliest single-street subdivisions ended at a dead end. Later, cul-de-sacs were added to the end of the street.

Architecture

After World War II, housing in DeKalb County included three relatively new types of houses: the Ranch house (Image 67), the American Small House (Image 68), and the Split-Level house (Image 69). The first two appeared in DeKalb County following World War II in relatively equal numbers, while the Split-Level was more rare. Other house types built in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s included the English cottage, the Georgian cottage, the gabled wing, and the pyramid cottage; these types had also been built in DeKalb County prior to World War II.

The American Small House was built approximately between 1935 and 1950. It is based on traditional precedents but lacks expensive traditional detailing. The form of the American Small House varies widely, but it typically has one or one-and-a-half stories (Image 70). The houses are compact, and often nearly square, and may have projections – rooms that extend from the main mass of the house (Image 71). Typical sizes range roughly from 900 to 1500 square feet. Many were built with a crawlspace or partial basement.

Exterior cladding materials for the American Small House in DeKalb County include wood (board and batten, vertical boards, shingles, or weatherboarding), asbestos shingles, concrete masonry units (often at the crawlspace), granite (Image 72), and brick. Granite construction often features a beaded (“grapevine”) mortar joint, while brick veneers are often finished with a raked or concave joint. Stone veneers and floor applications often have flush mortar joints.

The American Small House usually has a moderately-pitched roof, not shallow like the Ranch, nor steep like its traditional predecessors. The house type features very narrow eaves (Image 73), and usually has a gabled or multi-gabled roof, which provides space for an attic, accessed by staircase or ladder.

In DeKalb County, the Split-Level house (Image 74) was built primarily in the 1950s and 1960s. The typical Split-Level consists of three levels; two are stacked on one side, and the middle level is on the other side. The top and bottom levels are accessible via the middle level, which is located one half level between the others. This form made possible the separation of three separate types of living areas: “quiet living areas, noisy living and service areas, and sleeping areas.”⁵¹ The garage, utility areas, and television were typically located on the bottom floor, “quiet” living areas on the middle floor, and sleeping areas on the top floor.

The main doorway is usually on the middle level, and is usually located near the center of the façade. Forms and styles varied widely, although many Split-Levels derived low-pitched roofs and picture windows from the ranch style (Image 75). Finishes and cladding are similar to those of the American Small House and the Ranch house.

However, the Split-Level in DeKalb County deviates somewhat from this standard national description. A Split-Level house in the Parkwood neighborhood of the City of Decatur has two levels on each side, for a total of four levels (Image 76). A Split-Level house in the College Heights neighborhood of the City of Decatur has its two-level wing on the back, while it appears from the front to be a single-story Ranch house (Image 77).

The following four house types all appeared in DeKalb County prior to World War II; in fact, some had their heyday during the nineteenth century. However, these typologies also appear in DeKalb County’s post World War II neighborhoods, contemporary to the more ubiquitous Ranch, Split Level, and American Small Houses.

⁵¹ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2006), 478.

The English Cottage, built both before and after World War II, generally has a cross-gabled massing and a prominent front chimney and is modeled after English vernacular houses. In DeKalb County, these compact, single-story houses were often clad in brick or stone.

The Georgian Cottage, which also appears in post World War II neighborhoods, consists of a one-story, square floor plan with a central main entry and two rooms on either side. It has a simple hipped or gabled roof.

The Pyramid Cottage is a single-story four-square plan with a steep pyramidal roof.¹ The front door is located to one side.

The Gabled Wing Cottage is sometimes called the Gabled-Ell house. Its floor plan is T-shaped, with a recessed gabled wing and a transverse gable facing the street. The front door is located on the recessed wing.

The Players and the Process

Overview

The subdivision boom in DeKalb County between 1945 and 1970 relied on a variety of people and social factors operating in the United States during this time. The collective efforts of politicians, developers, builders, realty companies and lenders led to the dramatic transformation of the county. DeKalb became a magnet for young, white families and was marketed as an ideal place for them to raise children. As subdivisions began to cover the county, former agricultural land and dairy farms were transformed into suburbia. The landscape of DeKalb County after World War II was greatly affected by ambitious politicians and developers; with their collective efforts, the county changed forever.

Developers, Builders and Bankers

For developers, DeKalb County was the ideal place to launch new entrepreneurial efforts. The *Atlanta Journal* real estate section in the 1950s and 1960s makes it clear how widespread suburban development became. With so many people moving into the county, there were many opportunities for anyone interested in making money in the housing economy. The small size of tracts available through purchase of individual farms lowered the financial barrier to land development. This is apparent from the number of total subdivisions in the county, which reached nearly 1,300 between 1945 and 1970. Many different people and corporations became developers: individuals with land or access to a tract, corporations formed by individuals who knew the local markets, and multi-state corporations.

Subdivision development can generally be divided into three steps. First, a developer purchased the land, generally through a real estate broker. The developer hired an engineer to lay out the streets and lots, obtained permits from the county and federal agencies (VA and

FHA), graded the site, constructed streets, and installed utilities. Financing came from local banks in Atlanta and Decatur in the form of acquisition and development loans.

When the lots were ready for a house, the developer sold each lot to a builder, paying off the development financing and taking the profit. With a building loan, usually from a local source, the builder constructed homes in the subdivision. The relationship of developer to builder was generally close; they were often the same person or company. Developers wanted to ensure that the neighborhood reflected and maintained value over time. Builders were subject to numerous inspections, from both the county and either the VA or FHA.

In an interview on April 20, 2010, Charles F. Huff explained the process of obtaining financing for developers and builders. When Huff, a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology, returned to his job at First National Bank of Atlanta (hereinafter, First National) in 1958 after a two-year stint in the U.S. Army Air Force, it was primarily a “commercial bank” with no mortgage lending business. The bank did, however finance new housing developments, providing interim construction loans through mortgage companies such as Embry Mortgage and National Home Loans in DeKalb County. Essentially, First National “backed” these mortgage companies by financing their agreements with a builder on an interim basis. Embry Mortgage focused on the northern, “more upscale” part of DeKalb County, while National Home Loan typically catered to a lower-income market. A permanent financing arrangement called a “take-out” commitment was typically arranged through other lenders such as New York Life Insurance Company or savings and loan institutions to accommodate mortgage-financing for the home buyers. The interim financing allowed the builder to develop speculative housing in small subdivisions. First National inspected the homes during the construction process and advanced funds in increments until the project was completed and converted to permanent financing. In describing the housing industry during the period, Huff spoke of the City of Atlanta as “slow,” while the suburban communities of DeKalb County (and to a lesser extent Cobb County) were experiencing what he called a “builders market.” He noted that, by the late 1950s, DeKalb County was no longer a Decatur-centered farming community and that the “new perimeter highway” further propelled DeKalb’s growth.

The third step in the process was the sale of each house to a homeowner. While real estate brokers were involved in the development and building process, real estate agents played a central role in selling houses to individuals. Home buyers obtained FHA- and VA-backed loans from both local and national banks.

The difficulty of assigning special significance to specific developers and builders in DeKalb County arises from the sheer number involved. Also, individuals and their companies changed roles on a regular basis, even from project to project. For any particular subdivision, the developer and builder can generally be identified through the deed record. Real estate agents may be identified through newspaper and city directory advertisements; however, it is generally difficult to determine with which subdivisions they were associated.

Because subdivision development required bringing together numerous people, bureaucracies, and political forces, developers, builders, and real estate agents had to become

political in their operation. They came formed the DeKalb Development Association, the Home Builders' Association of Metropolitan Atlanta, and the DeKalb Board of Realtors, all designed to represent the interests of the players involved in the development of DeKalb County.

Architects and Designers

Although there are many homes in DeKalb County where architects were commissioned to execute the designs, the vast majority of residential housing constructed during this period came from plan books used by contractors and developers. As the popularity of the subdivision rose, the demand for housing increased dramatically, and plan books, which could be produced by a design company or an individual architect, were a logical and efficient way to allow the supply to meet the demand.

Plan Book Designers

Plan books were the most popular way for builders and prospective buyers to select a house plan during the years between 1945 and 1970, and had been popular well before the turn of the twentieth century. Thousands of plan books were published across the country, and many architects also designed for periodicals like *Better Homes and Gardens* and *American Home*. A local architect, Leila Ross Wilburn, and a local designer, W.D. Farmer, made successful careers publishing their original designs in plan books. Other local architects, such as Clement Ford, whose designs can be found throughout Georgia, though none are specifically identified in DeKalb County, also occasionally submitted plans to be published by others in collections such as *Five-Star Plan Houses*, published by *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Leila Ross Wilburn was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1885. Her family moved to Atlanta, where Wilburn attended Agnes Scott Institute (now called Agnes Scott College) from 1902 to 1904. Developing a strong interest in architecture, she had private tutors who taught her architectural drawing, and she apprenticed with B.R. Padgett and Son. As one of the only females working in the profession at this time, she boldly opened her own practice in 1909.

In 1914, Wilburn released her first plan book, called *Brick and Colonial Homes: A Collection of the Latest Designs, Featuring the Most Modern in Domestic Architecture*. Until her death, Wilburn produced successful plan books, and her female perspective added a welcome dimension to residential architecture in Georgia.

Builders and contractors throughout Georgia used Wilburn's design books, and her plans were featured nationally in publications such as *Ideal Homes of Today* and *Southern Homes*. Wilburn's designs became wildly popular; many of her designs were built throughout the Georgia, although the number of her house designs executed unknown. Architectural historian Robert Craig writes, "Wilburn-designed houses proliferated throughout neighborhoods and suburbs of Atlanta and elsewhere in Georgia, where there are more houses by Wilburn than by any other architect from any period."⁵²

⁵² "Leila Ross Wilburn", *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-567> (accessed March, 24 2010).

Some of Wilburn's homes built in DeKalb County are located in the MAK Historic District in Decatur, Candler Park, and Druid Hills. Although it is not known exactly when Wilburn's design book called *Ranch and Colonial Homes* was published, it is believed that a majority of her ranch designs were executed during the 1950s. (Image 78)

William D. Farmer was born on September 23, 1928, in Atlanta, Georgia, the youngest of eleven children. In 1948, after studying drafting and architecture through correspondence courses while serving in the U.S. Marines, Farmer returned to Atlanta and began working as a draftsman for the Home Builders Plan Service. In 1961, Farmer opened his own design business.

Farmer designed his houses from a sociological perspective; as families and technology evolved, Farmer adapted his home plans to the changing times. Farmer also marketed his homes. Having worked for the *Atlanta Journal* through high school, he kept in contact with his former co-workers at the paper and always sent them his latest floor plans, which they would often publish in the real estate section of the paper.

Farmer designed many homes in DeKalb County that are still in use. On Lavista Road, in north DeKalb County, for instance, five of Farmer's houses remain; their facades are almost completely unchanged.

Many of the architects listed in the following section who have designed residences, buildings, and public spaces in DeKalb County have been graduates of the Georgia Institute of Technology's architecture school. The theories and teachings of this university, informally known as Georgia Tech, can be seen in the buildings designed by their students. Following are summaries of the careers of selected architects who practiced in the Atlanta area and are known or purported to have designed residences in DeKalb County in the mid-twentieth century. Many of these architects embraced the Modern and Ranch House movements along with the builders and homeowners in DeKalb County, responding to the mid-twentieth century housing boom.

Beckett, William (1915- unknown) AIA 40. Georgia Chapter

William Beckett was a native of Georgia, born in Darlen, Georgia, in 1915. He graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1937 and went to work as an architectural draftsman for Burge and Stevens the same year. After 1960, he worked as an architect for Godwin and Beckett. Although his best-known works are in Atlanta and in Tennessee, he is reputed to have provided architectural designs for residences in Druid Hills. However, more research is necessary to determine which houses in Druid Hills were designed by Beckett.

Breen, William, Jr. (1926-) AIA 53. Georgia Chapter

William Breen, Jr. was born at Emory University in DeKalb County on June 4, 1926. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Architecture in 1949. After working for Stevens and Wilkinson in the early 1950s, Breen partnered with a fellow architect to form Breen and Johnson. In 1955, the architect established his own independent practice, William Breen Jr., Architect.

Breen had many works in DeKalb County including the Public Library in Lithonia, Georgia, which was constructed in 1955, and the Rehoboth Elementary School and Auxiliary Health Center, built in 1961.

Green, Robert Miller (1935-2003) AIA 69. North Georgia Chapter

Robert Green was born in Savannah, Georgia, on April 2, 1935. From 1955 to 1958, he studied architecture at Georgia Institute of Technology. Green was awarded the Frank Lloyd Wright Fellowship, which allowed him to study with the legendary architect at Taliesin West in Arizona from 1958 to 1959. Upon returning to Atlanta, Green worked for Roos & Jenkins from 1962 to 1963. From 1964 to 1965, he worked for Tommerlin & Associates, before opening his own private practice in 1965.

Robert Green is known for his residential architecture, in the Wrightian style, much of which was built in DeKalb County. He designed the “Arrowhead House,” Sagamore Hills subdivision, Atlanta, which takes its name from its distinct shape. In 1968, he designed the John Gould Residence, also located in Atlanta. In 1969, Green designed the Hank Schlachter Residence, John Gunter Residence, Dwight Howard Residence, and Dr. Herb Stone Residence. Several of these house designs can be found in the Amberwood subdivision in DeKalb. Like Wright, Green also designed custom furniture for his residential designs (Image 79).

Heery, George Thomas (1927-) AIA 52. North Georgia Chapter

George Heery was born in Athens, Georgia, in 1927 and received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1951. He promptly opened a private practice, Heery and Heery. Although he went on to designs large office buildings, sports complexes, and institutional buildings in Atlanta and other cities, in 1955, he designed residences such as those for Embry Hills in DeKalb County.

Mastin, Ernest (ca. 1921-) AIA 56. Georgia Chapter

Ernest Mastin was born in Alabama and attended Georgia Institute of Technology where he obtained a Bachelor of Architecture degree. Upon graduation, he began working for Atlanta architect David Cutton in 1950. In 1953, he partnered with one of his Georgia Tech classmates, John Summers, to form Mastin and Summers Architects.

Mastin became known for his residential architecture and his work with developer Walter Tally on subdivisions such as Northwoods, Northcrest, and Sexton Woods. Later in his career, he began designing large hotels, such as the Hilton. Mastin still maintains his practice today, designing private airports. (Image 80 and Image 81)

Norris, Henry Dole (1913-1992) AIA 46. North Georgia Chapter

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1913, Henry Norris attended the University of Miami before setting up his practice in the Atlanta area in the 1950s. Several residences in DeKalb County were designed by Norris, notably on Circlewood Road, Woodrow Way, and Fisher Trail. In 1957, he received an Award of Merit for Housing from *House and Home* magazine, and, in 1959, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) granted him a special award for his design of “homes for better living.” In 1961, he authored a book, *Architecture for*

Contemporary Living, and, in 1965, he was given a Design Leadership Award for Housing by *Practical Builder* magazine. In 1966, he again received an Award of Merit for his work for Antoine Graves Homes, and, in 1967, Wood Marketing gave him a Citation for Excellence for a house design. He was a member of the Home Builders Association – Metropolitan Atlanta, serving as its director in 1968. (Image 82 and Image 83)

Peabody, S. Walton

S. Walton Peabody graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Architecture in 1936 and went on to design FHA houses. He eventually partnered with contractor Malvin Rauschenberg, designing several houses on Artwood Road. The property on Artwood was developed as part of a partnership with the Fernbank Foundation, and served as a way to protect the forestland owned by Fernbank while still making a profit. More of Peabody's work is found on the 600 block of Clairemont Avenue in Decatur and he was the architect for several local churches and Turner Funeral Home, also located in Decatur.

Robert, L.M.

The architectural firm, Robert and Company, was founded in 1917 by L.M. Robert after graduating from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a degree in Civil and Experimental Engineering. In 1933, he served as the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in charge of Public Works under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Although much of his work consisted of institutional and industrial buildings such as the 1967 Atlanta Civic Center and the 1987 Chamblee MARTA Station, Robert and Company employed architects who were involved in suburban development in DeKalb County between 1945 and 1970. See, for instance, Andre Steiner, below. (Image 84)

Steiner, Andre (1908-2008)

Born in 1908 in Slovakia, Andre Steiner attended the Bauhaus School in Weimar, Germany. Upon graduation, Steiner returned to Slovakia, where he began working for the government as a resort planner.

In 1941, Steiner was arrested when the Nazis seized control of Slovakia, but he was released upon the condition that he serve as an architect, designing work camps. Steiner felt that if he and his fellow Jews cooperated, they would be kept in the work camps, thus avoiding certain death or deportation. In the historiography of the Holocaust, Steiner and four comrades became known as the "Working Group," and by using a bribe scheme, were able to save more than 7,000 Jews from deportation.

After World War II, Steiner emigrated to the United States. Arriving in Atlanta in 1950, Steiner began working for Robert and Company, first as an architect, and then as the director of planning and urban development. In the early 1950s, Steiner designed approximately twenty residences in DeKalb County as a sideline business. Most of these houses are located in the Briarpark Court subdivision. Eventually, Robert and Company asked that he not design for anyone except their firm, and they gave him a promotion to ensure it. (Image 85 and Image 86)

Summer, John Henry (1921-2009) AIA 56 North Georgia Chapter

John Summer was born in Newberry, South Carolina, in 1921, and graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1949. Except for a period of partnership with Ernest Mastin as the firm of Mastin and Summer between 1953 and 1960, Summer generally operated his own private architectural practice. With Mastin, Summer is one of the architects of Northwoods, in Doraville, Georgia.

Stevens, Preston, Jr. (1896-1989) AIA 62. North Georgia Chapter

Born in Atlanta in 1930, Preston Stevens, Jr. graduated in 1953 from the Georgia Institute of Technology with Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Architecture degrees. After working for R. H. Hansen of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in 1956 and 1957, Stevens returned to the Atlanta area and opened the firm of Stevens and Wilkinson, Inc. in 1957. During the 1960s, Stevens designed several commercial properties in DeKalb County, including the 1963 Sears building and the 1968 Richway Store in Decatur, Georgia, and another Sears building in Tucker, Georgia. In 1969, he received the Ivan Allen award.

Prefabricated Homes

Instead of having an architect design a house or selecting a plan from a plan book, another popular method of obtaining a modern home after World War II was to purchase one prefabricated and have it erected on a home site of the buyer's choice. This seemed the best of both worlds: the design the buyer wanted in the location the buyer chose. Prefabricated homes were often sold as kits, with all the necessary systems of the home already installed except for the foundation. Sometimes, even the windows and doors were already installed in the walls. The kits were shipped to the site after the foundation was prepared, then the walls and roof were bolted together, cabinets and appliances installed, electrical and plumbing systems connected, and the house was nearly ready for occupancy. All it really needed was curtains. Several national firms sold prefabricated homes, such as Gunnison and National Homes, but Georgia was also home to a business that constructed prefabricated homes for shipment worldwide: Knox Homes.

Peter S. Knox founded the Knox Lumber Company in 1923, located in Thomson, Georgia. Knox expanded his business in the wake of World War II when he changed the name of his company to the Knox Corporation in 1946. Knox was one of the first entrepreneurs in Georgia to begin selling prefabricated houses, which his company produced in the factory in Thomson.

Knox houses could be sent to the construction site complete with fixtures. In Georgia and elsewhere in the southeast, many subdivisions are built entirely of Knox Homes. In the 1950s, the company developed "Knox Boxes," which were prefabricated home kits that were shipped both domestically and internationally. Knox Homes periodically published design catalogues. The catalogues included design ideas for the interiors in addition to the house plans. Investigation did not reveal any subdivisions composed entirely of Knox homes in DeKalb County, but identification of prefabricated houses is difficult, especially if they have been altered. More detailed investigation of individual homes in DeKalb County would likely reveal the presence of prefabricated homes, especially Knox homes since they were produced locally.

Neighborhood Amenities: Civic Associations and Garden Clubs

With a greater amount of leisure time, Americans were better able to pursue their hobbies and interests, including membership in civic associations and garden clubs. The FHA's "desirable standards" for suburban residential development encouraged the creation of community organizations by property owners. On October 30, 1947, *The DeKalb New Era* proclaimed, "Now is the time to make DeKalb County the nation's finest."⁵³ The newspaper campaigned for progress in DeKalb County by publishing a series of public service ads featuring a civic organization's ideas for improving the county.

Many garden clubs in DeKalb County met at the same location: the Decatur Federal Savings and Loan Association Building. Memberships to the clubs were mostly women. As metropolitan Atlanta grew, so did the number of garden clubs. Members who moved from Atlanta to the suburbs brought with them a wealth of gardening knowledge, transferring the goals and ideals of older, urban clubs to the new, suburban ones.

Neighborhood and Civic Associations

This section explores some of DeKalb County's neighborhood associations such as the Doraville Civic Club and the Glen Haven Civic Club.

Doraville Civic Club

Founded in 1934, the Doraville Civic Club was created "for the purpose of making a good community better."⁵⁴ During World War II, the club planted Victory Gardens, spearheaded scrap drives, and promoted Civilian Defense organizations. According to Coni Binkley of Doraville, the club hosted dances and cookouts at the Doraville Recreation Center during the 1950s and 1960s. They also sponsored several garden clubs in Doraville. The club disbanded in the late 1970s.⁵⁵

Glen Haven Civic Club

Originally named the Glen Haven Community Association, the Glen Haven Civic Club began on September 1, 1936. Through attending public hearings, the group was active in community affairs such as road maintenance, billboard usage, water line extensions, and land rezoning. In 1941, the group also became involved in beautifying highways and neighborhoods. A welcoming committee was created to contact new people in the community and invite them to meetings. In 1945, the group formed the Glen Haven Garden Club. In early 1949, the Glen Haven Civic Club helped raise funds for a county park in Glen Haven. In late 1950, the organization received house numbers from the county surveyor for numbering the residences in Glen Haven. The numbers seemed wrong, so the Glen Haven Civic Club formed a committee to develop a numbering plan and submit it to the county. Glen Haven Civic Club is representative of the many activities in which members were involved and the types of issues in which they took an interest.

⁵³ Walter Reiman, "Opinion of DeKalb Neighbors," *The DeKalb New Era*, October 30, 1947, 2.

⁵⁴ "Doraville Civic Club," *The DeKalb New Era*, February 20, 1943, 3.

⁵⁵ Connie Binkley, Telephone interview by Luis A. Rodriguez, Jr., Doraville, Georgia, April 16, 2010.

Garden Clubs

With the experience of growing Victory Gardens during World War II behind them, the people of DeKalb County formed garden clubs in their post-war communities. This section profiles selected garden clubs in DeKalb County.

DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs Inc.

The DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs Inc. (DCFGC) held its first meeting on June 29, 1948. Its primary goal was to support the “Dress-Up Dynamic DeKalb Program” which sought to “beautify, restore, and preserve” the historic DeKalb County Court House. The Federation was also instrumental in having legislation passed limiting billboards on interstate highways. With the collaboration of the Advertising Club of Atlanta and the Outdoor Advertising Association of Georgia, the Federation formulated guidelines for outdoor signs in 1966. In 1967, the DCFGC held another “Dress-Up DeKalb” contest to increase public awareness of community appearance, to encourage efforts to improve the county’s “visual environment,” and to synchronize the beautification efforts of citizens, groups, businesses, and local governments. The club’s goal was to establish a “permanent county beautification program.”⁵⁶ In 1987, DCFGC initiated fund raising to restore the Callanwolde Conservatory, to serve as its headquarters.

The Briarcliff Woods Garden Club

The Briarcliff Woods Garden Club began in 1957 with seven members. Membership in the club reached a high of sixty-five members. Eventually, the Briarcliff Woods Garden Club divided into three smaller clubs: The Azalea, The Camelia, and The Gardenia. These smaller groups allowed members to meet at each other’s homes. The club started the Garden Therapy Program at DeKalb General Hospital. Each club member volunteered four or more hours each month helping the elderly learn about horticulture. In 1987, the club won the Gladys Manning Garden Therapy Award. The award distinguished the Briarcliff Woods Garden Club as the best garden club in DeKalb County. In 2003, the club was disbanded, and funds from its treasury were donated to the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club of Georgia.

The Men’s Garden Club

Organized on February 23, 1953, the Men’s Garden Club held monthly meetings at the Decatur-DeKalb Library. It was sponsored by the Men’s Garden Club of Atlanta, the largest men’s garden club in the nation. The idea for this club was the brainchild of Conrad Faust, former president of the Men’s Garden Club of Atlanta. It was felt that a club outside Atlanta would be more convenient than the Men’s Garden Club of Atlanta, which met downtown.

The Morning Glories Garden Club

Created in 1970, the Morning Glories Garden Club serves the Smoke Rise community. It was founded by former members of older garden clubs. The goals of the club include beautification, which involved trash pickup along Hugh Howell Road. The establishment of a bluebird trail at the Smoke Rise Golf Course and the sponsorship of a local Girl Scout chapter are some of the accomplishments of the garden club. The group was also involved in

⁵⁶ Briarcliff Woods Garden Club, Subject Files, DeKalb History Center., Archives. DeKalb History Center, Decatur, Georgia.

dedicating Hugh Howell Road as a Blue Star Highway and has helped form a new garden club, The Mountain Mums. Today, the Morning Glories is still active and represents a diverse cross-section of the community which includes teachers, realtors, grandmothers, and retirees.

House Type of Choice: “The Ranch”

Statewide Trends

After World War II, developments were created all over the country. Georgia was no exception. Over a span of twenty years, from 1940-1960, the state’s population increased by more than 800,000 residents, the largest population increase the state would experience in the twentieth century. DeKalb County had one of the largest concentrations of these post-World War II neighborhoods in the State of Georgia. Nearly than 1,300 suburban developments were created in DeKalb County alone.

While suburban developments and architectural styles were essentially the same across the country after World War II, different regions modified the new architecture to meet regional needs and cultural influences. DeKalb County’s developments were influenced by the hearty economic climate after World War II, the warm southern weather, and family-centered lifestyles.

Massing, Construction, Design Details, and Interior Organization

The Ranch house was embraced in DeKalb County, and its form offered many advantages in the area’s climate and topography. Architects and builders adapted the style to specific cultural preferences and a range of budgets and took advantage of locally abundant materials such as granite and red brick. The ranch house proved wonderfully adaptable.

Massing

The Ranch house is a long, one-story building, usually rectangular, which may or may not have projections (rooms or wings that protrude from the main mass of the house). The style derives loosely from homesteads in the western United States in the era following Spanish colonization, with Craftsman-, Prairie-, and International-style influences. Development of the “rambling” Ranch house and other types of large Ranch houses was facilitated by very large residential lots made possible by available open land on the outskirts of cities and widespread automobile use. Ranch house design utilized an innovative linkage to the site, using porches and windows to exploit outdoor scenery as a feature of the house (Image 87)

Construction

Ranch house construction is usually wood frame with wood cladding or applied veneers of brick or stone. Ranch houses were built quickly and economically of dimensional lumber and easily-available finish materials, resulting in stylistic tendencies of the Ranch house that vary by region.

Ranch houses feature slab-on-grade construction or full or partial basements. They typically do not have attics, and may feature vaulted ceilings, with no space at all between the ceiling and the roof, in living areas.

Roof types vary widely among DeKalb's Ranch houses, but they are always low-pitched and feature moderate to wide eaves. A typical Ranch roof pitch ranges from around 25° (a 5.6-over-12 slope, in builder's terminology) to around 32° (a 7.5-over-12 slope). A simply-massed Ranch house may feature a hipped roof (Image 88) or a single-gabled roof, usually oriented so that the gables are at the narrow ends of the house (Image 89). Occasionally, gables are oriented transversely, on the long side of the house, resulting in a very low-pitched, broad gable, usually facing the front (Image 90). Rooflines with these front gables or hips allowed for ample front porches, perhaps a nod to the ideal of Southern hospitality. More complex shapes required an amalgam of roof forms, with complex massing formed of multiple gables and hips (Image 91 and Image 92). Contemporary or architect-designed Ranch houses may feature flat roofs (Image 93), shed roofs, or butterfly roofs, which resemble inverted gables (Image 94). "Flat" roofs generally have a slope of at least ¼" per foot. Asian- or Polynesian-inspired Ranch houses may boast hipped roofs with vent details at the ends of ridges (Image 95).

Design details

Exterior cladding materials for the Ranch house in DeKalb County include wood (board and batten, vertical boards, shingles, or weatherboarding), concrete masonry units (CMU), stone (coursed ashlar, rubble, or granite), man-made stone, and brick (red, tan, or multi-colored; standard or extra-long "Roman" sizes). Granite construction (Image 96 and Image 97) often features a beaded ("grapevine") mortar joint, while brick veneers are often finished with a raked or concave joint. Stone veneers and floor applications often have flush mortar joints.

Many Ranch houses have decorative exterior features of contrasting stone. Accent treatments of a contrasting material were often employed at the house's main entrance or picture window or both (Image 98 and Image 99). This accent treatment may be granite, tan-colored sandstone, man-made PermaStone, or faux stone made of concrete with a pressed pattern. These same materials may be utilized in walkways, patios, and entry stoops.

Designers of the Ranch house elevated common house elements like chimneys and windows to the status of design centerpieces. Massive chimneys may project from a front façade or low-profile roof. Windows were grouped in the living room to become large "picture windows" (Image 100), and they were often accented with concrete sills or inlaid sandstone.

Privacy screens made of brick, concrete, or dimensional lumber appear in ranch houses of the contemporary, rustic, and plain styles; these most often screen the home's entrance or the carport (Image 101).

Interior Organization

In the typical Ranch house, private spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms are usually clustered at one end, while the kitchen, living room, and dining room are clustered at the other. These more public spaces are often open and connected. On many Ranch houses, a carport is attached at the "public" side of the house; this usually has direct access to the kitchen.

Georgians, perhaps not prepared to fully embrace the modern California lifestyle of the Ranch house, typically built houses with zoned, but not fully open, floor plans. Living rooms, kitchens, dining rooms, and sometimes porches and patios, were connected and left fairly open, while bathrooms and bedrooms, conventionally closed off, were located at the other end of the house.

Subtypes and Styles

In DeKalb County, Colonial-Revival-style Ranch houses often featured white columns, shutters, and even broken pediments, to suit the region's preference for traditional and classical architecture (Image 102). Other styles of the Ranch house include contemporary (Image 103), which often featured butterfly roofs and flat roofs and utilized clean lines; Wright-influenced, which featured flat roofs, clean lines, and clerestory windows of Usonian houses (Image 104) and the Prairie style; Eichleresque, with contemporary details and broad front gables; rustic (or "western") which often featured rubble and timber finishes and exposed rafter tails; and plain (no style), which, in DeKalb County is often manifested as the red brick Ranch at its most basic. Many "plain" Ranch houses feature decorative wrought-iron columns supporting the roof over the porch, made to resemble creeping vines (image Image 96).

A variety of subtypes of the Ranch house were built in DeKalb County. These include the compact Ranch house, which is often nearly square (Image 105); the linear Ranch house, with a length-to-depth ratio approaching 2 (Image 106); the linear-with-clusters Ranch (Image 107); the courtyard Ranch house, whose courtyard may be located on the front or the back of the house (Image 108); the half courtyard, or L-shaped, type (Image 109); the bungalow Ranch, with a square or nearly square floor plan (Image 110); the rambling Ranch, which several distinct clusters or directional changes (Image 111); and the alphabet Ranch, a catch-all category for ranches that do not fit the other designations, of which there are many (Image 112). These subtypes simply help us to concisely describe a variety of Ranch houses.

Adaptations to DeKalb County

The nationally popular Ranch was well-adapted to DeKalb County's climate, topography, and cultural attitudes. The house type, at its most generic, already had several advantages in Georgia heat. For instance, wide eaves provided ample shade in the summer and invited the lower-angled sunlight of the winter. A variety of window types, such as jalousie and awning, allowed for ventilation in houses that were often not air conditioned. "In the sultry part of the South," reads one plan book, "louvers trap reluctant breezes, air conditioning, insulation against the sun..."⁵⁷ Often, these windows were combined with a fixed window to create a large picture window in the living room. In DeKalb County, some Ranch houses feature screened porches, which are more adept than open patios at keeping out mosquitoes. Screened porches are found at the rear of the house, or as a breezeway between the house and carport (Image 113).

⁵⁷ Jean Graf and Don Graf, *Practical Houses for Contemporary Living* (USA: F. W. Dodge Corporation, 1953).

Taking full advantage of DeKalb's sloping topography, many Ranch houses are equipped with partial basements housing garages (Image 114). These basements were excavated only on one side of the house and serve as a substitute for the ubiquitous carport that is better suited to the flat topography of Macon and other Georgia locales below the fall line. In other cases, where the topography falls away toward the back of the lot from the street, the ranch may have a full, daylight basement, perhaps not visible from the street side but with windows and doors leading to the back yard.

Ranch houses in DeKalb County usually feature red brick and often granite, as both clay and granite are abundant in the region. However, the desire to build inexpensively sometimes had to be balanced against the homebuyer's preference for materials like brick. Houses such as those in the Northwoods subdivision of DeKalb County are clad in brick from the bottom of the slab to the window sill line, and brick is sometimes used only on the front elevation (Image 115). To terminate the half-wall of brick veneer at the front, the veneer sometimes continues several inches, or even feet, beyond the mass of the house (Image 116). This unusual solution was used as a design element in the Northwoods neighborhood, and later was useful for screening air conditioning units installed after the original construction of the house.

Many of the notable architect-designed Ranch houses in Atlanta were built in Fulton County. However, Richard Cloues, architectural historian and authority on Georgia architecture, notes that shed-roofed "chicken coop gothic" specimens and "Eichleresque" Ranch houses (Image 88) were also built in DeKalb County in the 1950s. Architect Robert Green incorporated elements of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs in his "Arrowhead House" in the Sagamore Hills neighborhood of DeKalb County. The Arrowhead House featured built-in furniture, extremely wide, cantilevered eaves, and a massive stone fireplace that served as a design focal point.

In the early 1940s, the Ranch house began appearing in neighborhoods once dominated by American Small Houses. For example, in the Chelsea Heights neighborhood in Decatur, several Ranch houses were built as early as 1940, and continued to be built through 1959. In the same neighborhood, American Small Houses were built only through 1948, apparently crowded out by the Ranch house. The Parkwood subdivision, in Decatur, featured the "red brick Ranch," a type that would come to dominate much of Georgia's landscape (Image 97).

V. Overview of Selected Subdivisions in DeKalb County

Methodology

This section was compiled based on site visits and "windshield surveys" of a broad representation of subdivisions in DeKalb County. Oral interviews also served as a source to validate findings as well as infuse a personal perspective on this unique period of the county's history.

Profiles: Location, Historical Development and Architecture

Briarpark Court

Briarpark Court, a small enclave of mid-twentieth century modern houses, is located in north DeKalb County. The neighborhood is off Old Briarcliff Road and is in close proximity to Druid Hills and Emory University.

The property that would eventually be developed as Briarpark Court changed hands several times during the early part of the twentieth century, but, in the 1950s, the area was affected by the suburban housing explosion, which was redefining DeKalb County. The development of the Briarpark Court subdivision was initiated by several upper-middle class members of DeKalb's Jewish community. The most exceptional aspect of Briarpark Court is the number of residential designs from the innovative architect Andre Steiner, who was the head planner and architect at the Atlanta firm, Robert and Company. The architect built his own home in the neighborhood as well as the residences of several friends and colleagues. Perhaps the close proximity to Beth Jacob Congregation was a strong draw for the residents of this Jewish enclave. The original plans for these homes were found in the basement of Steiner's close friend, Harold Montague and are now part of the architect's architectural drawings collection at the Atlanta History Center.

During his early years in Atlanta, Steiner maintained his own architectural practice independent of his employment at Robert and Company. Twenty to thirty of Steiner's 1953 homes are still extant. His residential architecture placed an emphasis on the horizontal plane and, at the time they were built, likely introduced the "Bauhaus Modern" architectural style to Atlanta. Eventually, Robert and Company asked that Steiner not design for anyone except their firm, and they gave him a promotion to ensure it (Image 117).

Briarpark Court is still very much intact, and it appears that the houses have been well maintained throughout the years. The most noticeable changes that can be found by comparing historic photographs to the current streetscape is the mass of trees and foliage that now envelope the neighborhood. The subdivision can be accessed by only one entrance, and the street takes the shape of a "T" upon which the houses were built with façade orientation towards the street. The subdivision is small, with only eighteen houses, and there is no park located inside the neighborhood boundaries. (Image 118, Image 119, Image 118, Image 120)

Carver Hills

When General Motors built its assembly plant in Doraville, it was constructed on the site of an existing African-American community, with homes, a school and a church. The Doraville City Council refused to rezone the land unless the company found a place for displaced residents to live. In 1949, General Motors purchased a 150-acre tract of land northwest of the factory site for the purpose of developing a subdivision for the African-American residents. Individual, acre-size lots were sold for \$2,000. Houses were constructed by many individual builders, not just one or two companies, and represent a variety of house types, including the Pyramid Cottage, American Small House, and Ranch (Image 122).

Carver Hills is located on the west side of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and on the north and south sides of Interstate 285, within the city limits of Doraville. The subdivision's modern amenities were touted in the *Atlanta Journal* in 1949. "The community has every convenience—water, lights and paved streets. It is just like adjoining sub-divisions except that white persons cannot buy there. It has a school and Baptist and Methodist churches."⁵⁸ Approximately fifty houses were built on the site, and it included an undeveloped buffer "to render purchasing encroachment impossible (Image 123)."⁵⁹

Encroachment did happen, first through the expansion of the interstate highway system. When Interstate 285 was constructed beginning in 1960, it cut directly through the center of the Carver Hills subdivision, splitting the area into two sections. Carver Drive is on the south side of the interstate; North Carver Drive and Carver Circle are on the north side of the interstate. In the mid-1980s, development pressures on the neighborhood began to increase. A three-year zoning fight ended in the Georgia Supreme Court ruling that Doraville's refusal to rezone lots in the subdivision was a violation of the rights of property owners. The fight to keep the subdivision from being sold for commercial development divided residents, many of whom were ready to sell. The hotel proposed for the north section of Carver Hills was not built and, in 2010, there is still no commercial development there.

Chelsea Heights

The Chelsea Heights neighborhood, named for the Chelsea Development Company, is located on the northwest side of the City of Decatur in DeKalb County, immediately south of the Westchester Hills neighborhood (Image 124 and Image 125). Chelsea Heights began development in the 1920s, but its northernmost portion was developed during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The neighborhood is comprised of Chelsea Drive, Coventry Road, Kathryn Avenue, North Parkwood Road, Pope Circle, Mockingbird Lane, Ridley Circle, and the southern portion of Harold Byrd Lane (split in two by Westchester Elementary School, which was constructed in the mid-1950s). According to a 2009 historic resources survey commissioned by the City of Decatur, Chelsea Heights includes twenty-six American Small Houses, (Image 126) which were built around 1938 through 1948, seventy-eight Ranch houses, (Image 127) which were built around 1940 through 1959, sixteen English cottages (Image 128) and forty-six non-contributing buildings, which are buildings that were either not built before 1960 or that have been so significantly altered that the original appearance is obscured. Chelsea Heights was ahead of its time in including the Ranch house: many were built here in 1940.

Ranch houses in Chelsea Heights are mostly compact Ranch houses and a handful of half-courtyard Ranch houses. The design of these houses varies widely. Many of the red brick Ranches have entries accented by tan stone (Image 99), while others have Colonial-style details like shutters, broken pediments at entries, and front gables supported by white columns. A number of the houses, particularly the compact Ranches, are clad in asbestos or vinyl siding. A few houses have wrought-iron floral columns (Image 98). Rooflines vary; some roofs are comprised entirely of hip profiles (Image 92), while, on others, multiple small

⁵⁸ "Carver Hills Modern Homes for Negroes," *Atlanta Journal*, November 27, 1949, 4E.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

gables terminate at a primary hipped roof. Some of the houses have chimneys, although they are generally not major design elements. Very few of the houses have carports. A few houses take advantage of topography, and have a garage set within a partial basement level (Image 129).

One notable truncated-courtyard Ranch house on Harold Byrd Lane appears to be architect-designed (Image 130). It boasts thin-proportioned brick, a great deal of stone detailing at its entry, and a huge picture window comprised of multiple steel casement windows and fixed transoms. It appears to be completely intact, inside and out. In contrast to the intact Ranch houses, some Ranch houses and American Small Houses in Chelsea Heights have been altered and expanded to two stories.

Part of Chelsea Heights is located in unincorporated DeKalb County west of the neighborhood inside the city limits of Decatur. This section of Chelsea Heights, which is designated a DeKalb County local historic district, includes a portion of Coventry Road, Dyson Drive, Vickers Drive, Heaton Park Drive, Vickers Circle, Hummingbird Lane, Chelsea Circle, Woodview Drive, and Artwood Road.

This part of Chelsea Heights also features rolling terrain and curvilinear streets. An established canopy of pine trees shades the neighborhood, and the houses in the neighborhood utilize floor plans and site strategies that emphasize integration between indoor and outdoor spaces. The neighborhood is dominated by Ranch houses and American Small Houses; however, some bungalows and Cape Cod-style houses are located in the neighborhood. Fernbank Elementary School, built contemporary to Chelsea Heights' 1940s and 1950s development, is located on Heaton Park Drive.

College Heights

The College Heights neighborhood is located on the southeast side of Decatur, in DeKalb County. It was developed primarily during the 1940s and 1950s. The neighborhood is comprised of Brower Street, Buchanan Terrace, Candler Drive, Chevelle Lane, College Way, Driftwood Place, Driftwood Terrace, East Pharr Road, Garland Avenue, Griffin Circle, Lenore Street, McClean Street, Park Drive, South Candler Street, and South McDonough Street. According to a 2009 historic resources survey commissioned by the City of Decatur, College Heights includes 157 American Small Houses, (Image 131) which were built around 1939 through 1950, sixty-six Ranch houses, (Image 132) which were built around 1946 through 1959, ten Split-Level houses, (Image 133 and Image 134) built between 1957 and 1965, and thirty-eight miscellaneous house types, like gabled wing, English cottage, and pyramid cottage.

College Heights Elementary School, constructed in the mid-1950s, is located on South McDonough Street. A neighborhood park is located in front of the school, bounded by South McDonough Street, Garland Avenue, and Griffin Circle (Image 135). The steeply sloped parkland is located in a flood plain, and is unbuildable, so it is utilized as greenspace.

Embry Hills

Embry Hills is a planned community built in the 1950s. Located in Chamblee in northwest DeKalb County, the community is bound by Henderson Mill Road, Chamblee-Tucker Road, and Northcrest Road. The development of the Embry Hills community was a direct result of the dramatic increase in industry that occurred after World War II in Chamblee. Frito-Lay, Eastman Kodak, and General Electric are some of the companies that established offices and plants in Chamblee.

The Embry Realty Company saw an opportunity to develop a suburban housing community which would be convenient to the businesses in Chamblee. Jack Embry, who had formerly worked for Adair Realty, formed a partnership with his brothers, James, Neal, and Theo, to found the Embry Realty Company in the late 1940s. They began building houses in East Lake, Decatur, and East Atlanta before purchasing the 600 acres of farmland on which they would build Embry Hills. The Embry brothers hired the architecture firm Heery and Heery to design the contemporary Ranch and split-level homes, and, in 1956, construction began with the firm of Poe and King as planners and engineers.

Embry Hills was much more than a residential subdivision. Along with houses, there were apartments, offices, a medical building, and retail spaces. In 1958, the Embry Hills Club, a swim and tennis club, was created and was still active in 2010. In 1963, the Embry Hills Shopping Center was constructed; it housed a hardware store, drug store, five and dime, laundromat, and the Embry Hills Barber Shop. Also in 1963, the Embry Hills Kindergarten began in a small neighborhood church.

Many of the houses in Embry Hills featured unique and cutting-edge designs, which were a sharp contrast to the more traditional designs often shown in plan books. Along with the characteristic traditional red brick Ranch, Heery and Heery designed a variety of houses that experimented with the Ranch form and building materials. The architects also designed Split-Levels for the neighborhood, perhaps to accommodate the hilly topography of the area.

Gresham Park

Gresham Park is comprised of approximately 350 houses and is located about one mile south of the Gresham Road exit off of Interstate 20 and seven and one half miles southeast of downtown Atlanta. The main transportation artery with access to the neighborhood is Gresham Road, running north to south on the eastern border. From the interstate exit going south to southeast, Gresham Road extends for about three miles prior to terminating into Clifton Church Road, a main traffic corridor that connects to Flat Shoals Road about a mile north of the Gresham intersection. There are more than five access points to Gresham Road from the neighborhood, with the main access points at Wee Kirk Road in the center and Cottonwood Drive in the south. The main interior street is Horse Shoe Drive, running north to south in a straight path through undulating terrain the entire length of the neighborhood. Although there are no sidewalks, the residents stroll on the relatively wide streets to the park, the MARTA bus stops, or for leisure.

The first houses in Gresham Park were built in 1950, with the most development occurring during the 1950s and 1960s. The neighborhood boasts a diverse collection of houses, but the

predominant house types are compact and linear Ranch (Image 136). Interestingly, some of the streets maintain house-type integrity. Horse Shoe Drive, for instance, contains a majority of Split-Level homes (Image 137 and Image 138). There are other interesting variations of the Ranch house present in the neighborhood such as the transverse (Image 139), half courtyard (Image 140), and bungalow (Image 141). Most of the houses remain intact, with the most significant additions being enclosed carports (Image 142) and aesthetic accents such as shutters (Image 143). Infill construction has not significantly disrupted the historic core of the neighborhood; however, there has been some new construction on the periphery, particularly along Meadowview Drive, just north of Gresham Park (Image 144). Of note, there is a new subdivision under construction at the north end of the neighborhood, but it does not intrude on the contributing core.

Gresham Park boasts many amenities, including churches and schools, but the neighborhood's namesake, Gresham Park, provides the most significant amenities (Image 145). The park is home to a recreation center, swimming pool, playground, athletic fields, and a small walking trail. There are two major elementary schools in the neighborhood, Meadowview Elementary and Clifton Elementary, and McNair High School is only a mile to the west.

Greystone Park

The Greystone Park neighborhood is comprised of approximately 300 houses and is situated about a mile and a half north of the Flat Shoals exit off Interstate 20, seven miles east-southeast of downtown Atlanta. The other major road networks in proximity to the neighborhood are Memorial Drive two miles to the north, Candler Road two miles to the east, and Flat Shoals Road one and a half miles to the west. Greystone Park's main access road to the city's major transportation networks is Second Avenue, running north to south along its western border. The neighborhood boasts three major outlets to Second Avenue: Tilson Road in the south, East Drive in the center, and Trailwood Road in the north. Tilson Road is the only connection to the eastern road network, as East and Trailwood end at Mark Trail Park, the neighborhood's central amenity. The three main streets, with an outlet to Second Avenue, are almost completely straight, although there is a significant rise in elevation going east to west. Some of the secondary streets, like Scotty Circle off of East Drive, terminate in dead ends, while other streets meander to the main arteries. There are no sidewalks in the neighborhood; however, there is a consistent flow of foot traffic on many of the side streets.

Housing construction began in 1952 and continued significantly for the next ten to fifteen years. The predominant house type in Greystone Park is the compact Ranch, comprising more than ninety percent of the houses in the neighborhood (Image 146). Other house types present are the linear Ranch and Split-Level (Image 147). Most roof types on these houses are single gabled or simple hipped, with no chimney. Carports appear on about half of the houses, with less than half of the carports being enclosed after initial construction (Image 148). Due to the undulating terrain, many of the homes have original partial basements (Image 149). The main departure from the predominant red-brick facades is some multi-colored brick, which is used as an accent feature to create color patterns (Image 150). The large majority of the homes remain intact, with the predominant modifications being

enclosed carports and front gables supported by columns at the entryways (Image 151). There are only a few examples of second story additions (Image 152). Some minor infill construction disrupts the contributing core of the neighborhood (Image 153), but the periphery of the neighborhood has seen the construction of larger infill homes along the southern border on Tilson Road (Image 154).

Despite the relatively small size of Greystone Park, it contains several resident-friendly amenities. McNair Middle School is a half-mile southeast of the neighborhood's center, while Ronald McNair Discovery Learning Academy is on Second Avenue between East Drive and Tilson Road. The dominant feature of the neighborhood is Mark Trail Park on the eastern border (Image 155). It contains a swimming pool, recreation center, playground, softball field, and tennis courts, as well as pavilions, picnic tables, and areas for congregating. The only access to the park is from Tilson Road.

Lynwood Park

Lynwood Park is an African-American neighborhood in DeKalb County, Georgia, located on Windsor Parkway with Georgia 400 to the west and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to the east. The neighborhood developed in the 1930s and has a wide range of house types, including bungalows, American Small Houses, and Ranch house types. The types of Ranch houses that can be found in the neighborhood are compact Ranch, linear Ranch (Image 156), and bungalow Ranch (Image 157). Curvilinear streets with granite curbstones and rolling topography characterize Lynwood Park.

The neighborhood does boast a community center with a swimming pool and basketball courts. There are also a number of small churches located in the community. During the 1990s, the neighborhood began to undergo significant gentrification, with many larger homes being built as infill on the site of more modest houses, greatly impacting the look of the neighborhood. The majority of the original housing stock ranges from being well maintained to abandoned. Most of the original houses are architecturally very simple and reflect the modest means of those who built them.

Northwoods

In 1949, due in large part to the recently-built DeKalb Water Treatment Plant and the increasing industry that emerged in the area, Doraville's growing population needed a new residential development. Atlanta developer, Walter Tally, envisioned a community, which he named Northwoods, that could be a perfect option for young families eager to take advantage of the abundance of amenities DeKalb County had to offer. Located only eleven miles from Atlanta and convenient to downtown via Buford Highway, the Northwoods community was built steadily over the next decade. Between 1950 and 1959, 700 new homes were constructed on 250 acres of land bounded by Shallowford Road, Buford Highway, and Addison Drive.

Northwoods differed from many other developments of the time because it was more than simply a residential neighborhood (Embry Hills had similar characteristics, but it would be developed several years later.) Tally's subdivision not only included single-family homes on

curvilinear streets, but also housed a community with schools, churches, parks, a professional building, and a shopping center. Northwoods was designed with seven access points to the community, a design feature that is not often seen in developments during this period. For these reasons, Northwoods can be considered a community rather than a subdivision (Image 158, Image 159, Image 160).

In the early 1950s, construction commenced on the first homes in Northwoods. Now located in the southwestern portion of the development, these early homes were conventional ranches with hipped roofs, and the designs were found in plan books or were purchased from a publication such as *Home Builder's Plan Service* (Image 161, Image 162).

In 1953, as the sale of the traditional ranch homes began to slow, Tally decided to change his development strategy. He brought in young, Georgia Tech-trained architects Earnest Mastin and John Summers, who could keep prices down with innovative designs. For the newer homes that were built after 1955, Mastin and Summers designed six floor plans from which buyers could choose. Each lot had its own septic tank and included just enough space for the home and an attached garage for one automobile. The homes had one bathroom and were not equipped with air conditioning. Since the flat roofs prevented the homes from having attics with ductwork, the architects used radiant heat from the floor instead (Image 163, Image 164, Image 165). Open floor plans were an essential element of Mastin and Summers designs. Kitchens were no longer relegated to the rear of the home, and they became an important area for the family. The contemporary homes in Northwoods were equipped with the most modern amenities such as dishwashers and disposals, and there was less emphasis on formal entertaining. The architects' designs also included wood-burning fireplaces, a feature that was usually not available in homes of the Northwoods price range.

The architects adapted their designs to the hilly topography of Peachtree Ridge by designing Split-Level homes for the lots that had slopes. Mastin and Summer's designs emphasized the importance of nature and the outdoors, and many homes had patios and outdoor barbeques. Sliding glass doors and jalousie windows were modern design elements connecting the interior spaces with the outdoors while also provided light and venation. Floor to ceiling windows also helped to blend the indoors with the natural environment outside. Some models were designed with a flat roof, giving these homes a modern twist- something that could be considered daring for middle-class residential architecture in the typically conservative south.

Walter Tally, who would later develop Northcrest (1960s and 1970s), Sexton Woods (1955), and Brookvalley (1955), worked with Mastin and Summers to develop ways to keep the cost of the homes low while still making them highly desirable for young couples. Tally allowed prospective homebuyers to choose the lot on which their home would be built. Buyers could also meet with Mastin and Summers to customize their homes, which made buyers feel that they were getting a custom home at a bargain price. Tally had the young family in mind in his plan for Northwoods- early residents included architects (Mastin and Summer each purchased home in the community), engineers, and employees of Lockheed, General Motors, and Delta.

Although some of the original ranches are intact, a large number of houses in Northwoods have been modified over the years, including enclosure of porches and carports and expansion of garages and living space. A solid foundation of longtime residents remains, yet there have also been an increasing number of homes being used as rental property. The active neighborhood association has been integral to neighborhood improvement plans, and currently there is an initiative in place to improve the public green space (Image 166).

Parkview

The Parkview neighborhood (Image 167) is located in unincorporated DeKalb County just east of Atlanta's eastern city limits. It was developed primarily in the early 1940s. The neighborhood is comprised of Warren Street Southeast, Eleanor Street Southeast, Liberty Avenue Southeast, Lincoln Avenue Southeast, Wilkinson Drive Southeast, Overland Terrace Southeast, South Howard Street Southeast, Eastport Terrace Southeast, and Fairway Hill Drive Southeast. The neighborhood includes DeKalb Memorial County Park, a very large public park bounded by I-20, Wilkinson Drive, and the property of Crim High School. Crim High School, built prior to Parkview's development, is located on Memorial Drive. Average lots in the Parkview neighborhood have roughly sixty-foot frontages and 200-foot depths. Setbacks range from thirty feet to sixty feet.

Parkview is home to a variety of Ranch houses (Image 168) and American Small Houses (Image 169), which were mostly built between 1945 and 1952. House sizes range from around 1,000 square feet to 1,500 square feet, although many houses have recently been enlarged. Houses in Parkview are mostly wood-frame construction on crawlspaces, clad in wood, brick, or sometimes stone (Image 96). Many weatherboard-clad houses have been covered in vinyl or asbestos siding (Image 169). A large number of houses in Parkview have been altered too much to be considered historically significant (Image 170).

Parkwood

The Parkwood neighborhood is located on the west side of the City of Decatur in DeKalb County. The neighborhood was developed during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. The neighborhood, comprised of East Parkwood Road, West Parkwood Road, Parkwood Lane, Upland Road, Wimberly Court, and West Ponce de Leon Avenue, boasts early examples of the "red brick Ranches" that came to dominate Georgia's Ranch style.

The City of Decatur commissioned a historic resources survey in 2009 that included the Parkwood neighborhood. The survey's findings list eighteen American Small Houses (Image 170), five Split-Level houses (Image 172, Image 173, Image 174), fifty-eight Ranch houses (Image 103), and twenty-one non-contributing buildings, which includes all of Wimberly Court, as well as a handful of other house types, such as a Georgian house built in 1950 (Image 175). Most of the neighborhood's American Small Houses were built between 1943 and 1955, and Ranch houses began appearing in 1950. The Split-Levels were built from 1950 to 1957.

The Parkwood neighborhood is home to compact Ranches, L-shaped Ranches, and linear Ranches. Several of the red brick Ranches are in the Colonial Revival style, with details like

shutters, broken pediments at entries, and front gables supported by white columns (Image 176). Others utilize horizontally-arranged sandstone as accents to the front entries (Image 177). One Ranch house in the Parkwood neighborhood is in the Mediterranean Revival style (Image 176).

Rooflines vary: some roofs are comprised entirely of hip profiles (Image 92), while on others, multiple small gables terminate at a primary hipped roof. Some of the houses have chimneys, although they are generally not major design elements. Several of the houses have carports (Image 179), and some have been enclosed (Image 180). A few houses take advantage of topography, and have a garage set within a partial basement level (Image 181).

Styles and materials also vary among the neighborhood's American Small Houses, though many are brick. Many of Parkwood's American Small Houses are in the Colonial Revival style (Image 182). Some houses in the Parkwood neighborhood have been altered to two stories (Image 183).

Sargent Hills

The neighborhood now known as Sargent Hills is located in north DeKalb County in the Rehoboth/Pea Ridge area. Only a few miles from the Decatur square, the area is close to central transportation routes such as Scott Boulevard, Lawrenceville Highway, and Interstate 285. Although the area is densely developed now, at the turn of the century, the landscape was green pastures and farmland spanning miles. The land that eventually became Sargent Hills was owned by the Wages family, who moved into the area in 1908, building their home near the current intersection of Lawrenceville Highway and Stone Mountain Freeway. Sargent Hills is bounded by Lawrenceville Highway, Orion Drive, Hollywood Place, and Valley Place.

The Wages family purchased a large amount of land in Pea Ridge, extending their holdings to include parts of Tucker and the Little Creek Ranch. Jim Wages gave DeKalb County the right of way to build the road along what is now known as Valley Brook Road. Upon her parent's death, Lola Wages inherited much of her family's land, and, after she married Luke Sargent, the young couple began to gradually develop the land around Valley Brook Road and Lawrenceville Highway.

The construction of I-285 greatly affected the community cohesion of the Pea Ridge area. During the 1960s, the once-thriving community was split as the new highway came through land that had formerly been green pastures. Many long-time residents sold their land, and subdivisions and shopping centers began to emerge in this area as they had throughout other parts of DeKalb County.

The Sargent family apparently embraced these changes. They sold much of their land to developers, and they oversaw the construction of several subdivisions. Lola Sargent supervised the construction of the North DeKalb Apartments and North DeKalb II. Luke Sargent named Orion Drive and Valley Brook Place, while Lola named Hollywood Place, Thrift Place, and Wages Drive (named after her father) (Image 184).

Sargent Hills is surrounded by dense commercial development. Although the neighborhood and most of the original houses are intact, the presence of the large and busy Scott Boulevard and I-285 have permanently altered the once primarily rural suburban community. Most houses are compact red brick Ranches and the designs likely came from a plan book (Image 185, Image 186, Image 187). There are no parks in the Sargent Hill community, though the Tobie Grant Recreation Center is approximately a mile and a half away. The Washington Park Cemetery and the Scottdale Cemetery are also close to Sargent Hills.

Westchester Hills

The neighborhood of Westchester Hills is located on the northwest side of the City of Decatur in DeKalb County. It was developed primarily throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The neighborhood is named for Westchester Drive, a road that begins at Scott Boulevard, just southwest of the intersection between Scott Boulevard and Clairemont Avenue. Westchester Drive terminates in a cul-de-sac. The other streets in this neighborhood are Harold Byrd Drive, Dogwood Way, and Maediris Drive. According to a 2009 historic resources survey commissioned by the City of Decatur, Westchester Hills includes nineteen American Small Houses (Image 188) which were built around 1939 through 1948, fifty-three Ranch houses (Image 189) which were built around 1947 through 1953, three English cottages, and fifteen non-contributing buildings.

The houses in Westchester Hills are mostly rambling Ranch houses (Image 111), compact Ranch houses (Image 105), half-courtyard Ranch houses (Image 109), and transverse-linear Ranch houses, whose narrow facades face the street. Most of the Ranch houses on Westchester Drive are red brick; a few have been painted. However, in the middle of the street, where Westchester Drive curves to the south, several houses are clad in aluminum siding. Many of the houses have shutters. Rooflines vary; some roofs are comprised entirely of hip profiles, while on others, multiple small gables terminate at a primary hipped roof.

Real estate listings indicate that many homes are between 1,200 square feet and 1,500 square feet. Towards the west end of the Westchester Drive, approaching the cul-de-sac, some carports appear. However, closer to Scott Boulevard, builders took advantage of sloping terrain, and many houses have garages set within a partial basement. The Westchester Hills neighborhood does not have sidewalks. Houses are set back about fifty-sixty feet from the road.

Westchester Elementary School (Image 190) was built in 1956 on Scott Boulevard, roughly 300 feet from Westchester Drive. It was constructed to be an all-white school. African-American elementary students attended Beacon Elementary School, about one and a half miles south. Westchester Elementary School was altered substantially in the late 1990s, but its International style details are in good condition in portions of the school. In 2004, the building became the administration building for the City Schools of Decatur and is no longer used as a school.

For the most part, the historic integrity of Westchester Hills appears largely intact. A handful of two-story infill houses have encroached on the street in the last few years (Image 191).

Environs: Landscape, Streetscape, Greenspace, and Neighborhood Parks

For this section, a survey of several DeKalb County neighborhoods – Northwoods, Beverly Hills, Whispering Hills, Marlin Acres, Appling Heights, Avondale, and parts of Belvedere Park – was conducted to find traces of their original 1950s and 1960s landscaping. As expected, these neighborhoods provided extremely good examples of the original housing because of their durability, but, due to its impermanent nature, the survey team found only portions of the original living landscaping at any given residence. Since a greater part of landscaping is composed of living plants with finite life spans, periodic renewal is required or that particular landscape feature is lost. This is true particularly of annuals but even longer-lived perennials are lost after an extended period. However, enough of the original landscaping features remained – in the form of mature shrubs, trees, and ground covers as determined by size and spread– to make informed generalizations. Hard landscaping features such as retaining walls, fences, and ground contouring were still readily observed (Image 192 and Image 193). Descriptions are based on current observations of both mature landscape plants and hard features believed or know to originate from the study period of 1945 to 1970.

Residential Landscape – “Soft” Features

Due to the county’s zoning ordinances, first established in 1956, which clearly segregated commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential construction, all neighborhoods surveyed were easily distinguishable from the surrounding commercial areas (zoned along main thoroughfares) and recreational parks. They were islands of quiet and seclusion – meeting the FHA’s *Desirable Standard* for “privacy and attractiveness” – though often only a block from a busy road such as Buford Highway or Memorial Drive.

Some of the surveyed neighborhoods have boundary plantings at the entrance, reminiscent of suggestions made by Olmsted and Vaux for Central Park in New York. The boundary plantings not only shield the living areas from major roadways, they also serve as buffer zones, further separating the residential neighborhood from the surrounding commercial activity. One community, Northwoods, has installed signage that welcomes guests to the community. The current welcome signs are recent, and it was not determined if similar signage was present when the subdivision was first developed.

Of the neighborhoods surveyed, only Northwoods incorporated landscaped medians dividing the entry streets into the neighborhood. The medians were only one block long, and were found at the three original entry points leading into the early 1950s portion of the neighborhood. The developers did not install similar medians at the later or secondary entrances or within the neighborhood as it expanded. These medians are currently planted with a variety of low-lying shrubs, flowers, and other vegetation, as they most likely would have been when the subdivision was first established. However, mature, well-established trees were not present within the medians.

Two distinct landscaping areas were observed surrounding the vast majority of all surveyed residences: the front and rear yards, separated by the house. When compared to these two areas, side yards are almost non-existent. The following observations refer to both the front and back yards, though more of the front yard was visible from the public right-of-way. A

mixture of trees, shrubs, flowers, and ground covers surround most residences. The sizes, types, locations and colors vary according to the taste of either the current or the previous residents. The subdivision developer may have purposely planted or retained many of the mature trees and older shrubs observed by the survey team to make the house more appealing to prospective buyers (Image 193). This was the case with the foundation plantings around Tom Bearden's Northwoods residence; the developer, Walter Tally, planted the Wax Leaf Ligustrum seen in early photographs of the residence. The developer also retained a pre-existing cedar tree located on the property. Both are still landscaping features currently observed at the residence⁶⁰ (Compare Image 194, Image 195, and Image 196).

Foundation plantings are one of the most prominent types of plantings found throughout the neighborhoods. Even when there is no other type of planting in the yard, the house usually has at least one shrub located at the door or corner of the residence. Evergreen plants such as azaleas and hollies are the most prevalent, followed closely by camellias, spreading junipers, and hydrangeas. Some honeysuckle, forsythia, euonymus and spirea are also present. Sometimes, the foundations are framed by a mixture of shrubs and a flowerbed, either bounded by a hard fixture such as a built stone wall or a soft planting of liriopé, also known as "monkey grass" (Image 194, Image 195, Image 192, and Image 197).

Trees, though occasionally planted close to the house, such as a low-growing Japanese maple, crape myrtle, or dogwood, are more often used as an informal screen between properties or as the focus of a larger, centrally-located planting bed. In all cases, they provide shade for the yard or the house. Cedar and spruce are the primary choices for boundary screens, while several different trees are used as prominent specimen plantings within the yards. Pine is most prevalent with oak a close second. Occasionally, a magnolia is used. Although the residents may have planted these trees, it is as likely they were naturally grown, simply retained, and then allowed to mature.

Unfenced properties show a variety of patterns and locations for vegetation: in smaller rectangular or curved beds close to the house, as edging used to establish a boundary between properties, around mailbox posts (sometimes covering the entire mailbox with privet or clematis), or in large planting beds that incorporated a substantial area of the front lawn. These larger beds are typically either centrally located or radiated out curvaceously from a front corner of the yard. Often, these beds contain small dogwoods, azaleas, perennials, or ivy ground covers of various types. Even when the properties demonstrate little to no soft landscape plantings such as trees, shrubs, and flowers, they still maintain a grassed lawn. As discussed in Section II, lawns were an important feature of 1950s and 1960s neighborhoods; these green expanses likely originated with the original owners (Image 192) (Image 193).

Residential Landscape – "Hard" Features

Fences, primarily of wood or chain link, and masonry walls of various types were observed within all neighborhoods visited and are employed as privacy screens and boundary indicators. Although the wood and metal fences are current installations, the equivalent

⁶⁰ Tom Bearden, interview by Anthony Souther, 2532 Addison Dr, Doraville, Georgia, 30340, March 27, 2010. Mr. Bearden is a long time resident of the Northwoods neighborhood.

would have been in place during the study period. Cliff May, in his 1946 Sunset book *Western Ranch Houses*, included wire, post-and-rail, and wooden picket fences in many of his examples. He also used solid-wood privacy screens. In his 1958 Sunset book *Western Ranch Houses*, Cliff May uses photographic examples, primarily with post-and-rail fences and solid-wood privacy screens; picket and wire fences were no longer showcased. Just as in Cliff May's books, most of the enclosures observed in present-day DeKalb County neighborhoods enclosed the rear yard, with only a small number in the front. Although the three images chosen to highlight the different fence styles in this report all enclose the front yard, this was not typical of house plan books of the period (Image 198, Image 199, and Image 200). The back yard, in this period, was often treated as an extra room of the house and was enclosed accordingly, to establish its boundaries. When the slope of the lot allowed, some of the homeowners installed brick or stone retaining walls with soft landscaping such as hostas, "monkey grass," ivy, or low plantings of flowers, thereby softening the setting. Some residences incorporated rectangular brick planting areas into the house design, usually to one side of the main entryway or as part of the entry path, but these were rare (Image 201).

Other permanent hard landscaping features installed by some homeowners were wood, stone, cement, and brick edging materials along driveways, walkways, and planting beds to accentuate the features. Some homeowners also decorated their landscaping areas with fountains, statues, and other mass-produced objects of cement, metal, and plastic. No landscaping features were observed that are not commonly found throughout the south.

Streetscapes

Although most developers after World War II built according to FHA guidelines in order to receive both FHA and VA mortgage-insurance approval, none of the observed neighborhoods incorporated all FHA design features; there was no model neighborhood. This is possibly due to the incremental development characteristic, in which suburban areas developed only one to five streets at a time, found throughout DeKalb County.

Neighborhoods north and east of Decatur have a greater predominance of curvilinear street patterns interspersed with a few straight streets. The earliest post-World War II neighborhoods in DeKalb County, those built south and west of Decatur, exhibit a greater occurrence of grid street patterns. As an example, compare Northwoods subdivision in northeast DeKalb County (Image 202) to the northern portion of greater Belvedere Park located south and east of the Decatur (Image 203). Ponce de Leon Avenue is a clear demarcation line between these two neighborhood types (Image 204). The 1950s and 1960s subdivisions on each side of Ponce de Leon Avenue continued the street patterns established by the two, early twentieth-century subdivisions of curvilinear Druid Hills, designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted, to the north, and the grid street pattern of Candler Park to the south. Although the subdivisions to the south of Ponce de Leon Avenue were built with longer runs of straight streets, they still curved at the corners, had numerous loops, and provided minimal access points, minimizing the number of through-ways and four-way stops, traffic devices advocated by Federal Housing Authority (FHA) guidelines. Unlike the neighborhood design features just discussed, cul-de-sacs (also a desired but not required FHA design feature) were not widely used by DeKalb County neighborhood developers during the period of this report. One small neighborhood in the North Druid Hills area, developed from the late 1950s

through the late 1960s, used a cul-de-sac road plan. Although a small number were built in the 1950s and 1960s, cul-de-sacs were more common in DeKalb County subdivisions developed after 1970.⁶¹

Due to the proximity of Stone Mountain and Georgia's granite industry, the streets in most neighborhoods were edged with randomly-sized granite curbing, although some of the streets in later neighborhoods were edged with poured cement gutters. In the neighborhoods surveyed (all dating from the 1950s and 1960s), there were no sidewalks. When constructed, it was assumed that these would be commuting neighborhoods, and residents would drive wherever they need to go, so sidewalks were not included in the design. The lack of this neighborhood amenity allowed the developer to increase both the lot size and street widths. By surveying neighborhoods using Google Earth, it was observed that access to neighborhoods was usually restricted to a minimum of points, usually feeding in to a main thoroughfare. Connectivity to adjacent subdivisions was present but often restricted to only one street. Both of these design features can be traced to the FHA neighborhood design guidelines that restricted through traffic within subdivision to promote a safe and sheltered environment.

Almost every house had a carport or garage, and, as a minimum, a driveway to one side of the house. Most driveways were simple and straight, but a curved drive was observed occasionally (Image 205 and Image 201). All neighborhoods had county-provided streetlights located at regular intervals on the subdivisions power poles.

All houses along a given street typically demonstrated a similar setback, usually deep, thus allowing for a larger front yard. This suggested development by the same neighborhood developer who, as long as the developer adhered to the current zoning law minimums, could build as desired. Close observation of this common setback indicated that most of the county subdivisions were developed slowly, one to five streets at a time, by different developers. This was confirmed by a number of conversations with both neighborhood residents and William D. Farmer, a house plan book designer in DeKalb County.

According to Tom Bearden, when he bought his Northwoods ranch house in 1951 from DeKalb county developer Walter Tally, it was “one of forty that Tally had built.”⁶² Alton Jones, a resident of Belvedere Gardens since 1955, made a similar comment when he talked about his neighborhood being developed from the Dinsmore Dairy between 1954 and 1955. He stated, that the “same developers – twin brothers – had built the houses along his street

⁶¹ A concerted effort was made to locate cul-de-sacs in DeKalb County, through site visits as well as by using Google Earth to perform aerial searches. Only three cul-de-sac were found in the neighborhood around Spring Creek Road in the north Decatur area, zip code 30033. Two cul-de-sacs were found in the Northwoods subdivision in Doraville at the intersection of Arbor Creek Road and Arbor Creek Point, but they both were built in the 1970s. Other cul-de-sacs were identified through Google Earth, but research indicates that they, too, were built after 1970, so names were not obtained. Speculation is that though a more prominent feature today, the cul-de-sac did not become common, in DeKalb County until after the 1970s. Further study is needed.

⁶² Tom Bearden, interview by Anthony Souther, 2532 Addison Dr, Doraville, Georgia, 30340, March 27, 2010. Mr. Bearden is a long time resident of the Northwoods neighborhood.

[Beech Drive] and the next two over from it.”⁶³ When William D. Farmer was asked who used his house designs, he said it was the small developer of two to three streets because the larger developers usually had their own staffs.⁶⁴ There were large scale developers in Atlanta and DeKalb County, but there is no indication that developments on the scale of Levittown (17,477 homes) in Hampstead, New York were ever built in DeKalb County. Because of this trend toward smaller subdivision development, the character of a neighborhood streetscape – house types, setbacks, scale, and lot size – can change within a few blocks. This incremental development may explain why no surveyed neighborhood incorporated all of the desired features of an ideal FHA subdivision; no one neighborhood designer or developer controlled the overall development of the extended neighborhood. It is likely the smaller developers integrated only enough FHA features to ensure acquisition of FHA secured loans for both themselves and the homebuyers.

Greenspace and Neighborhood Parks

FHA neighborhood standards called for both parks and playgrounds, and open, park-like spaces or greenspace had been tenets of the Picturesque and Garden City planning movements since the mid-eighteenth century. In these design movements, green space and parks were planned and developed as part of neighborhood planning, as was the case with Riverside, designed by Fredrick L. Olmsted in 1869 (Image 11), and Radburn, New Jersey (Image 12). Although regional parks were a part of the first regional land use plan⁶⁵, developed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission in 1952, parks and greenspace as planned components of the neighborhood did not occur on a large scale in DeKalb County until the 1970s. Looking at satellite imagery of the county, it can be seen that there are vast areas with unknown numbers of subdivisions without any park or recreational areas set aside for public use. Considering that DeKalb County subdivisions developed slowly and were developed by multiple developers building homes on only three to five streets at a time, it is understandable that developer-planned park and green space were not usually a part of DeKalb County neighborhoods. When developing a subdivision of three to four hundred homes, the developer could afford to set aside and develop park space, but the small-scale developer would not build tennis courts and swimming pools for only forty houses.

Northwoods, one of the subdivisions surveyed, was unusual in that it has two smaller City of Doraville city parks – Brook Park and Autumn Park. Although Brook Park can be seen on a 1955 plat of the Northwoods subdivision, the space was left unimproved by the developer at his departure from the subdivision (Image 158). Millie Fadden, a resident of Northwoods since the early 1950s, lives across from Brook Park and confirmed that, when the developer departed the neighborhood, it was left in its natural state. When asked about the park, she stated, “originally it had a stream running through it, and it was rough and overgrown. And because of the stream, it was left in its natural state and given to the subdivision by the developer. My husband and a number of other neighbors eventually burned it off and opened

⁶³ Alton Jones, interviewed by Anthony Souther, 3302 Beech Drive, Decatur, Georgia. 30032, March 23, 2010. Mr. Jones could not remember the names of the developers.

⁶⁴ William D. Farmer, interviewed by Rebecca Crawford, Susan Conger, Luis Rodriguez, and Anthony Souther, 1709 East Gate Drive, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30087, March 23, 2010.

⁶⁵ The Metropolitan Planning Commission composed of Atlanta, Fulton County and DeKalb County developed their first regional land use plan in 1952. It was titled *Up Ahead: a regional land use plan for Metropolitan Atlanta*.

it up.”⁶⁶ At one point, the county threatened to take the land if it was not improved, but the City of Doraville assumed responsibility for the area and it was finally developed as a city park. The City of Doraville installed and covered drainage pipes to contain the creek and provide an unbroken open space, and, according to Mrs. Fadden, “the city began to add the park amenities in the mid-1970s.” Autumn Park was also originally given to the community and is now also a city park (Image 206 and Image 207).

According to Regina Brewer, Preservation Planner for the City of Decatur, and Amanda Thompson, Planner for the City of Decatur, this was also the case in Decatur. Any greenspace that remained after development was simply land not suitable as building space – “generally it was land located within a flood plain.”⁶⁷

Conclusion

Although there were many factors that shaped the built environment of DeKalb County’s residential neighborhoods, a small number stand out as having the greatest impact. One is the quantity of subdivisions built after the conclusion of World War II until 1970. After World War II, many communities initially resumed building the same type of houses constructed before the war, namely the bungalow and the American Small House. That does not appear to be the case in DeKalb County; developers immediately began building whole neighborhoods incorporating the Ranch type house. It is not known why DeKalb County’s developers adopted the Ranch House so quickly when other Georgia communities did not, but it established a building trend that lasted well into the 1970s. Another building trend seen throughout the county was the incremental development of its neighborhoods. Many small developers, building along three, four, or five streets at a time, were responsible for developing the county’s many neighborhoods, creating a great expanse of diversity within a single neighborhood. The opposite of this trend were developments such as Levittown in New York where a single developer was responsible for the construction of 17,000 houses that had little diversity.

The Federal Housing Administration’s (FHA) guideline for residential development was a second large influence on the physical and aesthetic character of the county’s subdivisions and neighborhoods. Developers sought FHA approval for their neighborhood designs in order to qualify for FHA backed construction loans and mortgages for the buyer.

Most, but not all, of the features in the guidelines provided by the FHA are found within DeKalb County neighborhoods built during the study period – development of parks and open space and the use of cul-de-sacs did not occur on a large scale until after 1970. The incorporation of some, but not all, of the FHA desired guidelines may also be the result of the incremental nature of neighborhood development within the county. The smaller scale of the construction projects and the cost involved prohibited incorporation of all guideline features.

Finally, the choices each resident made when landscaping their individual lot added to the overall character found in each of DeKalb County’s neighborhoods. These choices include

⁶⁶ Millie Fadden, Phone conversation with Anthony Souther, March 25, 2010

⁶⁷ Regina Brewer, Preservation Planner for the City of Decatur, and Amanda Thompson, Planner for the City of Decatur, conversation held with Elizabeth S. Morris, March 24, 2010.s

the placement of plants, shrubs, and trees; the selection of each of these living features; and the use of fences, walls, and natural topography. The developers, the FHA neighborhood guidelines, and the homeowners all played a part in creating a distinctive type of DeKalb neighborhood.

Summary: Character-Defining Features of Suburban Residential Development in DeKalb County

As homogenous as ranch house subdivisions are believed to be, regional and local variations make such developments in one part of the country different from those in other parts of the country, or, in some cases, even in other parts of the state. What makes the development of DeKalb County's ranch suburbs different? Of developments in general, the first difference is the large number and small size of individual developments. Between 1945 and 1970, almost 1,300 suburban developments were established in DeKalb County. Unlike places like Levittown, New Jersey, where one development contains thousands of houses, DeKalb County tended toward hundreds of developments containing only a small number of houses, sometimes as few as four. Only fifty of the developments in DeKalb County contained as many as two hundred and fifty houses. This fact allows for the second distinctive feature of DeKalb County residential development: the diversity of residential design. There is no significant development in ranch house design that is not represented somewhere in DeKalb County. The many small developers active in DeKalb County between 1945 and 1970 also allowed for the involvement of a greater number of architects in the design of houses in residential subdivisions, resulting in a greater variety of designs and materials.

A very distinctive material element of subdivisions in DeKalb County is the use of locally-quarried granite. Granite can be found as curbing along the edge of the road, as edging around garden islands, and as decorative accents around doors and windows. In a few cases, all of the siding material of a house is granite. Suburban landscaping in DeKalb County also incorporates distinctively Southern plant material such as magnolia trees, azaleas, lirioppe, and pine, and the use of pine straw as a bedding material is more prevalent in the South than it is in other parts of the country.

Distinctive of Georgia, though perhaps not of the entire south, and certainly not of the rest of the country, is the use of red brick as the cladding material of choice. Many ranch houses in DeKalb County, possibly even the majority of them, are clad in red brick. Elements of ranch house design that are more common in the South than in other parts of the country are the use of jalousie windows for better ventilation before the advent of air conditioning, enclosure of porches and patios with screens to keep out the bugs, and the prevalence of carports instead of enclosed garages. Floor plans were more segmented in Southern Ranch houses than in Western ones. Whereas Western Ranch houses often had free-flowing common spaces with few or no walls between living, dining, and kitchen areas, Ranch houses in DeKalb County generally provide definition for these spaces through the use of walls or half-walls. Common to the eastern part of the country, including Georgia, is the use of "Colonial" decorative elements such as turned porch posts, Colonial-style window shutters, and even broken pediments over doors, but also common in DeKalb County is the "plain" style of ranch, with

no particular decorative features. Use of “Swiss” style decorative features such as diamond-pane windows, lattice-work porch railings, and scalloped wood trim such as is found in the Midwest, for instance, is extremely uncommon, but not completely missing. Fireplaces are less common in the South than they are in the more northern latitudes.

These features can all be used to define a ranch house in DeKalb County as a “typical” ranch, even though there are almost endless variations. Further study may reveal even more features of suburban ranch development typical of DeKalb County.

VI. The Future of the Ranch House

Importance as a Cultural Resource

This study clearly illustrates the cultural, social, and architectural importance of the mid-twentieth century housing that so vividly tells the story of America between 1945 and 1970. While this period represents half of the existing houses in the United States, they are currently facing many threats such as demolition and insensitive alterations and additions. These threats create the urgent need to begin preserving these buildings so that the fabric of our recent past remains intact. An aggressive preservation approach is needed to save these resources not only from physical dangers, but from the social threats that are also promoting their demise. Many people see mid-twentieth century housing as ordinary and abundant, and therefore lack appreciation for these historic resources. However, beyond the multitude of simple facades are the innovative designs that represented a new approach to family living developed during the mid-twentieth century.

Numerous examples of these exemplary mid-twentieth century houses exist in Georgia, and DeKalb County is host to a number of them. The architecture of these houses, combined with social history, produces an area worthy of preservation. Therefore, it is important that the people of DeKalb County and the State of Georgia take an active approach in preserving these significant resources so that they can continue to tell the story of mid-twentieth century America for generations. The following is a summary of current preservation movements, a description of the threats facing mid-twentieth century housing, and suggestions for what can be done to ensure that this type of housing is saved from destruction and neglect.

Preserving the Ranch

Current Movements

Over the last two decades, the preservation movement in the United States has continually expanded. What originated as a means of saving the houses of great white men has become more inclusive of human values, focusing increasing attention on social and environmental concerns. Included in this more-encompassing movement is the preservation of the recent past, a focus that revolves around mid-twentieth century and post-World War II structures, some of which are not yet fifty years old. While the “fifty-year rule” for National Register listing is well known in the preservation field, there are exceptions to it if a structure demonstrates extraordinary significance. In the case of some mid-twentieth century buildings, the development pressures that could potentially destroy these resources make the preservation of the recent past even more important.

Many agencies, state and local governments, and community groups have recognized the value of these resources and the need to preserve them for future generations and are supporting the preservation of the recent past by developing numerous publications, initiatives, and strategies. Included in these are methods of educating the general public and policy makers through tours and special events, endangered-places lists, workshops, and

seminars. Groups are also developing surveys, inventories, and National Register nominations as part of the movement to actively preserve the recent past.

National Register Listing of Joseph and Mary League House (Macon, Georgia)

The Joseph and Mary Jane League House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 9, 2009, for its significance in architecture and women's history. It is the first individually listed Ranch house in Georgia to be given this distinguished honor of national recognition.

The low form, H-shaped Ranch house is located in the Shirley Hills neighborhood north of downtown Macon (Image 208). It was built in 1950 using natural building materials, and it features a zoned interior plan that integrates its indoor spaces with the outdoor landscape. The homes' use of cutting-edge ranch house design characteristics set an excellent example for the rest of the state and was featured nationally in several architectural publications.

The architect for the home was Jean League Newton, a second-generation female architect and one of the earliest professionally-trained woman architects in the state of Georgia. Newton completed her architectural degree at Harvard University and studied under leading Modernists, including Walter Gropius. After graduation, Newton went on to design many Modern buildings, including the Joseph and Mary Jane League House that she designed for her brother and his wife. Through her designs, Jean League Newton represents an important aspect of women's history in the state of Georgia.

The listing of the Joseph and Mary Jane League House on the National Register is an important step forward for the preservation of Ranch houses across America. It is also a good example of what can be done to better document and recognize the Ranch houses in DeKalb County.

Threats Facing Mid-Twentieth Century Housing

Repair and Replacement of Failing Materials

As buildings age, their materials fail. The materials that make up these houses are exposed to a number of conditions, including solar radiation, moisture, and botanical agents, which can cause deterioration and weaken structural integrity. They can also cause unsightly appearances, damaging the home's overall aesthetics. One of the main tasks of preservationists is to repair and replace these materials in the most sensitive way possible. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* state in Standard Six that:

deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in

design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.⁶⁸

Mid-twentieth century buildings are starting to face the deterioration that preservationists are more accustomed to seeing in older structures. However, the differences in materials and construction techniques of these modern structures will require extensive research and the development of rehabilitation techniques that target the historical characteristics of this period of housing.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency have developed a list of products and services to assist the homeowners of mid-twentieth century buildings with their repair, replacement, or replication of original features that are beginning to fail. This guide, *Materials for Repair and Restoration Resources Guide*, can be found in Appendix H.

Teardowns and Infill Construction

Mid-twentieth century houses, including the ranch, are currently facing many threats. Included in these is the threat of destruction. The words “teardown” and “infill” have become commonplace in our society and pose a great threat to the architectural heritage of our country. The recession and crash of the housing market in the late 2000s provided a break from these dangers, but, as the markets rebound, the threats will surely resume.

This process, driven in part by the so-called “McMansion” movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, is destructive in ways beyond the complete loss of historic architectural resources because it changes the historic fabric and scale of existing neighborhoods, affects livability for surrounding neighbors, and changes the balance of economic and social diversity. Ranch houses and the neighborhoods that contain them are often targeted for this type of redevelopment for their large lot sizes, location, and rolling topography. Their small size, perceived ordinary qualities, and abundance also make Ranch houses prime targets for demolition and re-development.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is actively fighting the threat that teardowns and infill pose to the historic homes and are recommending prevention strategies to protect these historic resources. These strategies include moratoriums on demolitions, designation of local historic districts or preservation ordinances, establishment of conservation districts, implementation of design review processes for new construction, establishing floor-area-ratios and lot coverage requirements, development standards, down-zoning, easements and covenants, historic real estate marketing and education programs, and financial incentives and technical assistance programs. The number of historic homes and neighborhoods that are being destroyed daily across the United States is daunting. It is vital that these strategies be

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

implemented to ensure that the mid-twentieth century houses that represent an important part of the social and architectural context of the past century are not lost forever.

Modifications and Historic Integrity

Ranch houses are often modified to accommodate the homeowner's taste or to provide more living space. While modifications may benefit the homeowner, they can often detract from a structure's historical significance if they are not accomplished in a manner that preserves the building's key architectural features and characteristics. A building must maintain its historic integrity to be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; therefore, it is important to consider the key elements of the building before making any alterations. Integrity includes location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Often, integrity can be measured by looking at the scale and proportion of the house, as well as any additions or modifications that have been made. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* can guide homeowners in the process of making sensible alterations and can be found in Appendix I.

In a Ranch house that has already undergone modifications or additions, it is important to identify if the changes compromise the home's integrity. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation established by the National Park Service can help determine if a home is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, New South Associates, a consulting firm in Atlanta, Georgia, has established three levels of evaluation signals to determine if an alteration has compromised the integrity of the Ranch. These signals can be found in their publication, *The Ranch House in Georgia*, and are summarized below.⁶⁹

Alterations that can affect integrity include, but are not limited to:

- Enclosing the carport, garage, or porch
- Significant changes to the home's front entry that is of a different architectural style or type than the ranch
- Major changes in the roof design
- Changes to the appearance of the exterior façade such as painting over the original masonry

Alterations that may affect integrity include, but are not limited to:

- Additions to the side or rear of house
- Chimney alteration or removal
- Changes to the windows and/or doors or the creation of new window and/or door openings
- Use of inappropriate building materials
-

Alterations that do not affect integrity include, but are not limited to:

- Additions of shutters, awnings, window bars, ramps, and/or decks

⁶⁹ Patrick Sullivan, Mary Beth Reed, and Tracey Fedor, *The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation* (Stone Mountain, Georgia: New South Associates, 2009), 90-111.

While these evaluation signals create a starting point in determining if the integrity of a Ranch house has been undermined, it is still important to contact a professional to determine if the house is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Many cultural resource management firms in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area specialize in making such determinations.

Recommendations for Next Steps

Future Research and Initiatives

- Informal Assessment Surveys of mid-twentieth century neighborhoods in DeKalb County
 - “Windshield” surveys to identify types of houses in neighborhoods and to capture photographs of those houses
 - Integrity surveys to determine the amount of alterations made to housing
- Subdivision surveys – to identify subdivisions that are representative of mid-twentieth century housing
- Documentation of resources – to create measured drawings and photographs to document significant resources in case of future destruction
- Architectural Surveys – to identify potentially significant resources before they become threatened
- Local Historic Designation Studies – to detail the historic context and significance of an area as well as to evaluate the ability of the resources to support a designation
- Work with Neighborhood Associations to protect housing stock

National Register Nominations

The National Register of Historic Places, authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Overseen by the National Park Service, the National Register identifies significant properties and districts for general planning purposes and makes available specific tax incentives for preservation purposes.

Designation is based on established criteria including age, integrity, and significance. Listing does not place obligations on private property owners nor does it place restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property. Individual properties as well as districts of historic properties can be nominated to the National Register. While individual listings make up a single structure or parcel of land, a historic district is a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

The information in this study should be used as a basis for creating National Register Nominations for both individual properties and districts of homes within DeKalb County. Listing properties in the National Register is a process that starts with Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office. The state office provides many resources and forms that guide the process, such as the Historic Property Information Form. This form helps highlight the

neighborhoods importance and includes six sections: general information, description, history, significance, support documentation and checklist, and additional guidelines. Needed information includes, but is not limited to, a chronology of the development history of the neighborhood, identification and evaluation of all associated contributing property types and individual properties, the identification of important persons associated with the neighborhood, a statement of significance, proposed boundary lines, a summary of the identification and evaluation methods used, and representative photographs. The research and application of material in this historic context report of DeKalb County will help provide homeowners and local officials with a large portion of the information that is required for the nomination process.

For more information on the National Register Nomination process or to obtain the Historic Property Information Form, please visit the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office website at <http://www.gashpo.org/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=461>.

Local Designation

While the National Register of Historic Places provides many incentives and is a major accomplishment, it provides almost no real protection. Designation through local government is the only way to protect the historic streetscapes, patterns of development, landscapes, and architectural fabric that represent the rich architectural and social contexts of the mid-twentieth century Ranch house neighborhoods in DeKalb County. Local designation also encourages sensitive development and discourages unsympathetic changes, protecting the value of an area.

Local historic districts are designated by a local historic preservation ordinance and governed by a local historic preservation commission. The local designation of properties or districts in DeKalb County will protect the community's historic properties and areas through a design review process administered by the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission. The DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission is the governing body that regulates any designated local historic buildings or districts in the county. If local designation is approved, the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission will regulate any exterior work on a property or a property within a district through a Certificate of Appropriateness process, as well as provide information and technical assistance to homeowners and residents.

The design review process is guided by a set of design guidelines, which are based on the historic resources located within the district. These design guidelines are a tool to both residents and the historic preservation commission and offer guidance on appropriate methods for the upkeep and rehabilitation of historic buildings as well as assist in the design of new construction in the historic district.

For more information on local designation, please visit DeKalb County's Planning and Development website at <http://www.yourdekalb.com/planning/>.

Summary

Between 1945 and 1970, DeKalb County witnessed phenomenal growth. A government friendly to industry and willing to provide the infrastructure to induce the construction new manufacturing plants in the county facilitated an enormous increase in population as people moved into the area to take advantage of the new jobs. New ideas about housing, transportation, education, and commerce prompted the construction of well over a thousand new subdivisions. Developers of these subdivisions used nationally-recognized modern planning strategies, construction methods, and materials, but also employed many locally-educated architects and designers, who deployed designs that took advantage of local climate and topography and respected local social norms. Local builders used locally-available materials such as granite and brick, and homeowners and landscapers incorporated regional plant species into the landscape designs. All of these activities combined to create a pattern of suburban development unique to DeKalb County.

Central to that pattern of suburban development is the use of the Ranch house as the dominant residential type during this period. The number of Ranch houses built in DeKalb County is a distinctive feature of development during the study period, as is the variety of Ranch house designs. This is an outcome of the incremental development of small subdivisions that eventually blanketed the county, and gives development in the county its unique character.

Unfortunately, Ranch houses in DeKalb County are now threatened by re-development of the land on which they sit and by inappropriate modifications of the buildings themselves to meet twenty-first century living requirements. Victims of their own past popularity, Ranch houses are presently viewed as ordinary and plentiful. The result is that many people are not concerned when entire subdivisions of Ranch houses built in the 1950s or 1960s are razed to make way for new shopping centers or individual houses are demolished to allow for construction of larger homes. Preservation of these Ranch houses is urgently needed to maintain the integrity of the built environment unique to this period of growth in DeKalb County. Cultural resources like the Ranch house subdivisions in DeKalb County are a non-renewable resource; they must be protected now because they cannot be resurrected in the future.

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B. Fifty Largest Subdivisions in DeKalb County, GA, 1945-1970

This list was compiled from year 2005 DeKalb County tax assessor data. It represents the fifty largest subdivisions where more than seventy-percent of the total existing houses were constructed during the study period, and it shows the number of single-family residential-zoned structures within each subdivision. The list was created using the following process. First, single-family residential-zoned structures (with known dates of construction) were extracted from the database using zoning codes (R75, R85, R100, etc.). These addresses were then geocoded (tied to a physical location on earth) using ArcGIS and Atlanta Regional Commission streets data. Using a “neighborhood” code available in the tax assessor data, individual property points were grouped and the approximate center of each subdivision was identified.

Using subdivision center location, a new dataset was created containing the neighborhood code, the center coordinates, the land lot and district, and the names of streets within the subdivision. With this information, each subdivision’s name was researched using tax maps available at the assessor’s website. This last step in the process was necessary because DeKalb County does not have a computerized list of subdivision names. Future researchers should be aware that the numbers included here may represent a lower number than may actually exist in each subdivision. This is because all structures without a date of construction were omitted from the initial extraction. However, a spot check of the data showed greater than ninety-five percent coverage of construction dates for houses in the study period.

Subdivision	Years Built	Existing Houses		Longitude	Latitude
		Total	Built 1945 to 1970		
Abingdon	1956-1984	247	202	-84.212	33.80582
Alexander Estates	1932-1989	362	316	-84.2807	33.74103
Ashford Park	1945-1990	796	789	-84.3251	33.86826
Battle Forrest	1962-1997	362	346	-84.2849	33.70202
Belvedere Park	1934-1990	591	589	-84.2686	33.74614
Bouldercliff	1948-1996	594	587	-84.3174	33.71226
Briarcliff Woods	1940-1999	399	376	-84.3018	33.84017
Briar Moor	1955-1997	252	241	-84.2723	33.8596
Briar Park	1942-1987	241	235	-84.3407	33.7946
Chapel Hill	1932-2003	881	306	-84.2207	33.67331
Chelsea Heights	1839-2001	278	210	-84.3096	33.78158
Churchill Downs	1937-2000	294	243	-84.2387	33.70259
Columbia Valley	1954-1974	344	316	-84.2458	33.7282
Drew Valley	1953-1989	375	373	-84.3236	33.85426
Druid Lake	1954-1974	292	291	-84.2914	33.80862
Durand Falls	1924-2002	291	243	-84.316	33.78116
East Lake	1925-2004	436	408	-84.2924	33.73549
Eastdale	1929-1965	272	271	-84.2602	33.72835
Eastland Heights	1920-2002	276	222	-84.3382	33.71926
Edgemore	1939-2005	563	503	-84.3424	33.72737
Embry Hills	1956-1973	252	246	-84.2558	33.88068
Emerald Falls	1958-2002	616	507	-84.2248	33.72049
Glennwood	1958-1976	222	216	-84.2262	33.74051
Gresham Park	1950-2001	277	271	-84.3135	33.70517
Greystone Park	1952-2001	241	239	-84.3029	33.72508

Subdivision	Years Built	Existing Houses		Longitude	Latitude
		Total	Built 1945 to 1970		
Kingsley	1966-2003	407	253	-84.2969	33.94996
Leafmore Hills	1949-1960	269	269	-84.2958	33.81844
Lindmoor	1950-1986	249	235	-84.2565	33.82026
Longview	1958-2002	352	327	-84.3035	33.90455
Majestic Acres	1936-1999	284	244	-84.2581	33.76798
Merry Hills	1900-2000	235	231	-84.3183	33.81973
Midway	1880-2005	512	285	-84.2939	33.75604
Mountain Brook	1953-1998	293	276	-84.24	33.74582
Northcrest	1959-1981	357	349	-84.2433	33.89068
Northwoods	1950-1973	445	444	-84.2799	33.88976
Oakcliff Estates	1960-1984	554	534	-84.2561	33.90954
Parker Ranch	1928-1988	357	352	-84.308	33.70102
Parkview	1920-1997	235	213	-84.3245	33.74336
Pendley Hills	1944-2004	251	247	-84.2289	33.75628
Sagamore Hills	1930-1991	367	362	-84.3008	33.83011
Sexton Woods	1929-1980	334	321	-84.3139	33.89725
Shadowrock Acres	1964-1982	236	230	-84.1812	33.80351
Toney Gardens	1925-1987	287	285	-84.2613	33.72031
Toney Valley	1950-1969	458	458	-84.2714	33.72316
University Heights	1940-1997	269	261	-84.2945	33.80174
Valley Brook	1954-1962	248	248	-84.2634	33.81541
Wakefield Forest	1950-1991	333	332	-84.3025	33.85955
Woodland Hills	1950-2005	344	336	-84.3427	33.811

C. DeKalb County, GA Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce Presidents, 1938-1972

The following list was compiled by the staff of the DeKalb History Center. Based on the research for this report (Single-Family Residential Housing in DeKalb County, GA, 1945-1970), this organization was originally called the DeKalb County Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce. Advertisements reflected the original name in 1948. By 1959, the name of the organization had been changed to DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce due to the rapidly diminishing agricultural industry in the county.

1938: Malcolm A. Thompson (banker)
 1939: George W. Woods (real estate)
 1940: E. B. Emrey (telephone officer)
 1941: A. M. Chandler (automobile dealer)
 1942: Julius A. McCurdy (attorney)
 1943: Guy W. Rutland, Sr. (contractor)
 1944: Fred L. Cannon (soft drink bottler)
 1945: J. W. Battle (savings and loan official)
 1946: Norman Elsas (textile official)
 1947: Candler A. Murphy (pump distributor)
 1948: Walter H. Scott (textile official)
 1949: Kelsey D. Howington (granite producer)
 1950: Clark Harrison, Sr. (business college president)
 1951: Faye H. Robarts (real estate)
 1952: C. Payne McMurry (savings and loan official)
 1953: Claude H. Blount (banker)
 1954: Reid H. Cofer (retail merchant)
 1955: Tom M. Callaway (automobile dealer)
 1956: Charles O. Emmerich (Emory University business manager)
 1957: Charles O. Emmerich (Emory University business manager)
 1958: Jim Anderson (insurance agent)
 1959: E. Aldine Richardson (banker)
 1960: J. C. Haynes (retail public relations)
 1961: William C. Thibadeau (real estate)
 1962: Charles S. Daley
 1963: Roy Blount (Decatur Federal)
 1964: Rufus Camp
 1965: H. G. Pattillo (Patillo Construction)
 1966: William Thornton
 1967: Jess Avery
 1968: Orie Myers
 1969: Warren Woolsey
 1970: Forrest Henderson
 1971: J. M. Aiken, Jr.
 1972: Henry Leiphart, Jr. (Leiphart Chevrolet)



The DeKalb New Era, May 13, 1948

D. DeKalb County Civic and Garden Clubs, 1931-1970

The following list of civic and garden clubs was derived primarily from *The DeKalb New Era*. Information on the Glen Haven Civic Club, Briarcliff Woods Garden Club, and DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs was obtained from Subject Files at the DeKalb History Center. The symbol, "<", indicates that the club existed prior to the year listed, but the exact "year founded" has not been determined.

Name	Type	Year Founded	Activities/Comments
Allgood Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Avondale Estates Garden Club	Garden	1931	Enhancing neighborhood
Autumn Park Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Avon Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Landscaped Avondale Elementary School
Azalea Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Belvedere Park Garden Club	Garden	1953	
Belvedere Pines Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Met at Decatur Federal Savings and Loan Building at Candler and Glenwood.
Briarcliff Woods Garden Club	Garden	1957	Named best garden club in DeKalb County in 1987
Burnt Creek Garden Club	Garden	1963	
Candlelight Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Casa Linda Club	Garden	Unknown	
Chamblee Civic Club	Civic	<1947	
Christmas-Vista Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Circle Hill Garden Club	Garden	<1960	
Cleavemark Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Clairmont Estates Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	

Clairmont Heights Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
College Heights Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Colombine Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Coventry Woods Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Creek Park Hills Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Decatur Civic Club	Civic	<1947	Baseball team
Decatur Garden Study Club	Garden	Unknown	Beautified grounds of Boys High School
Deep Dene Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
DeKalb County Federation of Garden Club Incorporated	Garden	1948	Helped restore Callanwolde conservatory
Doraville Civic Club	Civic	1934	Assisted with Civilian Defense activities during WW2
Dunaire Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Durand Club	Garden	Unknown	
Emory-Dale Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Fair Oaks Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Fern Creek Club	Garden	Unknown	
Ferndale Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Fernbank Forest Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Flintridge Forrest Club	Garden	Unknown	Met at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church
Garden Arts Club	Garden	Unknown	
Garden Gate Club	Garden	Unknown	
Garden Lane Garden Club	Garden	1954	

Garden Lane Garden Club	Garden	1954	
Garden Study Club	Garden	Unknown	Donated a dogwood tree to each school in Decatur in 1945
Glen Haven Civic Club	Civic	1936	Community affairs
Glen Haven Garden Club	Garden	1945	Auxiliary of Glen Haven Civic Club
Glenncrest Garden Club	Garden	<1947	Placed signs at Glennwood Estates in November 1945
Glenwood Hills Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Greenbough Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Heaton Park Club	Garden	Unknown	
Hill and Valley Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Toney Valley Area
Jasmine Club		Unknown	
Johnson Estates Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Kirk Road Garden Club	Garden	1947	
Knollwood Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Met at Decatur Federal Savings and Loan Building in Belvedere
Leafmore Hills Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Met at Oak Grove Methodist Church
Lullwater Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Mark Trail Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Men's Garden Club	Garden	1958	
Merry Hills Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Misty Valley Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Garden & Outdoor Lighting
Oakhurst Civic Club	Civic	Unknown	Met at Oakhurst School Auditorium

Oakhurst Civic Club	Civic	Unknown	Met at Oakhurst School Auditorium
Oakhurst Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Northwoods Garden Club	Garden	late 1950s	
Parkwood Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Pinetree Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Pine Glen Club	Garden	Unknown	
Pine Lake Men's Civic Club	Civic	Unknown	Erected sign at city limit of Pine Lake
Randolph Estates Garden Club	Garden	1962	
Robinhill Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Sagamore Hills Club	Garden	1957	
Sagewood Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Clarkston
Sherbrooke Forest Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Smokerise Morning Glories	Garden	1970	
The Men's Garden Club	Garden	1953	
Tilson Park Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Top of the Hill Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Westchester Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
West Ponce de Leon Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Whispering Pines Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	
Wisteria Garden Club	Garden	Unknown	Met at Glenwood branch of Decatur Federal Savings and Loan

E. Selected List of Titles Pertaining to Gardening in GA and Southeastern U.S., 1945-1970

The following list of selected titles was compiled on April 15, 2010, by Staci L. Catron, Director, Cherokee Garden Library, Atlanta History Center.

- Blackwell, Cecil. *Gardening in Georgia*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension Service, 1958.
- Bralliar, Floyd Burton. *The Southern Gardener*. Nashville, TN: Rich Printing Company Press, 1946.
- Cooney, Loraine Meeks, ed. *Garden History of Georgia, 1733-1933*. Atlanta: Garden Club of Georgia, 1976.
- Davis, Ben Arthur. *Holland's Handbook for Southern Gardeners, South and Southwest*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951.
- Freeborn, Elbridge, ed. *Georgia Victory Gardening Guide: Garden for Victory*. Atlanta, GA: Georgia Power Co., c1944.
- Garden Club of Georgia. *Sixty-Year History of the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.: 1928-1988*. Athens, GA: Garden Club of Georgia, 1988.
- Garden Club of Georgia. *Garden Gateways: official bulletin of the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.*, date range of 1934-Present.
- Georgia Power Co. *Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place*. Atlanta, GA: Georgia Power Co., c.1960.
- Graham, Violet Emily. *Landscaping the Home Grounds*. Jackson, MS: State Board for Vocational Education in cooperation with the Agricultural Education Dept., Mississippi State College, c1955.
- Hartzog, Mattie Abney. *Garden Time in the South*. Harrisburg, PA: J. H. McFarland, Co., c1951.
- Hastings, Louise and Donald. *The Southern Garden Book*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948.
- Henderson, Edith, ed. *The Peachtree Planner: A Garden Schedule for Atlanta and Surrounding Areas*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Garden Club, 1966.
- Hoffman, John Leon. *365 Happy Days in the Garden*. Forsyth, GA: Hoffman, 1950.
- Hudson, Charles Johnson. *Hudson's Garden Scrapbook*. Atlanta, GA: Twentieth Century Enterprises, 1951.
- Hudson, Charles Johnson. *Hudson's Southern Gardening: A Practical and Complete Handbook*. Atlanta, GA: Tupper & Love, c1953.

Continued

Hudson, Charles Johnson. *Hudson's Garden Scrapbook*. Atlanta, GA: Twentieth Century Enterprises, 1951.

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Korbobo, Raymond. *Complete Home Landscaping and Garden Guide*. New York: W. H. Wise, 1954.

Lawrence, Elizabeth. *A Southern Garden, A Handbook for the Middle South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942.

Mason, Hamilton. *Your Garden in the South*. Princeton, N.J., Van Nostrand, c1961.

McHatton, Thomas Hubbard. *Armchair Gardening: Some of the Spirit, Philosophy, and Psychology of the Art of Gardening*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1947.

Ragsdale, Elmo. *Hints for Georgia Gardeners*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1942.

Williams, Thomas G. *Landscaping Georgia Homes*. Athens, GA: Agricultural Extension Service, University of Georgia, College of Agriculture, 1958.

F. Architectural Survey Form for Mid-Twentieth Century House Identification

Neighborhood: Location: <small>North-South/East-West:</small>	Date: Survey Team:		Other															
	Split																	
	Multistory																	
	International																	
	Duplex																	
	Modern Contemp																	
	Bungalow																	
	Apartment																	
	American Small House																	
	Primary Year of Build																	
Street																		
Notes:																		

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G. Landscape Survey Form for Mid-Twentieth Century Landscaping Identification

Neighborhood or Park:		Date:											
Location within County: <small>North South East West</small>		Survey Team:											
				Streetscape									
Street	Primary Year of Build	Sidewalk		Layout		Lights		Edging		Driveway		Set Back	
		Straight	Curvilinear	Modern	Historic	Granite	Concrete	Straight	Curvilinear	Shallow	Middle	Deep	
Notes:													

A. Sculther

Neighborhood or Park:		Date:						
Location within County:		Survey Team:						
North/South/East/West								
Street	Soft Features		Hard Features					
	Planting Location	Planting Type	Fences	Gates	Stairway	Masonry Walls	Other 1	Other 2
	Foundation	Tree						
	Central Bed	Bush						
	Boundary	Flower						
	Year of Build							
	Primary							
Notes:								

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H. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing standards for all programs under Departmental authority and for advising Federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and can encompass the exterior and interior of the buildings. They also cover related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. To be certified for Federal tax purposes, a rehabilitation project must be determined by the Secretary to be consistent with the historic character of the structure(s), and where applicable, the district in which it is located.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Continued

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

For more information, please see <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm>

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- “Atlanta Goes Modern: Without Going Overboard.” *House and Home*,. April 1953.
- “Here’s a House Divided- Happily, for Formal and Informal Living.” *House and Home*,. April 1956.
- “People in Atlanta Like the Trees and Outdoor Living.” *House and Home*, October 1956.
- “Split-levels Spread to More Cities and Their Designs Improve.” *House and Home*, July 1956.
- “With this Flat Roof, No Costly Valleys.” *House and Home*, June 1955.
- “You Couldn’t Put This Luxurious House Under Anything but a Flat Roof.” *House and Home*, October 1956.
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IX. Images

