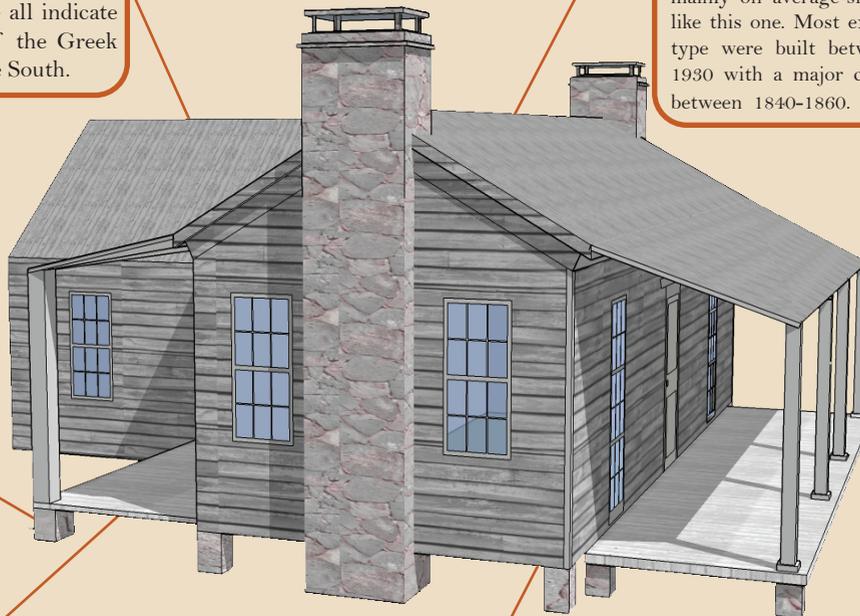


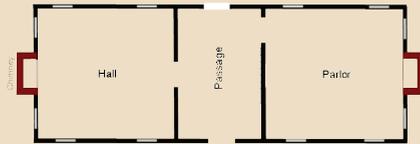
The Briarlake Forest Homestead has experienced significant alterations over the years. Originally, the home was just two rooms with a rear kitchen. This rendering is as Grace Flowers remembers it from her childhood in the 1930's. Since then, the house has been altered to accommodate changing styles and needs.

This homestead was at one time symmetrical, with two rock chimneys on each end. It's symmetry, central hallway, square columns and sweeping roofline all indicate this is a vernacular version of the Greek revival style that dominated the South.

Common in the South, this home was originally raised on rock piers, to allow proper air circulation, to keep the home cool in the summer and to prevent wood rot caused by moisture.



In the 19th century, porches served as living areas where families could rest, enjoy the cool breeze in the summer, discuss farm crops, and share chores such as shelling peas and peeling peaches for canning. At one time, this home had two porches, one in the front (still seen today) and one in the back off the original kitchen.



The central hallway type was a favorite for Georgians throughout the 19th century. It consists of a central hallway or passageway between two rooms. In this house, the hallway leads to a rear kitchen. The type is evenly distributed across the state, appearing mainly on average-sized farmsteads, like this one. Most examples of this type were built between 1830 and 1930 with a major cluster occurring between 1840-1860.

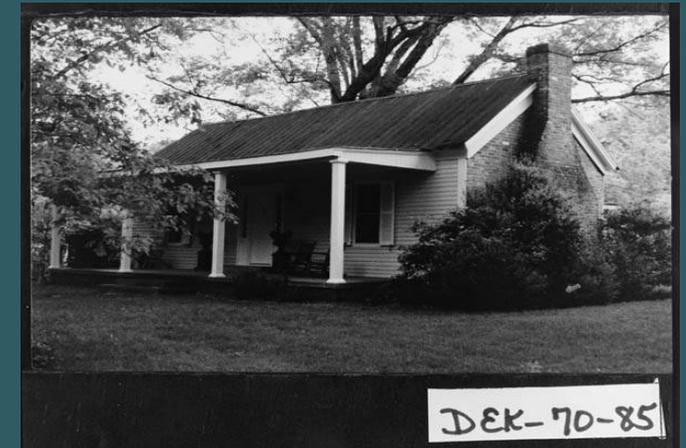
Timber framing was the most common method of building wooden buildings in America until the 20th century. This home has hand hewn, imperfect beams in the basement with original bark (above). This is a valuable dating tool in determining this house was from the mid-19th century, before the common accessibility of saw mills for mechanical cutting.

For more information on Briarlake Forest, visit briarlakecommunityforest.org.

For more information on the families who inhabited this property refer to *The Gresham, Weed, Wells, Long and Langely Families of DeKalb County Georgia, 1792-1988* and *The Cash, Leavell, Pylant, Gresham and Flowers Families of DeKalb County, Georgia, 1625-1987*, both by **Grace Gresham Flowers**.

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The Briarlake Forest Homestead



"The history of the early settlers of DeKalb is but the record of their lives spent in laying the foundations upon which we are building. We are reaping from their sowing, and the peace, the liberty, and the prosperity we enjoy are the results of their early building of one unit in a great state."

- The Hon. Charles Murphy Candler, DeKalb County Centennial Celebration, Decatur, Georgia, November 9, 1922.

Visuals by
Kimberly Ellis
Research by
Grace Flowers

The House Tells The Story

DeKalb County

1821

The Georgia land lotteries open up land in DeKalb County. Qualifying citizens can register for a chance to win land that had formerly been owned by the Creek Indians and is used as a way to expand the new frontier.

1850

The 1850 census indicates that DeKalb County is made up of small farms and not particularly wealthy. While DeKalb participates in the booming cotton economy, most farming is small-scale and for subsistence.



1864

In July of 1864, much of the Battle of Atlanta takes place in DeKalb County around the Courthouse and along DeKalb Avenue. The end of the Civil War marks a time of destitution and stark poverty with many small farmers scratching out a living with the help of their neighbors and family.

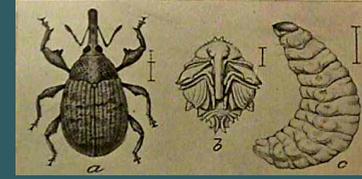
1869

As the realization of freedom settles on former slaves, some begin to organize churches of their own. In 1869, 2.5 acres of land lot 229 is decided to start the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Around this time, Mt. Zion AME is established as well on LaVista Road.



1897

"If you wish to live among good people, drink good water, have good health, and live a long time, come to East Atlanta and buy yourself a home" advises The New DeKalb Era.



1950's-1960's

DeKalb County becomes less agrarian and more suburban. Developments such as Amberwood, Silvestone and Breckenridge are built to house Atlanta's growth. DeKalb's farming industry mostly disappears and DeKalb has more miles of interstate than any other county in Georgia.



1900

An indicator of DeKalb's agrarian nature, the 1900 agricultural census reveals that the county has more cows than the city of Decatur has people.

1930's

The boll weevil, a destructive beetle that feeds on cottonbuds and flowers, devastates the Southern market in the first half of the 20th century. Exacerbated by the Great Depression, farmers in DeKalb are encouraged to diversify their crops along with switch to dairy farming to mitigate losses.

Present

Today, DeKalb county boasts a growing, diverse population. Originally mostly whites of Anglo-Saxon descent, its population has become racially and ethnically diverse. Today DeKalb is also home to nine colleges and other postsecondary institutions.

The Briarlake Forest Homestead

Between 1822-1850

William Cash, of Amherst County, Virginia, purchases 808 acres, including the old town of Montreal. William dies on Land Lot 190 in 1850.

1821

Eaton Lee draws Land Lot 192 in the 18th District, also known as the Browning Militia District. Lot 192 is the location in which the homestead is located.



1864

McElroy passes away just one year after his purchase. His estate is passed to his son-in-law Nathan Lankford. Lankford splits up lot 192 and sells the back half to Robert T. Livsey, a local Baptist preacher. Livsey donates 2 acres of his lot for the burial ground of 20 unknown Confederate soldiers. Descendents of Nathan Lankford later own Lankford Store, now Dave's Produce on LaVista Road.

1851

William Cash's estate is sold to Spencer P. Wright, the Foreman of the DeKalb Grand Jury. Wright is concerned for the education of poor children and promotes competency examinations for teachers. Wright pays \$306 for the property.

1885

George Bayliss Hudson, former Captain of the 36th Regiment of the Georgia Volunteers during the Civil War, passes away and the lot goes to his son Forrest P. Hudson, a physician, for \$505. Cotton is the principal crop at this time.

1918

Tragedy strikes when Dr. Forrest P. Hudson owns the property. Him and his wife have several children pass away while in the house. They are buried in a small cemetery on the property. Dr. Hudson sells the property to J.P. McConnell.

1919

The property is sold to Alma Long Gresham who is married to John N. Gresham. Their granddaughter, Grace Flowers, remembers Briarlake Forest's large oak trees that towered over the property. Large beech trees, dogwoods, lacy ferns, purple violets and wild honeysuckle color Grace's memory of her childhood on this site.

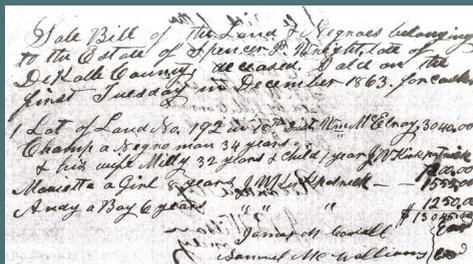


1920s

Milton and Hattie Wood purchase a portion of lot 192. Milton is a local African American Baptist preacher and burned wood to make charcoal, a common practice for the time. It is believed that Blackwood Road is named after this family.

1863

William McElroy, of South Carolina purchases Lot 192 for \$3,040, roughly \$59,000 in 2015. The price appreciation from 1851-1863 may indicate that the Briarlake Forest Homestead was built before this time.



2015

Over the years, the property shrinks to 21 acres. Property lost was sold for new housing developments in the 1950's and 1960's. In 2015, the property is sold to DeKalb County. The 21 acre parcel is the last of its kind inside I-285.



1949

Alma Long Gresham sells 71.2 acres to Charles T. Cathey for a sum of 'Ten Dollars and Other Valuable Considerations', which includes a small parcel to be left to her children, Bertha Mae Gresham and James Otis Gresham. By the 1940s, farming has scaled back on the property. Gresham clears lots, grades property, hand digs basements for the post-war boom of new subdivisions in the area.

1939

The first aerial is taken of the property. Note,

the agricultural terracing, a practice strongly encouraged in the late 1930s to DeKalb farmers to improve the soil and increase their crop productivity. Around this time, the farm gradually shifts to a Dairy, a popular trend after the boll weevil's destructive path through the South.

