

Summer 2023



Captain Albert D.
Wright's Congressional
Medal of Honor

ATLANTA
HISTORY
CENTER

HISTORY MATTERS

01

On Background

Message from the Chair & CEO

02-09

Feature Section: Veterans History

Veterans History Collections
Honoring Service and Sacrifice:
Veterans Park
Remembering Rick Lester

10-15

Cover Artifact

Captain Albert D. Wright's
Congressional Medal of Honor
United States Congress, 1904
Gift of Jim Philips in honor of
Mrs. Katherine Wright Philips
by her sons, 2001

The Congressional Medal of Honor was designed by Christian Schussel (1824–1879) and engraved by Anthony C. Paquet (1814-1882) in 1862 and Congress issued the first Medal of Honor in 1863. In 1904, Major General George L. Gillespie (1841-1913) redesigned the medal, and the patent for his “Gillespie” design was transferred to the Secretary of War to preserve the medal’s distinctiveness.

Captain Albert D. Wright (1842–1926) served in Company G, 43rd United States Colored Troops (USCT). On July 30, 1864, at Petersburg, Virginia, Wright led his troops to advance on enemy lines, thus capturing a stand of colors and its color guard. Wright was severely wounded in the act. He first received the Medal of Honor in 1893 for this demonstration of gallantry. Wright received the updated “Gillespie” Medal of Honor in 1904.

Exhibitions & Collections

Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley:
Let the World See
The Road to Good Taste
100 Years of Airport History

16-21

Programs

Juneteenth 2023
A New Way to Search Atlanta History
Center’s Collections

22-24

Goizueta Gardens

Swarm Catchers to the Rescue
Beyond the Barnyard

ON BACKGROUND



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

William B. Peard

Board Chair

Sheffield Hale

President & CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters of Atlanta History Center:

As we move into another summer, we are pleased to share these updates with you about happenings at Atlanta History Center. First, our institution is excited to participate in the third annual Civic Season, a period of historically-informed civic engagement from Juneteenth through the Fourth of July. Organized by the nationwide history and civics coalition Made By Us, we enjoyed our annual, on campus Juneteenth program along with looking at stories of service from our nation’s veterans in this issue of *History Matters*.

We also hope that you will join us for two temporary exhibitions opening this summer. In June, we opened a new exhibition in Swan House entitled *The Road to Good Taste: The Design Life of Ruby Ross Wood*, curated by Atlanta History Center and telling the largely forgotten story of the interior designer (or, as she would have preferred to be called, decorator) of Swan House—considered the “leading American decorator” of her time, with the article adding “her knowledge of color and rhythm in arranging an interior amounts to genius,” according to *House & Garden* in 1938.

In August, we are grateful to have the opportunity to host the traveling exhibition *Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See* sharing the devastating but important story of the murder of teenager Emmett Till, his mother’s courage, and the lasting legacy of the Civil Rights activists spurred to action by this tragic event. This exhibition is designed for children and adults, ages 10 and up.

If you’re interested in diving into historical research, we hope you’ll make use of our new federated search function, generously supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. This new search tool marks a milestone for our institution, making all of our databases containing information about archival documents, finding aids, museum artifacts, photos, videos, and more available all in one place for the very first time in our nearly 100-year history. Continuing to adapt our institution to be more digitally savvy and useful for people in Atlanta and beyond who need access to historical resources is critical to our future.

Thank you to all of our supporters for your ongoing commitment to Atlanta History Center and our mission to connect people, history, and culture.

Sincerely,

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTIONS

BY SUE VERHOEF
Director of Oral History and Genealogy

RIGHT PAGE Image of a box containing Kenneth Roberts' medals, insignia, unit patches, and dog tags. The silk American flag is known as a "blood chit," a piece of fabric identifying the bearer as part of the Allied forces and promising in several languages to reward anyone rendering him assistance. Gift of Ken Roberts, 2015.





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The Atlanta History Center Veterans History Project is an extraordinary collection of video and audio interviews that document the experiences of over 800 men and women who served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, the Global War on Terror, and the civilians who supported them. Their stories cover a broad spectrum of military life and range from the humorous to the tragic. There is the Army Air Force gunner whose electrically heated suit shorted out in his groin in the midst of aerial combat; the Army “Dustoff” pilot whose crew made more room inside the aircraft for the wounded by clinging to the helicopter skids outside; the Merchant Marine whose mother dreamed she saw him sitting in a tiny boat in the middle of the ocean on the very night he left his sinking ship for a lifeboat off the coast of South America.

The stories are, in short, amazing. But from a museum perspective, it’s particularly exciting when a veteran chooses to donate photographs or documents or artifacts to accompany their interview, adding new dimensions to their story. It isn’t often we score a collecting “home run”: an interview, a compelling photograph, and an unusual artifact. But it does happen.

Former Forest Park Mayor [Sparkle K. Adams](#) interviewed recently about her service in the United States Air Force. She speaks candidly about the harassment she experienced in a male-dominated work place because she is a woman and because she is a Black woman. In 1975, she was serving as an air traffic controller at K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base when she and her husband discovered they were expecting their first child. She recalls with emotion the conversation she had with her Air Force commander. “[He] told me, point blank, “You can have an abortion. Or you can get out.” She left the Air Force then but re-entered a few years later, giving 25 years of outstanding service to the Air Force and Air Force Reserves before retiring in 2006 as a Master Sergeant. Adams generously donated photographs and documents pertaining to her military and civilian life, as well as a unique artifact: her MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) suit, a complicated set of protective gear designed to protect the wearer from chemical and biological agents and radioactive materials. Because of her generous donation, we can better tell the stories of our Persian Gulf War veterans and those who have served and are now serving in the Global War on Terror.

Some veterans are not prepared to donate original photographs or artifacts they have treasured for decades. In those cases, with the veteran’s permission, we can borrow a small selection of items to scan or photograph and return the originals. [Kenneth Roberts](#), who served in the China-Burma-India theatre during World War II, is one such veteran. A pilot with the “Burma Banshees,” the Army Air Force 80th Fighter Group, he loaned us a few photographs to scan and a shadow box of his medals and unit patch to photograph. But perhaps the most compelling item in his donation is gun camera footage from the very P-47 aircraft he piloted during missions flown late in the war over targets in India. The footage is grainy, but stunning. How Roberts found the footage on his way home from India is a story in and of itself. And he shares a wry incident during a solo training flight when his discarded cigarette ignited a fire in the cockpit that he managed to extinguish in a most unusual way.

In a few cases, materials find their way to us after a veteran passes away. [Thaddeus Sobieski](#)’s children brought several of his belongings to us after his death in 2020. Sobieski was an Army veteran of the Korean War who earned the Silver Star for rescuing a seriously wounded comrade from the Iron Triangle. His jacket and sewing kit, combined with his 2004 interview, give researchers a glimpse of what life was like in that “Forgotten War.”

And while there is nothing quite like examining Adams’ MOPP suit while she talks about her duties as an air cargo supervisor or watching Roberts’ gun camera footage while he describes a mission, there are times when the artifact alone must do all the “talking,” because its owner cannot.



3

Such is the case with Paul William Murphy Jr.’s trunk. Murphy was killed in Vietnam on September 14, 1969. He was 19 years old. Filled with his uniforms, photographs, and letters to his girlfriend, the trunk is a painful reminder of the human cost of war. Donated by his family in 2019, it raises as many questions as it answers, but it is the closest we will ever get to understanding his experience in the Vietnam War.

We are deeply grateful to our veterans and to their families for the privilege of preserving their stories as well as the photographs, documents, and artifacts that help bring them to life.

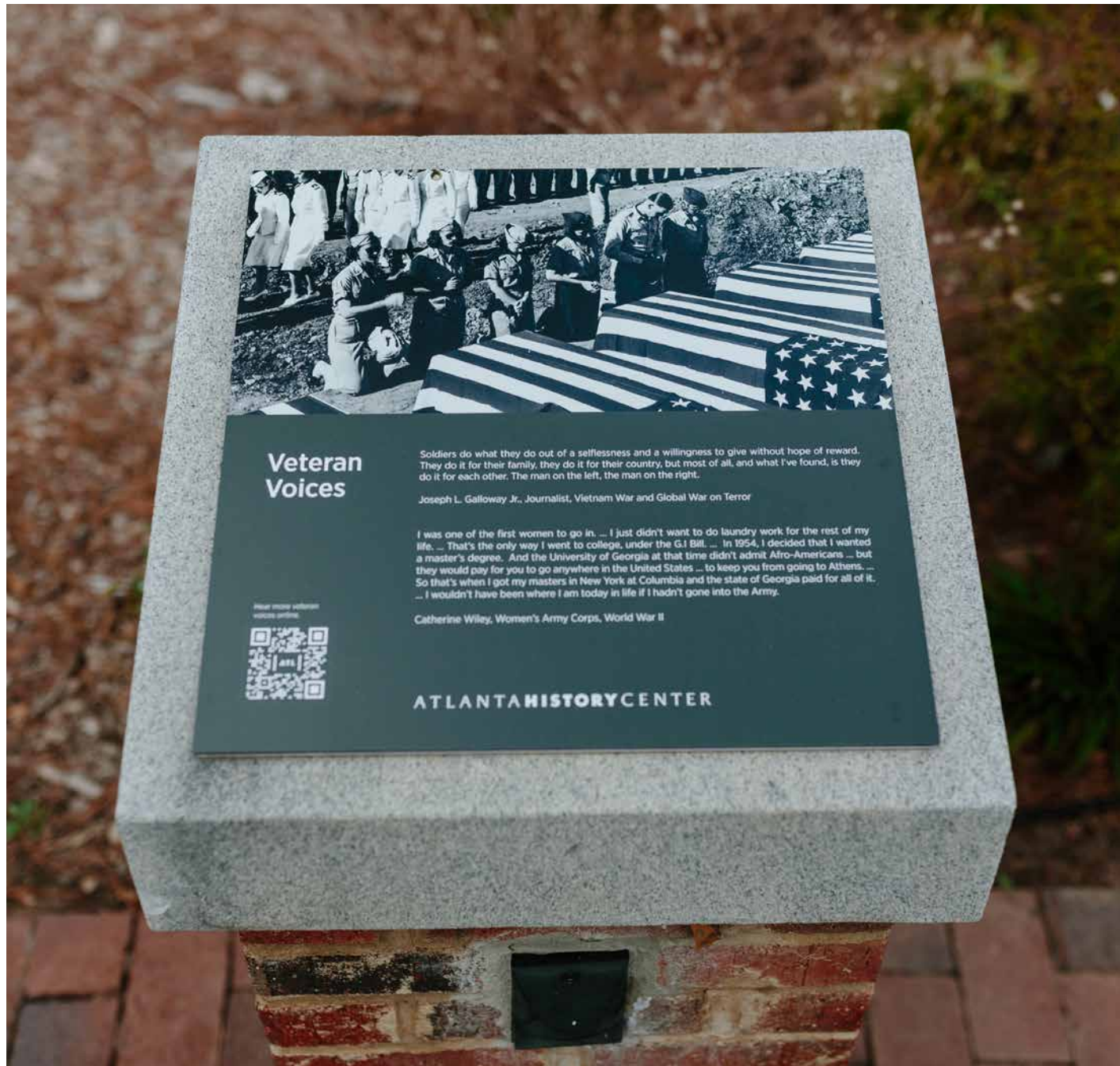
For more information about the Veterans History Project, to schedule an interview, or to discuss a potential donation, please contact Sue VerHoef at sverhoef@atlantahistorycenter.com or call 404-814-4042.

1 Barracks footlocker belonging to Paul William Murphy Jr., killed on 14 September 1969 in Vietnam. Pictured inside are his uniform items and the United States flag that draped his coffin. Gift of William J. Murphy II, 2019.

2 Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) suit, pictured with one pair of the rubber gloves included in this backpack of clothing items designed to protect the wearer from chemical, biological, and radioactive weaponry. Gift of Sparkle K. Adams, 2023.

3 Undated portrait of United States Air Force Reserves Master Sergeant Sparkle K. Adams. Gift of Sparkle K. Adams, 2023.

HONORING SERVICE AND SACRIFICE: VETERANS PARK



BY CLAIRE HALEY

Vice President of Democracy Initiatives & Author Programs

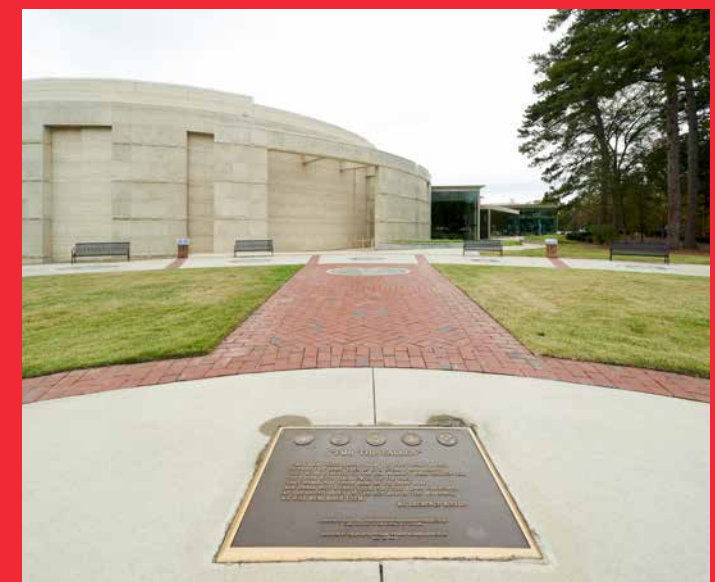
At the corner of West Paces Ferry Road and Slaton Drive stands Veterans Park, an interactive memorial space honoring veterans of all branches of all conflicts along with those who served during peacetime. The park is a testament to the partnership of the Atlanta military veteran community, who collaboratively designed the space with Atlanta History Center to be a place to honor veterans while being free and accessible to all.

The idea of Veterans Park dates to 2000, when it was originally designed with the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association (AVVBA) as a small commemorative space honoring those who served in the Vietnam War. The current Veterans Park opened on Memorial Day in 2013, the product of careful planning by a steering committee of veterans from the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, supported by The Home Depot Foundation, and designed by Marine Corps veteran and landscape architect, Mack R. Cain.

The park is filled with reminders of military service, past and present, and thoughtful tributes to the people of Georgia who served. The granite seals representing each of the military branches are made of stone specifically quarried from Georgia for the purpose, and beneath the Great Seal of the United States is a time capsule containing Sacred Soil and water. The Sacred Soil Ceremony, performed by the late Lt. Colonel Richard A. Lester, US Army Retired in 2013, represents the sacrifice for freedom and democracy across multiple conflicts, containing soil from battlefields of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The soil was collected in a helmet worn by Colonel John Ruggles of the Fourth Infantry Division at Utah Beach on D-Day and sprinkled on the park. The time capsule beneath the Great Seal of the United States contains soil and water from battlefields in Germany, France, Italy, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iwo Jima, Saipan, Wake Island, Tarawa, Peleliu, Guam, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Korea.

Today, Veterans Park serves as the venue for the yearly Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony, held at 11 AM on November 11th and honoring all US veterans, past and present. It also serves as a place for private commemorations, such as the AVVBA's annual Memorial Day ceremony. Visitors to the park are invited to contemplate stories of service available through oral histories accessible via QR code.

Veterans' history is a significant part of the American story. Veterans Park, the ceremonies it hosts, and the stories it helps to showcase, is one way that Atlanta History Center works to continuously honor that history.



REMEMBERING RICK LESTER

BY SHEFFIELD HALE
President & Chief Executive Officer



In the millions of stories that can be told about military service, all are truly remarkable. Filled with strife, conflict, and difficulties, they make the idea of war and sacrifice concrete. They help to illuminate not only the human cost, but the human ingenuity and common humanity also to be found in difficult moments.

Yet, too often, we don't have the opportunity to hear a full and detailed account of military service from those who served. There are many reasons why this may be true—service can be painful to recall, the veteran might feel like what they did wasn't that important, or, I think very commonly, the veteran just never quite gets around to sitting down and telling their story. That is why Atlanta History Center is a partner of the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project, a concerted effort to record detailed oral history interviews with local military veterans to ensure that their stories are preserved for future generations. Though we've interviewed more than 800 veterans to date, there are always more that we don't ever manage to get in the studio.

Lt. Colonel Rick Lester, retired from the US Army, is one such veteran who unfortunately never participated in the Veterans History Project. Lucky for us though, he took the time to write down some of his stories—such as the story of one particularly harrowing and daring helicopter mission during his service in Vietnam. Lester writes about this particular mission in a short piece he co-authored with Major Todd Copley. As a member of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) using the call sign "Jokers," Lester served as a Chief Warrant Officer flying Huey gunships. His platoon's mission, as he describes it, was to protect the base and infantry troops moving into battle. Though the Jokers were often deployed in response to enemy attacks, the opposing troops would always manage to clear out as the helicopters were launched.

Tired of the enemy constantly evading their attacks while inflicting heavy damage on the Americans, Lester led his team on a risky maneuver during which, instead of departing back to base at the usual time, the team delayed departure to catch the opposing troops off guard. Once in the air, the Jokers climbed up to 10,000 feet and entered auto rotation, allowing them to sneak up on the North Vietnamese company. The subsequent assault was successful, thanks to the daring set-up for the attack.

As the attack began to conclude, the crew turned on the ADF radio to the armed forces network when they heard Neil Diamond's "Brother Love's Travelin' Salvation Show!" The helicopter was then named in honor of the occasion and its door decorated accordingly. 38 years later, at a Neil Diamond concert in the Gwinnett Arena in Georgia, Lester and Copley got the nose cover of the aircraft signed by the star.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Rick Lester due to his involvement with Atlanta History Center. Similar to stories about his service, he always seemed willing to jump into crazy projects and make the impossible happen. One such effort included the tricky task of getting soil from major international battlefields across borders and to Atlanta, GA in time for the dedication of Veterans Park in 2013 for the Sacred Soil Ceremony. As a lawyer, I knew better than to ask about his methods too closely.

Hearing the story of the helicopter assault at Rick Lester's funeral on January 27, 2023, I was reminded that there is no substitute for listening to the stories of our military veterans from the people who were there. In his story, I heard bravery and the gravity of war all leveled with humor.

I hope that veterans and those who know a veteran take inspiration from Rick's story as there was much more to hear—and make time to get in the recording booth.



1 Lt. Colonel Rick Lester giving remarks at the 2013 dedication of Veterans Park at Atlanta History Center. Copyright Ron Sherman.

2 Rick Lester pictured next to his Huey gunship during the Vietnam War.

3 The nose cover of Lester's aircraft was decorated to remember the mission.



In 1955, a shocking open-casket funeral and the victim's mother's heart-wrenching tears shook many people in the United States and spurred a generation of young Black activists into direct action.

The victim was 14-year-old Emmett Till, a boy described by his mother as "lov[ing] to make people laugh." Like many Black children at the time, he visited his relatives down South in Mississippi for summer vacation.

His mother was Mamie Till-Mobley, who never saw her son alive again after that fateful trip in 1955.

One day while visiting a store with his cousins in Mississippi, Till jokingly whistled at a white female storekeeper named Carolyn Bryant, a grave violation of Jim Crow social code. Four days later, a group of white men kidnapped Till from his uncle's home in the middle of the night. They tortured and murdered him before tying his body to a cotton gin fan and dropping him into the Tallahatchie River. Roy Bryant, Carolyn Bryant's husband, and his half brother J.W. Milam were arrested for the murder, but a jury of their white peers exonerated them after just over one hour of deliberation. The men later profited off the murder by selling a confessional to *Look* magazine, which admitted to killing Till but provided many false details about the circumstances leading up to the kidnapping and the crime itself.

When Till's body was recovered from a river days after the murder, his mother organized an open-casket funeral in their hometown of Chicago. The funeral laid plain the blatant racially-motivated violence occurring regularly in the Jim Crow South. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, generations of young Black activists and white allies organized, many of them around the age Till would have been had he not been killed. The murder of Till catalyzed many young activists to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement, invigorating the effort.

The traveling exhibition *Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See*, collaboratively created by the Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley Institute, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, and The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, tells this important story of Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley through eyewitness accounts, an artifact, and multimedia resources. Given Till's age, the exhibit is designed to be suitable for pre-teens and teenagers along with adults. During its showing in Atlanta, local content will be added to place this gruesome event in broader context, especially given Atlanta's importance to the Civil Rights Movement after Till's death.

Today, Emmett Till would be 81 years old. His murder, the bravery of his mother, and the movement that the reaction to his death helped to inspire, all carry powerful lessons—lessons that are critical to pass on so that even as this important chapter in history becomes more distant in years, it does not become more distant in memory.

Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See will be on exhibit at Atlanta History Center from August 5 through September 17, 2023. The exhibition is recommended for ages 10 and up.

Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See is a touring exhibition created in collaboration with the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley Institute, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, the Till Family, and The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. It tells the story of Emmett Till and his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, and challenges visitors to make a ripple for justice in their own communities. Local sponsorship has been provided by The Rich Foundation.

This project was made possible in part by The National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy Demands Wisdom, The Maddox Foundation in Hernando, Mississippi, The Institute for Museum and Library Services [MH-249226-OMS-21], and The Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior [15.904].

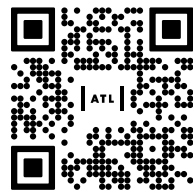
The views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Institute of Museum and Library Services or Department of the Interior.

THIS PAGE Mamie Till-Mobley pictured beside her son's open casket at his funeral. *Chicago History Museum, ST-17600658, Chicago Sun-Times Collection*

EMMETT TILL & MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY: LET THE WORLD SEE

BY CLAIRE HALEY
Vice President of Democracy Initiatives & Author Programs

LEARN MORE



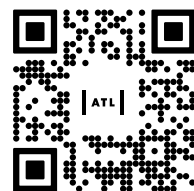


1

THE ROAD TO GOOD TASTE: THE DESIGN LIFE OF RUBY ROSS WOOD

BY CLAIRE HALEY
Vice President of Democracy Initiatives
& Author Programs

LEARN MORE



2

When people think of Swan House, one of the first things that often comes to mind is the name Philip Trammell Shutze and the stately, jazz-age aesthetic to his architectural design for the iconic home. Less thought of is the person behind the stunning interiors: Ruby Ross Wood. A journalist-turned-designer and businesswoman, Wood began her career before women even had the vote and during a time when it was unusual, and often frowned-upon, for women to work outside the home. Her talent as a writer for *Vogue* and as a designer, along with her savvy business sense, would lead her to become one of the originators of the field of interior design or, as Ruby Ross Wood would have preferred, decorating, as a profession and a highly sought-after designer for people across the country.

In Atlanta, Ruby Ross Wood first worked with future Swan House owners, Emily and Edward Inman, on their home in Ansley Park, completed in 1920. Though the non-color photographs cannot fully capture the contrast, imagine sky blue walls and yellow carpet that brought the rooms to life.

Though her designs made use of bold colors, she nonetheless valued the relationship between decorating and the people who would actually live in the rooms every day. “Decorating,” she says in one of her iconic quotes, “is the art of arranging beautiful things comfortably.”

If looking closely at photos of the Ansley Park home, pieces can be spotted that would be re-incorporated into the design of the 1928 Swan House mansion.

Today, the interior of Swan House is the last intact Ruby Ross Wood interior. A collaboration between Shutze, Emily Inman, and Wood, the house represents the essence of her interior decorating style. Striking, ornate, bright, but comfortable and timeless, the home persists with much of the original vision of the three creative minds—a rarity in itself.

Beginning June 8th through spring 2024, Swan House guests can learn more about the life and work of Ruby Ross Wood in a new temporary exhibition called *The Road to Good Taste: The Design Life of Ruby Ross Wood*. Located in two bedrooms converted to exhibition space, the new display includes photographs, sketches, magazine articles, and more. Guests can also see her work in all of the rooms of the house.

In the exhibit, guests will discover the tale of how a spunky and, according to author Mitchell Owens “chain-smoking, impatient, tart-tongued—was what used to be called a working girl”—all but invented the profession of interior design. Though she died in 1950 and most of her work exists only in photographs, her impact on the way that we all relate to our homes’ interiors, style, and visions of comfort, continues to this day.

The Road to Good Taste: The Design Life of Ruby Ross Wood is made possible by Emily Bourne Grigsby whose bequest endows support for the research, interpretation, and presentation of the role of women in the South. Additional support provided by Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles. Additional funding is from the bequest of Harvey M. Smith.

1 This room, designed by Wood for a bedroom, showcase’s her use of vivid color.

David Payne, artist, *House & Garden’s Complete Guide to Interior Decoration*, 1947

2 Interior view of the Swan House, showing the last preserved Ruby Ross Wood-designed interiors.

3 Of the color orange, Wood remarked in *The Honest House* in 1914, “Orange, pure and simple, is a magnificent color. ... A cream bowl of orange flowers and green leaves against a creamy-yellow wall – that is one of the things that makes one appreciate the gift of eyes!” “Playhouse in Jamaica” as pictured in *House & Garden’s Complete Guide to Interior Decoration*, 1947



3



100 YEARS OF AIRPORT HISTORY

BY JACKSON MCQUIGG
Vice President of Properties

It's a stunning statistic, when you think about it. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has been around for over one hundred years.

Back in November 1909, when Coca-Cola founder Asa G. Candler opened an automobile racetrack called the Atlanta Speedway near the town of College Park, aviation was in its infancy. The Wright Brothers had made their famous first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, a little less than six years before. Closer to home, in 1907 a Georgia man named Ben Epps built and flew his own airplane in the nearby city of Athens.

Across the United States and in Atlanta, young daredevils took to the skies, racing and performing stunts before amazed crowds. In an effort to draw crowds to the racetrack and to entertain attendees at the racetracks, Candler and his son Asa Jr., came up with a novel idea—airshows during auto and motorcycle races. In December 1910, the *Atlanta Journal* and Curtiss Exhibition Company hosted Atlanta's first aerial exhibition at the Atlanta Speedway, where planes landed in the straightaways.

The airshow proved immensely popular—more so, in fact, than the automobile racing at the track. By 1919, the speedway was leased to James H. Elliott, who opened an airfield at the closed track. Atlanta's aviation age had truly begun.

Looking across the one hundred year history of Atlanta's airport, aviation's shift from a daredevil's hobby to a cornerstone of international commerce is nothing short of astounding. This amazing evolution will be featured in a new permanent exhibit at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport called *Blue Skies: 100 Years of the Atlanta Airport*, which will open in between concourses D and E.

Since hosting its first commercial flight in 1926 (Contract Air Mail Route 10, an Atlanta-Miami run operated by short-lived Florida Airways), Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has passed many milestones. For instance, Eastern Air Transport (later Air Lines) began offering regular passenger service in 1928. And upstart Delta Air Service, a carrier with roots in crop dusting whose name would ultimately become synonymous with Atlanta as Delta Air Lines, first began service here in 1930.

Atlanta Municipal Airport, also then known as Candler Field, during World War II would add the role of Army Air Corps base to its status as a regional airline hub. After the war, airline passenger traffic increased greatly. By 1955, the Atlanta Municipal Airport was the 8th busiest in the United States with 2,166,000 passengers per year. Passenger and cargo growth at the airport in the period 1945-1980 followed Atlanta's rise as a major city, rendering three different terminals obsolete before the current Domestic/Midfield Terminal opened in 1980.

Featured in the exhibit will be key topics dating to the airport's earliest days and most important moments. Included are the role Atlanta's airport played in the Civil Rights Movement (commercial aviation allowed national leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ralph David Abernathy to save valuable time by traveling by air), the establishment of Atlanta's first nonstop international flight (Eastern Air Lines to Mexico City in 1971), the development of Atlanta's minority contracting program and its successful application to the construction of the Midfield Terminal during the first two terms of Mayor Maynard H. Jackson, Jr., from 1974-1982, the airport's rise to world's busiest in 1981, the 1989 strike and subsequent shutdown of Eastern Air Lines and its impact to Atlanta's economy, the yeoman's duty the airport performed handling visitors to Atlanta during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, and the construction of facilities at the airport over the years.

Key objects collected for the exhibit include the first maternity uniform worn by an airline pilot (Captain Laura Savino, of United Air Lines), signage and uniforms from Delta, Eastern, Braniff, and other carriers, a large scale model of an airmail plane called a Pitcairn Mailwing, and an original 1940s rotating beacon identical to the one which sat on the roof of Atlanta's control tower until 1961. Historic photographs and film footage will also be on display.

The Atlanta History Center is working with exhibit design firm Gary Lee Super Design Associates to pull content together for the show. The exhibit, which is funded by the City of Atlanta Department of Aviation's Atlanta Airport Art Program, will also feature an online component which will delve deeper into topics covered in the show, as well as highlight airline materials in the Atlanta History Center's permanent collection. The exhibit will open late 2023.



1 Delta Air Lines passengers disembark from a company DC-4 aircraft at Atlanta Municipal Airport, 1946. *Delta Air Lines photograph, courtesy of the Delta Flight Museum.*

2 A Delta Air Lines "Red Coat" customer service agent assists a passenger at the Airport, early 1970s. *Delta Air Lines photograph, courtesy of the Delta Flight Museum.*

JUNETEENTH 2023: PLANTED

Atlanta History Center celebrated Juneteenth 2023 on June 18, 2023 with a full-campus activation. The 2023 event honored the history of Black genealogy and agricultural practices as part of the institution’s exploration of the impact of Black Americans since emancipation.

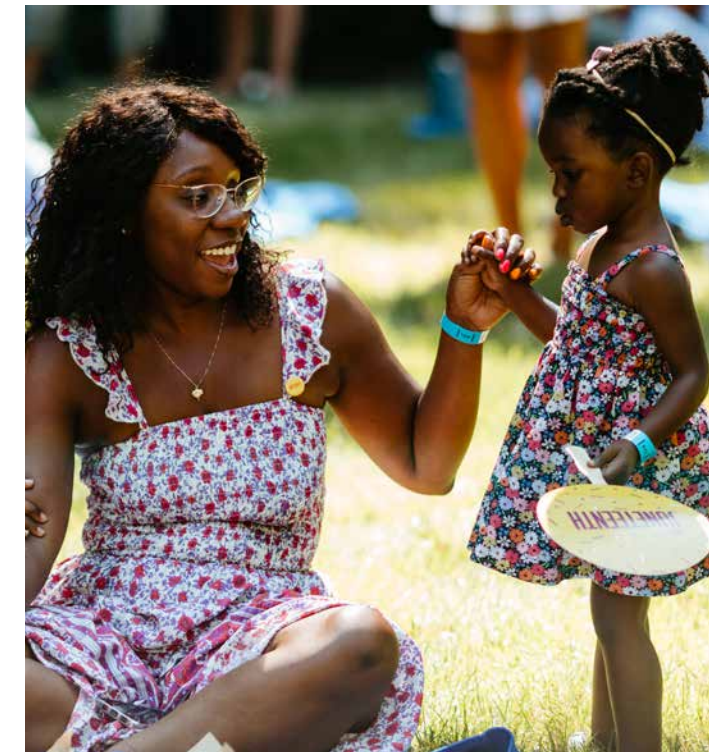
The holiday Juneteenth, now a Federally-recognized holiday, recognizes the moment when, on June 19, 1865, a group of Union troops stopped in Galveston, Texas, to inform formerly enslaved people that the Civil War was over, the Confederacy was defeated, and enslaved people in Texas were free.

This year’s 2023 event at Atlanta History Center was an immersive experience featuring live music, powerful storytelling, interactive crafts and delicious food. Workshops and talks provided valuable insights into the history of Juneteenth and offer tips on how to research family trees and preserve family artifacts.

Last year marked the first year back in-person since the pandemic and featured a Jubilee on Swan House Lawn, complete with a Second Line Band to close out the day, as well as museum theatre, interactive storytelling, poetry readings, and original video content.

This program is part of Atlanta History Center’s celebration of the Civic Season, a nationwide initiative encouraging historically-informed civic participation through a two-week activation between Juneteenth and July 4th in collaboration with national organization Made By Us.

Juneteenth at Atlanta History Center is presented in partnership with the Nissan Foundation.

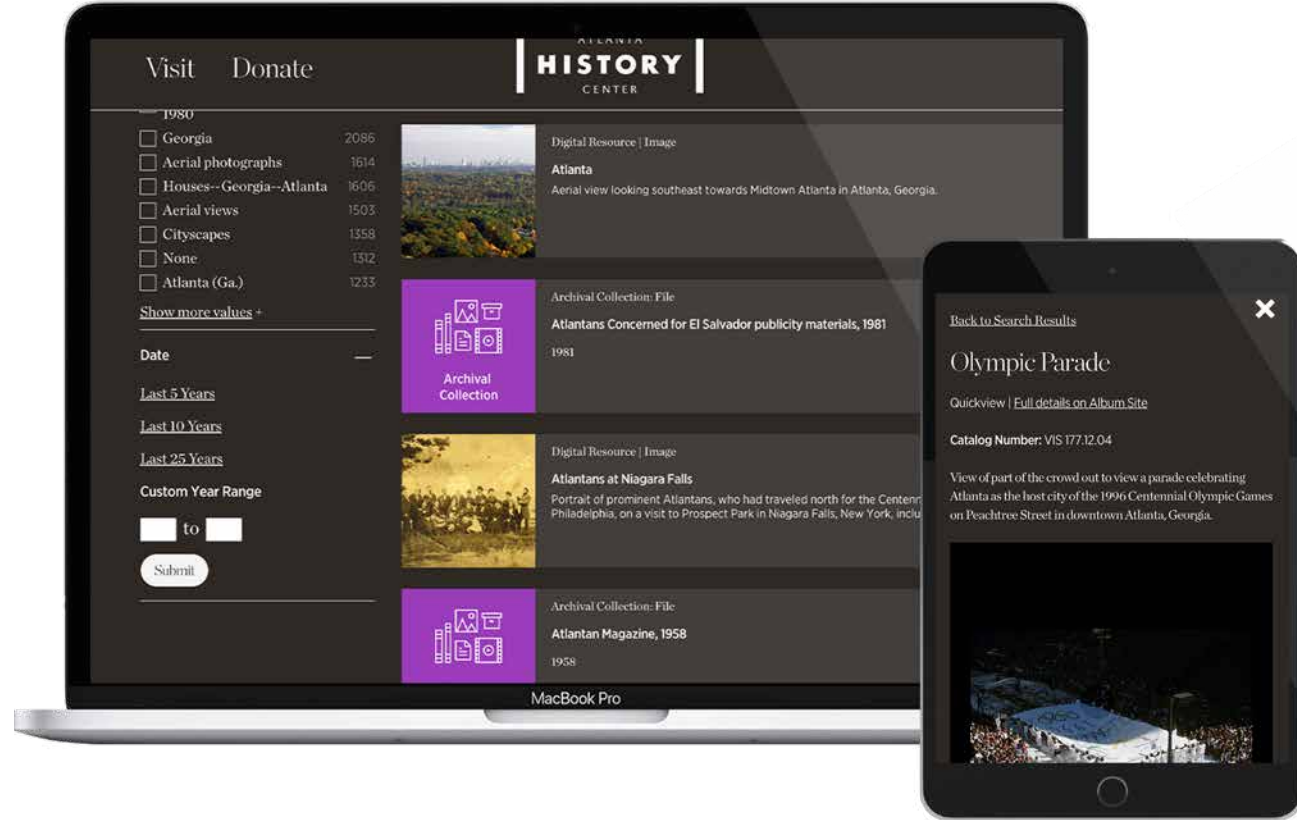


THIS PAGE Scenes from the Juneteenth 2022 program at Atlanta History Center.

A NEW WAY TO SEARCH ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER'S COLLECTIONS



Atlanta History Center is the repository of millions of pages of archival documents and photographs, and tens of thousands of books, maps, museum artifacts, oral history interviews, and much more, with the collection growing every day. Making all of those items easily searchable by the public has been an ongoing challenge as the institution tries to balance public access, user accessibility, and using the most effective and efficient databases for each type of archival or museum object.



For the first time in the institution’s nearly 100-year history, we are excited to announce that this process will now operate from a brand new search tool housed on our website.

Last year, Bloomberg Philanthropies selected Atlanta History Center for its competitive Digital Accelerator program, an innovative grant program that empowers cultural institutions to pursue digital solutions with expert guidance. From building archival management systems to online platforms, Digital Accelerator projects help arts and cultural institutions use technology to fulfill their missions, grow revenue, and improve operations. Even still, a search tool was a unique challenge.

Researchers wanting to access the materials from Kenan Research Center and the museum collections did so using a variety of databases, each linked out individually from the main website, and each requiring some familiarity with the collections and research process to navigate effectively. Databases that are good for some types of materials and collections, such as digitized photographs, are not always the same ones that work well for other records, such as finding aids. In addition, far from every item in the collection is digitized, meaning that some records contain information about the item or collection and how to access it in person at Kenan Research Center, while other records are the item itself, such as an oral history interview posted online.

Early in the project, the idea was proposed to integrate all databases into a new one to solve this issue. Though appealing in theory, it was quickly determined to not be feasible given the unique needs of each type of collection item.

Enter: a federated search.

Now, when researchers visit atlantahistorycenter.com, they are met with a “search the collections” tool that includes four databases—allowing access to information about archival collections and library books, as well as actual digitized images of archival photographs and museum objects.

“What we’re doing for access to our collections is like what Google did for access to the World Wide Web,” said President & CEO, Sheffield Hale, “We’re becoming a 21st century institution for historical research and knowledge-sharing, during a time when having access to those resources has never been more critical.”

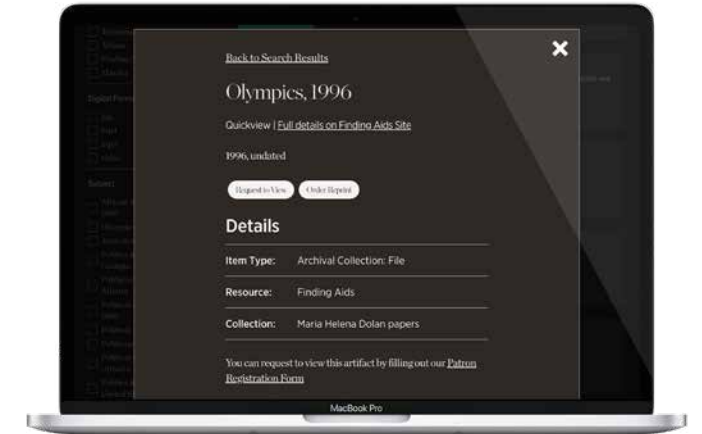
A major strategic focus for Atlanta History Center is building digital capabilities, of which research and collections access is a major part. The institution is focused on several aspects of digital engagement, including digital storytelling, digitizing collections, and making digital research resources more effective.

“Without our collections, you don’t have Atlanta History Center. Our museum and archival collections are the soul of this institution—and we’re excited for the public to have access to them in a whole new way.” Added Hale.

Creating a federated search tool was not an easy or straightforward process. It required technical expertise, a huge benefit of working with Bloomberg Philanthropies through this grant cohort. In addition to funding to assist with the effort, the organization also paired each grantee with a technical advisor to walk through the project step-by-step. To further provide the needed experience, Atlanta History Center returned to a valuable technical partner, IfThen, which also rebuilt atlantahistorycenter.com in 2020.

Lori Murphy, IfThen’s Senior Vice President of User Experience, said, “Our team was excited to take on this challenge for the history center as we value the resources they provide the community and are excited to see the collections become more accessible. Providing an interface for all of the archival resources to come together within a seamless experience was both a design and technical challenge. Our goal is that the new interface will feel inviting to both academics and casual researchers and be a compelling digital extension for anyone interested in Atlanta History.”

Experts in Atlanta History Center’s collections also worked side-by-side with both staff technical experts and outside contractors. Reflecting on the experience, Vice President of Collections & Research Services Paul Crater remarked, “Keeping the user experience central is key to having a project like this be a success. You have to think about what your ultimate goals are, especially given the fact that some collections are available completely online and others will have online records, but the actual collection item must be viewed in person.”

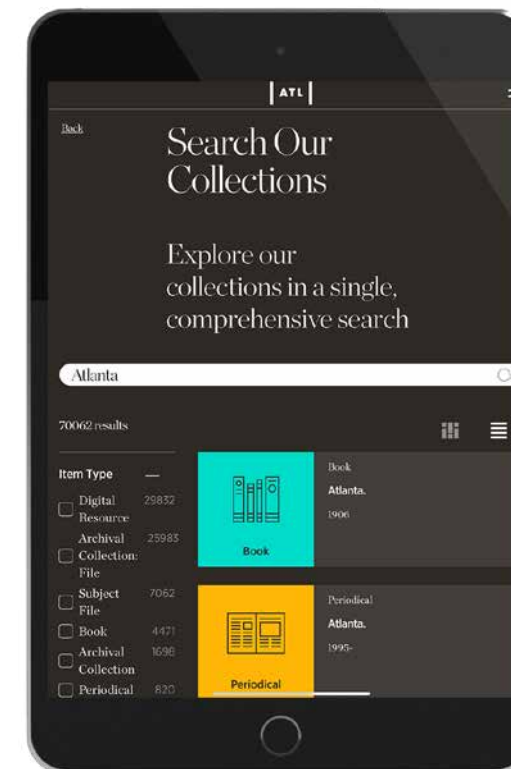


That said, the number of digitized resources, such as photographs and document scans, is always increasing. A separate but complementary project will provide online access to tens of thousands of newly digitized archival photographs and one thousand museum objects with more comprehensive catalog records to enhance online searching. The effort to continue digitizing collection materials will be an ongoing project, one that will require additional resources over many years to complete.

As these efforts continue though, rather than having to parse through several separate webpages to find these new materials, researchers will now start with the new search tool—a crucial development.

“By providing a more streamlined approach to searching collections, this federated search tool will facilitate access to Atlanta History Center’s robust archival, library, and museum collections like never before.” Crater said.

Primary sources help shed light on history and thus, on our current moment. Continuing to expand digital access to museum and archival collections will be an ever-present challenge, but one necessary to helping museums to be vibrant, integral contributors to local communities.



SWARM CATCHERS TO THE RESCUE

BY MADISON LOVE
Horticulturist



In the summer of 2022, the four honeybee colonies in Swan Woods of Goizueta Gardens collapsed without obvious cause. Honeybees battle immense pressure due to diseases, pests, lack of nutritious floral resources, and pesticide exposure (especially mosquito spraying). Determining the exact cause of colony loss is often difficult, leaving beekeepers scratching their heads and with heavy hearts. One hive received new residents in mid-September: a 5-frame nucleus colony, or nuc for short. A nuc consists of a family of bees, including several thousand workers with a queen. These are often installed in early spring when the nectar flow is at its peak, allowing the bees time to build up their winter reserves of honey and pollen. Installing this late in the season meant feeding would be necessary through the winter.

1 Bee team members attempt to settle the swarm in a new hive body

2 When bees are stationary and fanning their wings with their abdomens pointed away from the hive, they're releasing a pheromone that is used to guide the others home—and home is where the queen resides

The Gardens staff bee team took on the challenge and diligently fed the bees with a sugar syrup placed under the outer cover, in an empty super, minimizing impact and interaction. Beekeepers withhold from completing hive inspections during the winter to avoid exposing the bees to frigid temperatures and breaking the internal propolis seal (a glue-like substance made by bees.) Therefore, it was not known that the colony grew exponentially over the winter. So much so the bees swarmed! Generally, a swarm consists of the old queen bee and approximately 50-60% of the worker bees. Left behind remains a new queen and a portion of the workforce. Bees often swarm when the colony's population increases, so the bees need more space to live.

When bees are stationary and fanning their wings with their abdomens pointed away from the hive, they're releasing a pheromone that is used to guide the others home—and home is where the queen resides.

Fortunately, a team member sighted the swarm in a nearby tree while preparing the apiary for our nucs to be delivered the following week. The bee team caught the swarm from the neighboring tree and rehomed it into an existing hive.

We have since added three additional nucs, with one more to be delivered. Two hives now reside in the Smith Farm field, where guests can observe the bees (at a safe distance, of course) buzz from their new homes as they forage around the gardens collecting nectar (for honey) and pollen (for making bee bread fed to their young.) Our Save the Bees campaign for GivingTuesday 2022 raised \$4600, which allowed for increasing the number of staff trained in beekeeping, purchasing four nucs, new gear and hive equipment, and adding two new hives.

Bees are critical to upholding local ecosystems—including Goizueta Gardens and surrounding environments.



BEYOND THE BARNYARD



If you visit Atlanta History Center on a Saturday, you might encounter an unusual sight—Gulf Coast sheep, or Angora goats, strutting around the campus on a leash, happily accepting peanuts as treats from animal caregiver and manager of Animal Collections Brett Bannor and pets from museum guests.

Bannor takes sheep Daisy, Buster, Maribelle, and Hercules, as well as goats Claud and Dorothy, for strolls around campus, weather permitting. Due to her outgoing personality, Daisy holds the record for the year by participating in all 49 Beyond the Barnyard walks, though Buster comes in at a close second, clocking 40 strolls.

The walks not only help the animals get some extra exercise and explore beyond their home on Smith Farm, but help guests learn about history—wool, bleats, and all.

The animals at Smith Farm are all heritage breed animals, reflecting breeds that would have been raised in the Atlanta area during the city's earliest beginnings in the 1840s. The sheep, goats, chickens, and turkeys at Smith Farm help put the historic landscape in context, giving a glimpse of what livestock operations at the time might have looked like on a small scale.

Daisy, Buster, Maribelle, Hercules, Claud, and Dorothy are also excellent brand ambassadors, helping guests get acquainted with the full range of Atlanta History Center's offerings and sparking moments of genuine joy for children and adults alike. While on walks, Bannor records some of his interactions with guests, who frequently recall their own experiences raising sheep as children, ask questions about the breeds and animal care, and excitedly snap photos with the rare phenomenon of seeing a sheep in the middle of Buckhead (Maribelle even found herself featured in engagement photos, since she strolled by a mere 5 minutes after the proposal).

Heritage breed animals truly are walking, talking, living history—preserving the unique characteristics of the breeds of animals that helped make Atlanta, and Georgia, what it is today.

You can catch a glimpse of the animals every non-rainy day on Smith Farm, or be sure to visit on a Saturday to see a Beyond the Barnyard walk.

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