

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Decatur Waterworks
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1400 McConnell Drive, Mason Mill Park
city, town Decatur () vicinity of
county DeKalb code GA 089
state Georgia code GA zip code 30329

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- () private
- (X) public-local
- () public-state
- () public-federal

Category of Property:

- () building(s)
- (X) district
- () site
- () structure
- () object

Number of Resources within Property:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	2	0
structures	13	0
objects	0	0
total	16	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A
Name of previous listing: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

W. Ray Luce 1-12-06
Signature of certifying official Date

Ex W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Elson H. Beall 3-15-06
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other, explain: _____
- see continuation sheet For _____
Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/WATERWORKS
LANDSCAPE/PARK

Current Functions:

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

N/A

Materials:

foundation	Brick; Stone; Concrete
walls	Brick; Stone; Concrete
roof	N/A
other	Stone

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Decatur Waterworks is located northeast of downtown Decatur, DeKalb County, in north central Georgia. The complex, which was constructed over time during the early to mid-20th century, supplied water to the City of Decatur, the county seat of DeKalb County, until the 1940s. During the late 1930s it also became a public park and served as an emergency back up to the new county water system. Several resources remain on the property from each use.

Construction of the original phase of the waterworks was completed in 1907, although facilities were added or upgraded over time. Resources related to the waterworks facility include the remnants of a 1906-1907 brick, one-story administration building (photographs 2 and 3); two circular concrete water tanks (photographs 4, 5, and 6); two rectangular concrete settling tanks (photographs 7-16); a round water tower (photographs 19 and 20); two dams, both of which have been breached (photographs 22, 23, 24, and 25); a water outfall; and a concrete pump house (photograph 21). There is also an existing railroad trestle (Seaboard Air Line Railroad) (photograph 23, background), which was used to transport construction materials to the site. The rail line runs along the western boundary of the district and includes the historic trestle bridge, which spans Burnt Fork Creek. All of the manmade resources on the property related to the waterworks were extant prior to 1939. The two water sources located on the property are Burnt Fork Creek and South Fork Peachtree Creek. Burnt Fork Creek was the primary water source due to contamination in Peachtree Creek. The area used as a reservoir, although now dry, is also included in the boundary (see Map 4 and Attachment 1).

The letter designations given to these features are used to reference each on the attached sketch map (Map 2). The exact dates of construction for many of the resources are not known.

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Section 7--Description

- A. Large circular concrete water storage tank (between 1907 and 1928)
- B. Small concrete water tank (between 1907 and 1928)
- C. Administrative Building (1906-1907)
- D. Rectangular settling tank #1 (between 1907 and 1928)
- E. Rectangular settling tank #2 (prior to 1939)
- F. Water tower, date unknown (prior to 1939)
- G. Dam on Burnt Fork Creek (ca. 1907)
- H. Outfall (for water pumped from South Peachtree Creek into Burnt Fork Creek reservoir) (prior to 1939)
- I. Pump house (prior to 1939)
- J. Dam on South Peachtree Creek (prior to 1939)

Resources related to the period in which the area was used as a park include a picnic area with a pavilion foundation and granite benches (photograph 29); a stone bridge (photographs 27, 28, and 33); a stone fountain (photograph 31); and a second picnic area with a stone grill and granite benches (photograph 32). Some trails are also present. Construction of these resources was completed by Works Progress Administration labor in 1939, so all of these features are believed to date to that time.

The letter designations given to these features are used to reference each on the attached sketch map (Map 2).

- K. Picnic area with foundation from pavilion and associated granite benches (1939)
- L. Stone bridge (1939)
- M. Stone fountain, partially damaged (1939)
- N. Picnic area with stone cooking grill and granite benches (1939)

The site is recorded in the Archaeological Site Files held at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, although there has been no archaeological investigation at this time. The site is designated 9DA355, and was recorded in 1996 by R. Rogers, of the Historic Preservation Division. The field notes are located in the Known Sites Files at the Historic Preservation Division offices. The property includes the aboveground structures associated with the Decatur Waterworks. Archaeological research at the site likely has the potential to answer questions about the technical organization of the waterworks operation. In addition, minutes from the Decatur City Council indicate that a residence existed on the property, making it possible to address domestic research questions as well as industrial questions.

The property consists of approximately 42 acres that encompass the historic Decatur Waterworks and the portions of the property used as a community park. Most of the property is wooded with thick undergrowth. Today the site is overgrown (photographs 1, 3, 8, and 18) and not currently in use. It is surrounded by modern residential development (photograph 24, right background).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Engineering
Entertainment/Recreation
Landscape Architecture
Politics and Government

Period of Significance:

1906-1955

Significant Dates:

1906-Construction date of first buildings associated with waterworks
1939-Completion of Works Progress Administration park projects

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

Decatur Waterworks served the City of Decatur for nearly fifty years, first as a city water station, and later as a city park. The City of Decatur purchased the property in 1906, and the facility was completed in November 1907, at a cost of \$46,517. The waterworks were extended to new areas of the city in 1928. The reservoirs at the facility had a capacity of approximately 750,000 gallons, which was expanded to one million gallons with the addition of a reservoir on South Fork Peachtree Creek. In 1939 a money-raising campaign began to construct a countywide waterworks. During this period the new park was being planned and constructed. By November 1942, the new waterworks facility was complete and the Decatur Waterworks were maintained as a back-up facility. The park, however, was closed to the public during World War II and was no longer maintained. Attempts to revive the park in the early 1950s were not successful.

Charles Birnbaum defines a historic vernacular landscape as:

A landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape... Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.

He goes on to state, "cultural landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world."

The landscape created by the Decatur Waterworks is a good example of the relationship between human society and the natural world, shaped by the function that the facility served. Within this district are the remains of two dams, one along Burnt Fork Creek and the other along South Fork Peachtree Creek, which created reservoirs for use as a water supply. A pump house and outfall represent the linkage between the reservoirs created by these two dams. The waterworks complex located on the west side of Burnt Fork Creek included other cultural landscape features-buildings, structures, pipes, and ponds, for example. The complex changed over time. Ample physical evidence of this human interaction with nature remains today to illustrate this relationship. This evidence includes the remains of the main waterworks complex, which includes the ruins of the brick administrative building, water settling tanks, circular water storage tanks, and a water tower on the ridge west of the complex. The complex also constitutes an archaeological site that has the potential to provide information about this operation, although no test excavations have been carried out to date to verify this potential. Additionally, there are numerous small-scale elements that collectively add to the landscape's setting. These elements include curbing along the former road that led to the waterworks compound, terracing along portions of Burnt Fork Creek, and remnants of iron pipes used to transport water for the operation.

The historic vernacular landscape associated with the district is reflected in many features tied to its use as a park. Evidence from City Council records indicates its use for recreational purposes in the

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mid-1930s, but the landscape features connected to recreation that are visible today are related to the WPA improvements dating to 1939. Extant physical evidence of this use include a stone bridge spanning Burnt Fork Creek, the remains of a rock fountain, and picnic areas with associated features. Small-scale elements include remnant pathways, specimen trees, and granite benches. Combined, these features represent a planned park landscape that was overlain upon a cultural landscape already heavily influenced by the presence of the Decatur Waterworks. This landscape reflects the values that the community and the local government placed on recreation.

Decatur Waterworks is significant in the area of engineering as a good example of a city waterworks facility. The complex, which was constructed over time during the early to mid-20th century, supplied water to the City of Decatur, the county seat of DeKalb County, until the 1940s and served as a back up to a later countywide water system. Decatur Waterworks is significant in the areas of politics and government and entertainment/recreation as an important public works project and public recreation area. It represents the efforts of a municipal government in Georgia to provide water for its residents. The stone construction of the park-related resources, typical of public works projects of the New Deal era, was featured prominently in the park. It is significant in the area of landscape architecture as a planned park. Elements of the park design include walkways, a stone bridge over Burnt Fork Creek, stone fireplaces, granite picnic tables and benches, a stone fountain, and terracing along Burnt Fork Creek.

National Register Criteria

Decatur Waterworks is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of entertainment/recreation for its use as a public park, and in the area of politics and government for work carried out by the Works Progress Administration project during the New Deal era. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of engineering for the waterworks facilities that supplied the City of Decatur during the early to mid-20th century, and in the area of landscape architecture for the landscape features associated with the use of the area as a public park in the mid-20th century.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Decatur Waterworks begins in 1906, the year construction began on the facility, and ends in 1955, the end of the historic period. The period of significance includes the time in which the facility was used as a waterworks and the period in which it was used as a public park.

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Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Contributing resources in the historic district are those constructed during the historic period and are associated with the use of the site as a city waterworks facility and a public park. The administration building is the one contributing building on the property. Contributing sites include two picnic areas and associated granite benches. One picnic area also contains the foundation of a pavilion. The Decatur Waterworks contains 13 contributing structures including two circular water tanks; two settling tanks; one water tower; two dams, both of which have been breached; one outfall; one pump house; one stone bridge; one stone fountain; railroad tracks; and a railroad trestle. The site also contains portions of two creeks, Burnt Fork Creek and South Fork Peachtree Creek.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

****NOTE: The following history was compiled by Brian Thomas, preservation consultant, August, 2004. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Early History of the Waterworks Property

Prior to the Civil War, the land on which the Decatur Waterworks were later located was part of a large farm owned by Ezekial Mason. In 1860, Mason's property extended north and south of South Fork Peachtree Creek at Clairmont Road, as well as including some land on the west side of Clairmont Road (McCurdy n.d.). Mason first appears in the federal census in the Decatur District of DeKalb County in 1840. He is listed as a farmer and furrier (ferrier, or blacksmith). He appears in each subsequent census up until 1870, when he was 71 years old (DeKalb History Center Archives n.d.).

Two maps of the area (Ruger 1983; Uiffers 1983) made around the time of the Civil War show that Ezekial Mason had a mill on the present site of the Decatur Waterworks at that time. The exact location is difficult to determine. The Ruger map, compiled from field maps used during the Atlanta Campaign, shows the mill below the junction of Burnt Fork and South Fork Peachtree creeks. The residence of a Mason is shown on what is now Clairmont Road between the mill and the town of Decatur. The Uiffers map, made in the summer of 1865, perhaps under more relaxed conditions, places the mill on the west side of Burnt Fork Creek just above its confluence with South Fork Peachtree Creek, approximately where the dam for the Decatur Waterworks was later constructed (see Map 3). A residence just below the mill is labeled "Wilson," perhaps a tenant or mill operator. No Mason residence is shown. At that time, the road north from Decatur passed by the mill, crossing South Fork Peachtree Creek just below the mouth of Burnt Fork Creek, and then followed the current Mason Mill Road on the north side of the creek. Another road led east from the mill along the east and south side of Burnt Fork Creek. It is not known for certain, but the mill was likely a flour or gristmill. Traces of the old mill reportedly could still be seen in 1951 (Spencer, 1951).

Although no entrenchments related to the Siege of Atlanta are shown on period maps, the Decatur

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area was the scene of considerable action during the Civil War. The left wing of Sherman's forces was directed to push around to the Georgia Railroad near Stone Mountain, cutting off the Confederate supply line from the east. There were a number of skirmishes as they approached Decatur. Sherman briefly used the Powell House, on the west side of Clairmont Road and southwest of the project area, as a headquarters. Minié balls have been found in the vicinity of the project area as well (Charles F. Logan, personal communication July 28, 2004). Mason's Mill is not mentioned in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies documenting the actions of the Civil War.

In the 1890s the Seaboard Air Line Railroad constructed a line through the site. It is not known if Mason's Mill was operating at this time, but it seems unlikely. Ezekial Mason transferred his property to his wife prior to his death, and it was later acquired by J. A. Mason, whose relationship to Ezekial is not known. According to notes at the DeKalb Historical Society, it was J. A. Mason who sold the land to the city for the waterworks, but according to City Council Minutes, the property was known as the "Talley property," and the county exercised an option with C. H. Talley for the purchase of 160 acres of land in October 1906. Talley paid rent on the land for the year 1908 and was required to remove the timber before April 1 of that year (Decatur City Council Minutes 1906: Book 1:113, 1907: Book 1:209).

The Decatur Waterworks

Mr. H. T. Joudon, an engineer from Thomasville, Georgia, was selected to oversee the construction of the waterworks, which were constructed by the contracting firm of Walter and Wagner out of Rome, Georgia. The project was to be completed by October 1907, but the contractors asked for an extension of 60 days due to delays in the completion of a sidetrack for the delivery of supplies and delays in the delivery of supplies once the sidetrack was complete. The project was completed by December, and Mr. M. N. Driggers was hired as Superintendent at \$75 per month, and Mr. William J. Head was hired as pumping engineer for \$50 per month. They were ordered to report to work on December 15, 1907. There was apparently already a house on the site, perhaps the Wilson residence shown on the Civil War map, which the county was to repair and furnish free of charge to Mr. Head while he was employed as engineer. In 1908 an assistant superintendent was added to the payroll, and Driggers was made Superintendent of the Sewers as well (Decatur City Council Minutes 1907: Book 1:222-223, 233, 234-235, 1908: Book 1:251, 285).

The initial structures at the waterworks were constructed primarily from brick, based on the expenditures on materials listed in the budget report to the City Council. An inventory of the completed waterworks listed the following items: one brick building (pumping station); two 80-horsepower boilers; two horizontal pumping engines; two reservoirs, approximately 750,000 gallons capacity; a 160-acre land and water site; 12,002 feet of 8-inch pipe; 13,005 feet of 6-inch pipe; one 80,000-gallon tank and tower (when erected); and one 80-horsepower water heater. The total cost of the project was \$46,517.40, about \$1,200 more than was received in funds. The R. D. Cole Manufacturing Company provided the boilers and the tanks and tower; the Heron Pump & Foundry company produced the hydrants and valves, and the U.S. Cast Iron Pipe & Foundry supplied the pipes. The pumps were purchased from McGowan Pump Company. Other equipment came from

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Cotton States Belt & Supply Company, Charles Jacobs & Company, and Platt Iron Works. It appears that the standpipe storage tank in the southwest part of the site was constructed in 1908, after the completion of the main complex (City Council Minutes 1906–1975: Book 1:259–260, 289).

Percy Plant, possibly a former worker at the waterworks, compiled notes on the operation of the plant that are on file at the DeKalb History Center Archives (DeKalb History Center Archives n.d.). Plant reported that the original capacity of the reservoir on Burnt Fork Creek was three-quarters of a million gallons per day, and that this was expanded to a million gallons capacity by the addition of the Peachtree Creek reservoir. The report on the completion of the facility in the City Council Minutes states that there were two reservoirs by February 1908 but based on available maps and aerial photographs it appears that both of the original reservoirs were on Burnt Fork Branch and that the South Fork Peachtree Creek impoundment was added in the late 1920s or 1930s. A pumping station was located in the saddle of the ridge between the two creeks, and water from Peachtree Creek was pumped up the ridge and into the reservoir on Burnt Fork Creek to increase its capacity (David Cullison, personal communication, July 28, 2004; Charles F. Logan, personal communication, February 28, 2004).

In 1911, a night worker was hired at \$40 per month to operate the pumps during the second shift. In 1914, J. T. Nash was elected Superintendent of Waterworks, Chief of Construction, Plumbing Inspector and Civil Engineer, making \$100 per month. The Chief of Construction was responsible for roads, and that department was closely tied over the years to the waterworks. Along with the day and night engineers at the waterworks site, Nash also employed a worker to read the meters and deliver the bills to customers of the waterworks (Decatur City Council Minutes 1911: Book 1:587, 1914: Book 2:123, 197).

The city decided that it did not need the full 160-acre tract that it purchased in 1906, so in 1914 it sold a 63.59-acre tract of the property to W. C. Lawrence for \$5,175 (Decatur City Council Minutes 1914: Book 2:246, 257–258). Lawrence may have quickly sold the property since his name does not appear on a 1915 landownership map of the county (Maynard-Carter Simmons 1915). The property of the waterworks, now about 100 acres, is shown on the map, but the reservoir at the site is not represented (see Map 4). The city land was located on the north side of South Fork Peachtree Creek in Land Lots 59, 60 and 103. Two structures are represented in the northern part of Land Lot 60 between the railroad and Burnt Fork Creek.

Mr. W. H. Weaver, a graduate of Georgia Tech, became City Engineer in 1917, serving as Superintendent of the Waterworks as well as Chief of Construction. Weaver would serve in that capacity for many years, and would supervise the creation of a massive countywide water system in the 1940s (Decatur City Council Minutes 1917: Book 3:77; DeKalb History Center Archives n.d.; Shelton 1971:49).

Weaver stepped into the job on the eve of the United States' entry into World War I, which would present challenges to the waterworks. In preparation for war, the U.S. Army established Camp Gordon in Chamblee, on the current site of Peachtree-DeKalb Airport, as a processing center for

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recruits. In September 1917, the city waterworks department agreed to furnish water to a planned remount station or cavalry camp of the U.S. Army under certain stipulations. The city asked that the federal government: 1) eliminate all existing contamination in South Fork Peachtree Creek above the pumping station and divert the creek into Burnt Fork Creek at a point somewhere near the pumping station; 2) furnish all the necessary mains and connections or other equipment to insure the safe pumping of the water to both the city's customers and to the camp; and, 3) to locate their station away from the Peachtree Creek watershed at least two miles from Decatur, specifically at a point between the two-mile limit and Camp Gordon on Clairmont Road (Decatur City Council Minutes 1917: Book 3:132).

It is not clear if this cavalry camp was ever built, or was a part of the Camp Gordon complex, but the conditions of the agreement provide interesting clues about the waterworks and the impoundment of South Fork Peachtree Creek. It is apparent that the county was concerned with maintaining an adequate supply of water from its source and was hoping to get assistance from the federal government in improving its supply. Apparently contamination in South Fork Peachtree Creek presented problems for the waterworks in supplementing its water supply from Burnt Fork Creek.

Whatever resulted from the negotiations with the army, the city was still faced with a water crisis. In 1920, engineers with the waterworks met with the city council to discuss needed improvements at the waterworks site. A proposal and estimate for the necessary work was presented to the council in March, and in July a \$50,000 bond issue to fund the project was approved by the county's voters. The city then contracted with J. B. McCrary Engineering Corporation "to make necessary surveys, studies and investigations, prepare preliminary designs and estimates with a report on the improvements to the existing water supply, with special reference to relieving the present condition of the water after rains, also securing additional water from this source, the cleaning out and improvements on the present storage reservoirs with recommendations as to the advisability of building additional reservoirs." The engineers were also instructed to "investigate fully the advisability and feasibility of securing additional water supply from Peachtree Creek, this investigation to include the watershed, with reference to contamination from Scottdale sewage and from Clarkston (Decatur City Council Minutes 1920: Book 3:281, 284, 301, 312, 317).

It is not clear from the language in the contract with McCrary whether there was already a dam on South Fork Peachtree Creek and that the improvements were aimed at increasing the capacity of the reservoir behind that dam, or whether the "additional" supply would be in addition to what was currently being taken from Burnt Fork Creek. The contamination of South Fork Peachtree Creek may have prevented the city of Decatur from using the water in its system to that point. In any case, it certainly appears that improvements were made to the waterworks facilities in the early 1920s. Additional buildings or settling ponds may have been constructed during this time, since the inventory of the facility in 1908 mentions only one building and one tank (but two reservoirs, two pumps, and two boilers).

Improvements may also have been made to the dam on Burnt Fork Creek in the early 1920s. In October 1921, the City Council voted to purchase 13.66 acres at the head of the existing storage

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reservoir on both sides of the creek in order to accommodate an enlargement of the reservoir (Decatur City Council Minutes 1921: Book 3:405).

A map of the Atlanta area surveyed in 1927 and 1928 shows the waterworks in detail (see Map 4). It indicates that the two reservoirs originally constructed on the site were both on Burnt Fork Creek, with the second reservoir being a smaller pond located just below the main reservoir. A tailing led from the main dam to what appears to be two smaller ponds that may have been connected. The plant facility includes two structures surrounded by four holding basins. A large rectangular basin on the west side of the complex and a circular basin to the south correspond to the remains of basins extant at the site. Two square basins on the east side were apparently replaced in the 1930s by a larger rectangular basin and a small circular one. A third structure was located near the railroad tracks at a siding that served the waterworks. There is no dam or other structure evident on South Fork Peachtree Creek.

More improvements were made to the waterworks in 1928 or soon after. A bond issue for \$40,000 for "extending and enlarging the system of waterworks" was approved in that year. Much of this money appears to have gone to extending the water system to new areas of the city, but in December the City Council approved money for an architect to draw up plans for two houses at the waterworks for the employees there. The two houses were to cost approximately \$2,000. It is not known if the older house that was on the property when it was purchased by the city in 1908 was torn down in order to construct these two dwellings. The remains of only one structure on the property seem to indicate a dwelling, so it is not clear if these dwellings were ever built or where they may have been located. In 1929 funds from the bond issue were also used to purchase a gas pump for the waterworks from Dayton-Down Company (Decatur City Council Minutes 1921: Book 3:405, 1928: Book 4:386, 393-394, 1929: Book 5:61, 62).

The DeKalb County Water System and the End of the Decatur Waterworks

Despite the improvements made during the 1920s and 1930s, it was becoming evident that the existing waterworks were inadequate for the rapidly expanding city of Decatur, which was attracting residents from Atlanta looking for a quieter environment. Efforts were again directed at expanding the capacity of the plant by taking water from South Fork Peachtree Creek. In 1931, the City Manager reported that if the city intended to build a 20-foot dam on Peachtree Creek, then it would be necessary to purchase more land, and he recommended that the city purchase a tract known as the "Wages Estate" that was to be sold by an administrator the following month. The sale did not go off as planned because in 1936 the land was again available. The city manager again suggested that the county purchase the property "for the future extension of Peachtree Creek Reservoir." The council, however, decided not to purchase the property (Decatur City Council Minutes 1931: Book 5:263, 1936: Book 6:18). It may have been around this time that the small dam and intake structure was built on South Fork Peachtree Creek that pumped water over the ridge into the Burnt Fork Creek reservoir.

The city seemed to still be interested in improving the existing site, since in 1935, the council took

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bids for the "impounding of an additional supply of raw water in the dam, sufficient to insure a reasonable and safe supply for the needs of Decatur." They had subsequently called a mass meeting "to advise citizens of water system needs and to propose rate increase" (Decatur City Council Minutes 1935: Book 5:555, 587-588).

Meanwhile, City Engineer and Superintendent of the Waterworks, W. H. Weaver, proposed a plan in 1933 to draw water from the Chattahoochee River and expand the filtering capacity of the Peachtree Creek site. The costs of developing this system, estimated at half a million dollars, were considered prohibitive during the Depression that was gripping the country at the time, and the proposal was rejected. The issue was again raised in 1937, but again the city determined that it could not support the required bond issue for the project (Sweet n.d.).

In 1939, Scott Candler, who served as mayor of Decatur since 1922, was elected as the sole Commissioner of Roads and Revenues for DeKalb County, placing him in charge of nearly all money available for improvements in the county. He was well aware of the Decatur's water crisis and felt that through cooperation between the city and county, along with some creative financing, a countywide water system could be built that would also serve the city of Decatur. Although Decatur had grown rapidly during the three decades since the completion of the waterworks, it was still a relatively small community, with very little industry, and the dispersed rural population in the surrounding county was generally supplied with water from wells. No other county south of Virginia had its own waterworks, and at the time, many regarded Candler's ambitious plan as a wasteful. However, the system turned out to be one of the most important factors in the future prosperity of the county, which exploded as a suburb of Atlanta during the postwar era (Shelton 1971:17, 45-47).

To finance the new waterworks, Candler poached customers from the well-to-do Druid Hills neighborhood who were in DeKalb County but were receiving their water from the City of Atlanta. He also sold water revenue certificates to raise \$1 million and secured another \$500,000 in federal loans for materials and Works Progress Administration workers for the project. Construction began on the pumping station on the Chattahoochee River and state-of-the-art filtration plant north of Doraville (12 miles north of Decatur) in 1940. At the same time, the city of Decatur agreed to lease the city waterworks to the county and to serve as agents of the county in the distribution of water from the plant (Decatur City Council Minutes 1940: Book 6:551, 567; Shelton 1971:47-49).

The county water system was not yet complete when in December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into World War II. Since the city was still relying on the water from the works off Clairmont Road, there was concern for the safety of the water supply. Just two days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the City Manager was given authority to take whatever steps were necessary for the protection of the reservoir from possible saboteurs. In May 1942, funds were approved to pay the Georgia National Guards that were assigned that duty. The buildup for the war effort further taxed the Decatur water supply. The Naval Air Station and Lawson General Hospital, constructed on the site of the old Camp Gordon, required water. Recognizing that the new system would be completed soon, the county provided a temporary supply of water to the facilities by constructing an aboveground pipeline from the Decatur Waterworks up Clairmont Road to the Air

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Station (Decatur City Council Minutes 1941: Book 6:658–659, 1942: Book 6:691).

An aerial view of the waterworks facility looking to the north appears to date from the early 1940s (DeKalb History Center Archives n.d.) and shows the buildings, tanks, and landscape features on the site at that time (see Attachment 1). Two rectangular settling tanks with associated pump houses are evident in the lower foreground. A cluster of possibly interconnected buildings was located to the south of the west pump house and to the north of the east pump house. These buildings may have served as offices or residences. A large circular basin is located at the south end of the complex, while a smaller circular basin is shown on the east side. A circular storage tank is located on a hill to the west of the complex and to the east of the railroad. The dam, reservoir and railroad bridge can be seen in the center background. The smaller reservoir that was located below the main reservoir shown on the 1930 map was no longer in existence by the time this photograph was taken. This may have been replaced when the dam and intake were installed on South Fork Peachtree Creek. Other structures and features that are evident in the photograph are associated with the park that was constructed at the site in 1939, and are discussed in the next section.

In October 1942, Commissioner Candler informed the city of Decatur that the county water system would be operational on November 1, and it was agreed that the operation of the city waterworks would be turned over to the county on November 15. The county continued to maintain the old city waterworks throughout the 1940s and 1950s as an emergency back up for the new system. Although operated and maintained by the county, the property remained with the City of Decatur. Finally, in 1963 the city sold the land on which the waterworks had been located to the county to be used as a park. Sometime in the between 1960 and 1972 the county abandoned the works and breached the dam on Burnt Fork Creek to drain the reservoir. It is not clear when the dam on South Fork Peachtree Creek was breached. The county used the site as a storage yard and built a large storage building next to the stone fountain before 1954 (USGS 1973). That building is no longer extant, but the foundations of many of the earlier buildings remain.

The Use of the Waterworks Property as a Park

As was common at similar facilities in the early 20th century, the undeveloped land and impounded waters that were associated with Decatur waterworks attracted residents seeking a picturesque setting for outings and picnics. The first mention of the use of the Decatur Waterworks as a park was in 1935, when two ladies representing the Camp Fire Girls asked the City Council for permission to “beautify a park at the Water Works.” They had secured a route from the end of Superior Street (across South Fork Peachtree Creek) to the waterworks and intended to use this as a trail for the girls (Decatur City Council Minutes 1935: Book 5:580). The request was approved, but it is not known the extent of the improvements made by the Camp Fire Girls.

In the fall of 1938, W. H. Weaver was working at the site, clearing debris from the reservoir, when he had the idea to develop a picnic area on the grounds of the facility. Using laborers supplied by the Works Progress Administration, the site was graded and a number of features were constructed in 1939. Stone construction, typical of public works projects of the New Deal era, was featured

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

prominently. Elements of the park design included walkways, a stone bridge over Burnt Fork Creek, six stone fireplaces with granite picnic tables, granite benches, a stone fountain, and latticed gazebos for social gatherings (*DeKalb New Era* 1939).

According to a *DeKalb New Era* article, Weaver designed the park and oversaw its construction. The "central theme" of the design was the "huge rock fountain that was demolished and rebuilt several times to get it 'just right.'" The fountain was located over the old settling basin of the waterworks. Many of the features of the park can be seen in the undated aerial photograph of the waterworks shown in Attachment 1, believed to date to the early-to-mid 1940s.

Weaver planned to make more landscape improvements in the spring of 1940 and noted that the park could be further expanded if the new county facility, then in the planning stages, was completed. It was anticipated at the time that the Decatur waterworks would continue to be used by the county for emergencies, but Weaver hoped that the reservoir could be used to supply water to a swimming pool, fountains, and streams (*DeKalb New Era* 1939).

Unfortunately, World War II interrupted Weaver's plans. Since the waterworks were being guarded during the war to prevent sabotage, the park was closed to the public. Although the waterworks were maintained for emergencies after the war, the park was no longer maintained. By 1951, it had fallen into disrepair and lost much of its appeal due to the county using the site as a storage yard for equipment and supplies (Spencer 1951).

The county proposed to revive the park, the development dependent on a bond issue to be voted on in January 1952. County Commissioner Scott Candler was behind the effort to revive the park. The park would have included 100 acres, and the facilities of the waterworks would have been fenced off to prevent accidents in and around the basins and pump houses. A swimming pool and baseball diamond were to be built on the South Fork Peachtree Creek side of the property (Spencer 1951). The plans for the park were never carried out, although eventually tennis courts were constructed to the west of the site and incorporated into the park. The county continued to use the waterworks site as a storage yard and eventually the area became overgrown. The outlines of the buildings and settling basins are clearly evident in the 1960 aerial, although the condition of the buildings cannot be determined. By 1972, however, it is clear that only the foundations of the buildings remained (USDA 1972).

9. Major Bibliographic References

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Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

1949, 1960, and 1972. <http://dbs.galib.uga.edu/gaph/html/dekalb>

U.S. Geological Survey. Northeast Atlanta, Georgia quadrangle map, 7.5-minute series. Photorevised from 1954 edition. USGS, Reston, Virginia, 1973.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 42 acres

UTM References

A)	Zone 16	Easting 750025	Northing 3744339
B)	Zone 16	Easting 750041	Northing 3743503
C)	Zone 16	Easting 749433	Northing 3743491
D)	Zone 16	Easting 749417	Northing 3744323

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated historic district is indicated on the enclosed map by a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated historic district includes the intact portion of land historically associated with the waterworks facility and public park. It also includes the building, sites, and structures associated with the facility during the historic period.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 34 Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 1600
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** January 4, 2006
e-mail holly_anderson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Brian Thomas, Operations Manager
organization TRC
mailing address 3772 Pleasantdale Road, Suite 200
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30340
telephone (770)270-1192, ext. 112
e-mail bthomas@trcsolutions.com

- () **property owner**
(X) **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
() **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Ginna Tiernan
organization (if applicable) DeKalb County Parks & Recreation Department
mailing address 1300 Commerce Drive, Suite 200
city or town Decatur **state** Georgia **zip code** 30030
e-mail (optional) gmtierna@co.dekalb.ga.us

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Decatur Waterworks
City or Vicinity: Decatur
County: DeKalb
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: March, 2005

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 33

1. Decatur Waterworks; photographer facing south.
2. Administration Building; photographer facing north.
3. Administration Building; photographer facing northwest.
4. Large circular water tank; photographer facing southeast.
5. Large circular water tank; photographer facing east.
6. Small circular water tank; photographer facing north.
7. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing northwest.
8. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing east.
9. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing north.
10. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing north.
11. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing southeast.
12. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing northwest.
13. Rectangular settling tank #2; photographer facing northeast.
14. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing north.
15. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing north.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

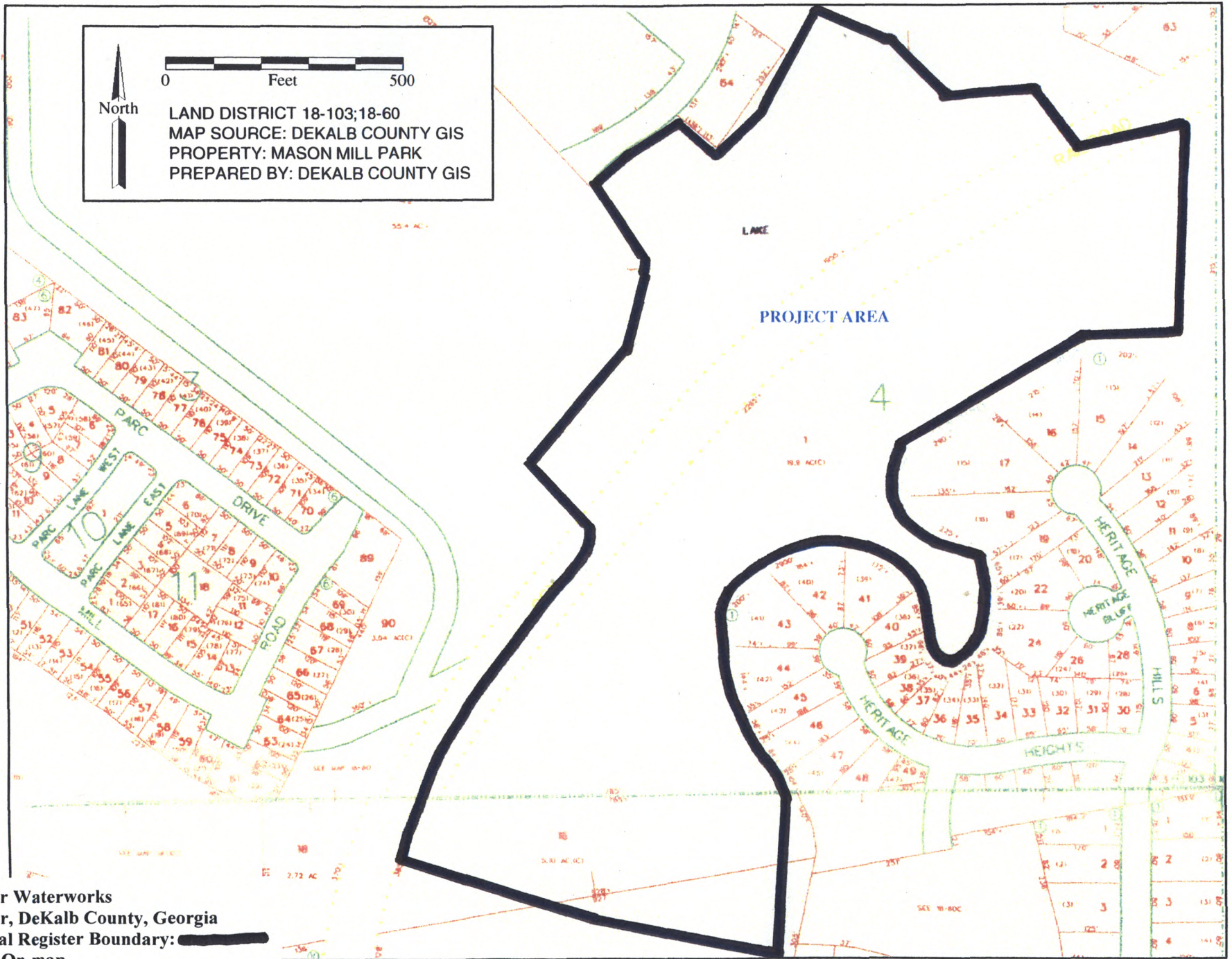
16. Rectangular settling tank #1; photographer facing southeast.
17. Ruins of building foundation; photographer facing west.
18. Decatur Waterworks; photographer facing east.
19. Water tower; photographer facing northwest.
20. Water tower; photographer facing north.
21. Pump house; photographer facing north.
22. Burnt Fork Creek dam; photographer facing west.
23. Burnt Fork Creek dam and train trestle; photographer facing west.
24. South Fork Peachtree Creek dam; photographer facing north.
25. South Fork Peachtree Creek dam; photographer facing southeast.
26. Burnt Fork Creek; photographer facing east.
27. Park bridge; photographer facing northeast.
28. Park bridge; photographer facing west.
29. Picnic area with stone pavilion; photographer facing north.
30. Picnic area; photographer facing northeast.
31. Stone fountain; photographer facing northeast.
32. Picnic area with stone grill; photographer facing south.
33. Park bridge; photographer facing northwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

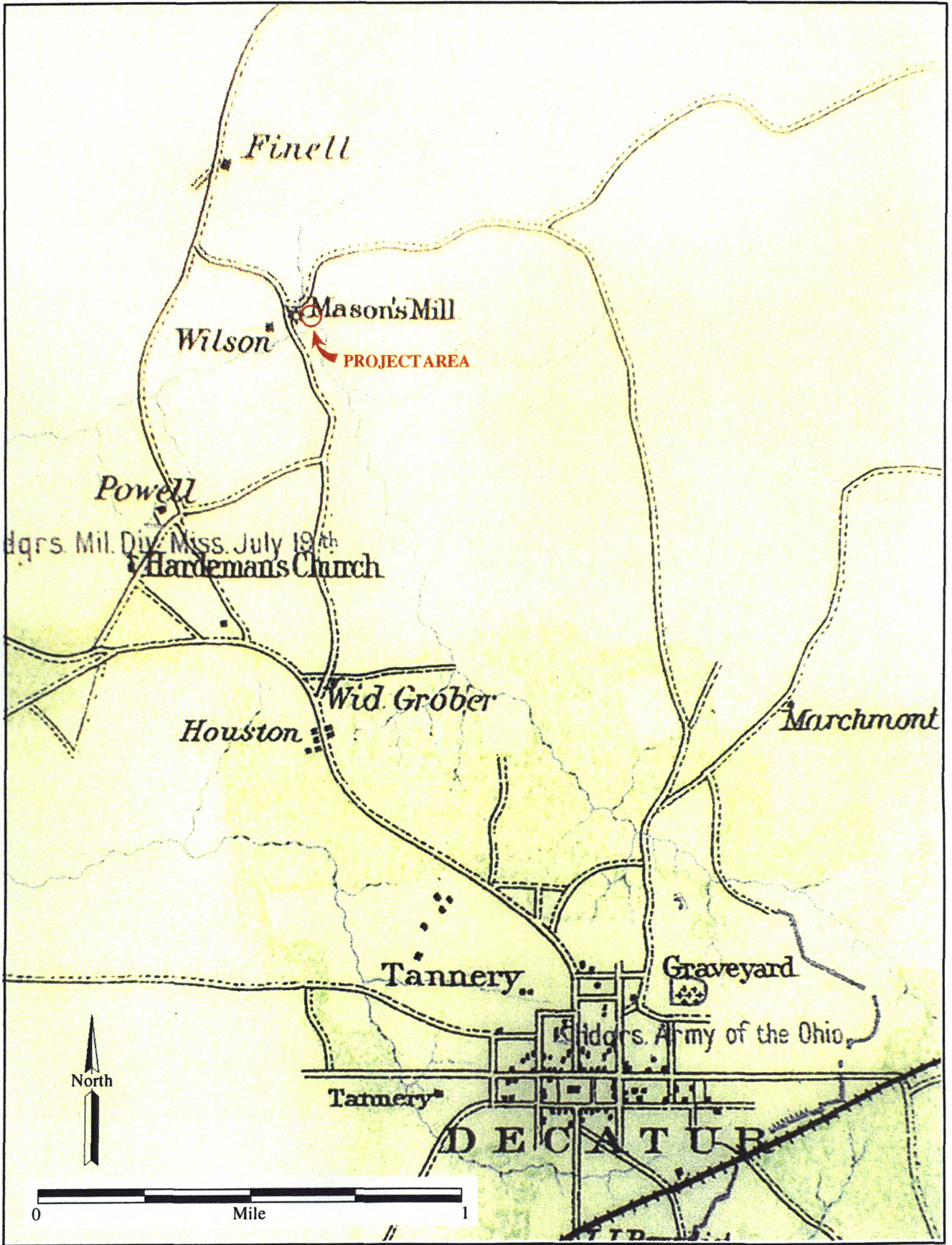


Decatur Waterworks
Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
Aerial Photograph c.1940s
North: ↑

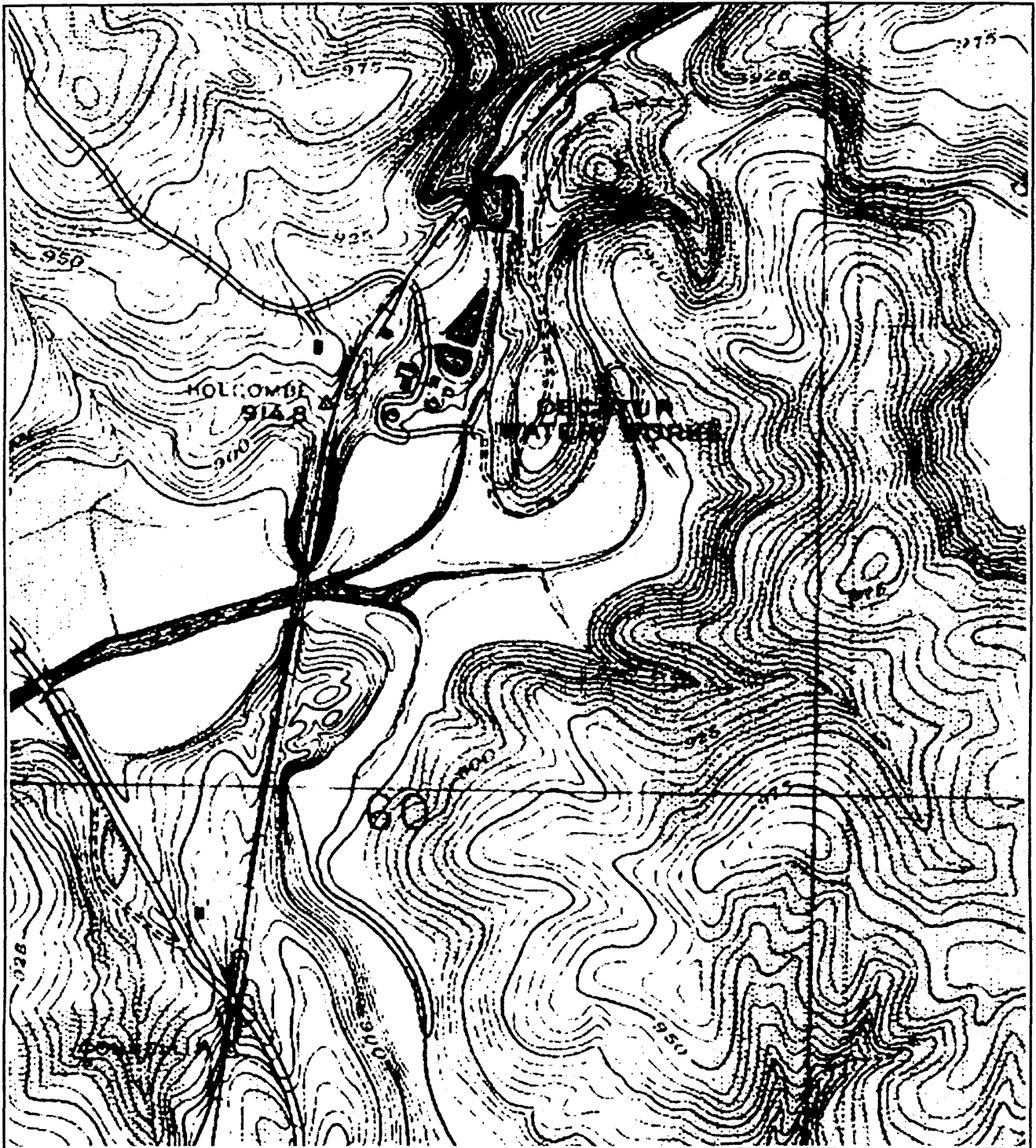
Attachment 1



Decatur Waterworks
 Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
 National Register Boundary: **_____**
 Scale: On map
 North: ↑

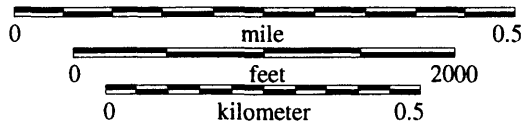


Decatur Waterworks
 Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
 Civil War era map
 Scale: On map
 North: ↑



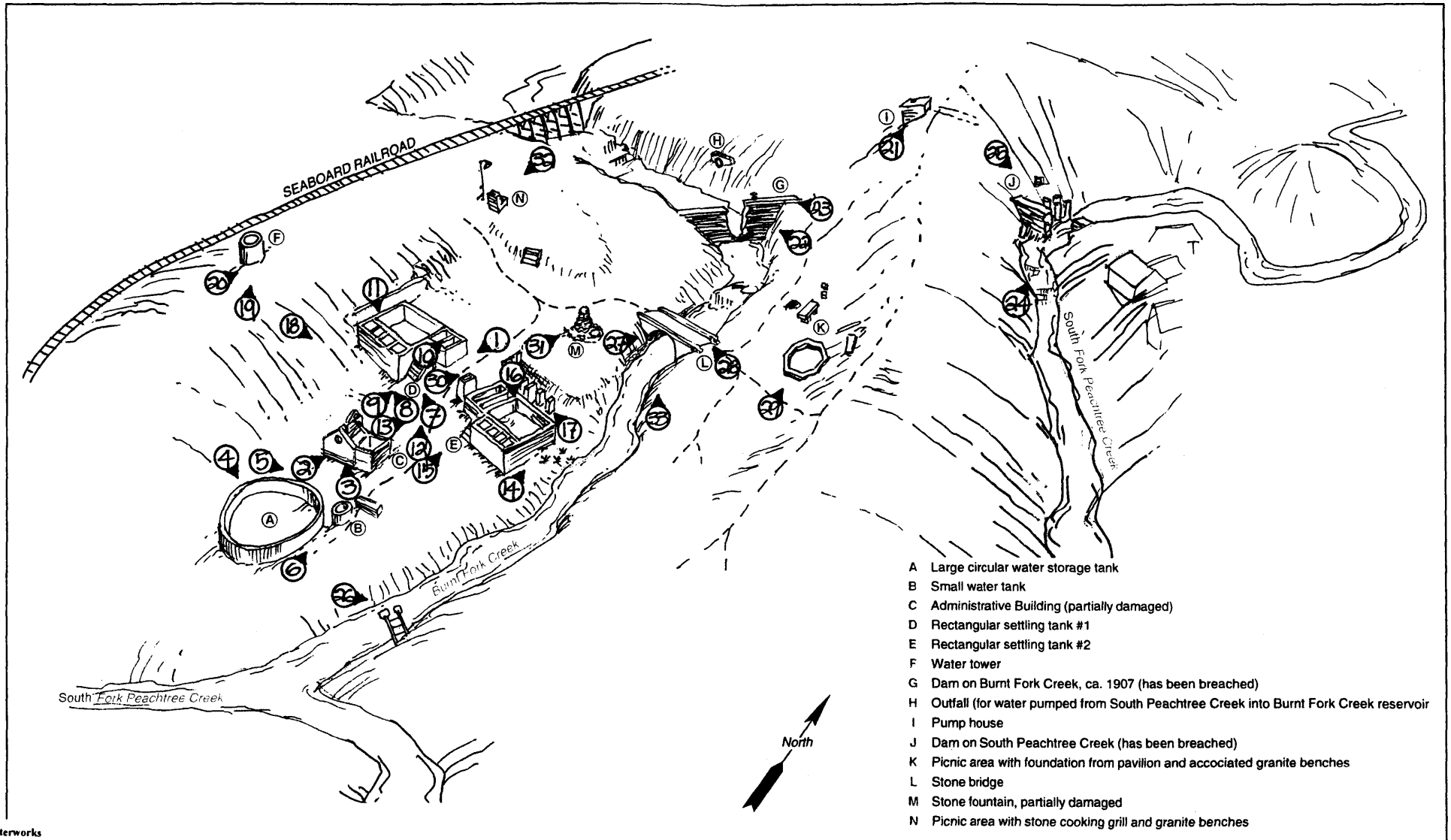
PROJECT AREA

contour interval = 10 feet



Map source: City of Atlanta Construction Department, 1930

Decatur Waterworks
 Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
 City of Atlanta Construction Department Map
 1930, based on 1927-1928 survey
 Scale: On map
 North: ↑



Decatur Waterworks
 Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
 Site Plan/Resource Key
 Contributing: ● Noncontributing: ○
 Photograph Direction/Number: ①②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧⑨⑩⑪⑫⑬⑭⑮⑯⑰⑱⑲⑳㉑㉒㉓㉔㉕㉖㉗㉘㉙㉚㉛㉜㉝㉞㉟
 Scale: Not to scale North: ↗