

PH0098434

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Georgia</b>
COUNTY: <b>Dekalb</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <b>MAY 6 1975</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Mary Gay House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**524 Marshall Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Decatur**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**4th - Benjamin B. Blackburn**

STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13** COUNTY: **Dekalb** CODE: **089**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Unoccupied</u>
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mr. Daniel Bonner**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1862 Candler Road**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Decatur**

STATE:  
**Georgia**

CODE:  
**13**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Dekalb County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Decatur**

STATE:  
**Georgia**

CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None**

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

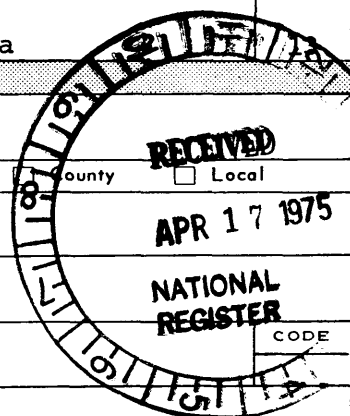
STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Decatur**

STATE:  
**Georgia**

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Georgia

COUNTY: Dekalb

ENTRY NUMBER:

DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mary Gay House, located in downtown Decatur, is one of the very few remaining buildings in the area that date from the Civil War era.

Presently the house has two stories and is oriented toward the east on Marshall Street with a jerkin head gabled roof and partial front porch. The original one story Classical style c.1850 house with a central temple form portico, faced southward originally on "several acres" some distance from West Ponce de Leon Street, then called Green Street. The central portico roofline on the south facade has been changed, steps reoriented and two of the four columns removed to the present front porch. What appears to be the original doorway has simple trim and a four light transom.

The original house probably consisted of the parlor, two small rooms on each side and at least one room to the rear. In the parlor is an Adam style mantel with heavy entablature, three sunburst designs on the freize and supporting fluted pilasters. Simple molding frames the original doors and windows; later door trim additions have wider trim. In the adjoining room on the left is a simpler mantel with a molding framing the fireplace opening, a wide freize and shelf defined by wide dentils. An apparently original closet is adjacent to the fireplace with a carpenter lock on the closet door. The only other mid-19th century mantel in the house is found in the room directly north of the parlor. It is similar in overall detail to the parlor mantel, however the freize has no sunburst detailing. In all rooms mentioned are found wide, approximately five inch flooring, as well as a variety of simple baseboard moldings.

Sometime around the turn into the 20th century the Gay House was oriented eastward on Marshall Street. With a jerkin head roof, this now one and a half story structure has simple bracketed eaves and a partial front porch that uses two of the original portico columns. Interior stair, mantel and flooring details suggest an early 20th century renovation.

Two outbuildings dating from the 19th century are to the west of the structure. Both frame structures, one is presently a storage house and another is primarily a shed, with what appears to be a well house attached. The present day environment of the Mary Gay House is on the fringe of a residential, but fast turning commercial area of downtown Decatur, less than two blocks from the courthouse square.

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) c.1850

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               |  | <u>History</u>                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mary Gay House, a c.1850, originally simple classical style frame structure, is significant historically and architecturally as one of a very few extant pre-Civil War, Decatur area buildings and also as the home of Miss Mary Gay, a noted local historian and author.

As an architectural example of a mid-19th century building, the Mary Gay House is outstanding especially for the interior details including the mantelpieces, locks and closet area described on the facing page. Early in the twentieth century, probably when the property was sold to a Johnston family about the time Miss Gay died in 1918, the house was renovated to face Marshall Street.

Miss Mary Ann Harris Gay, the occupant and owner of this house for over sixty years, is herself a significant figure in local history. Miss Gay, born in 1827, in Georgia, moved to Decatur with her mother and half sister, in 1850 from Marietta. Her mother, Mary Stevens Stokes, is listed in the 1860 census as a seamstress and courthouse records indicate she owned five acres in Decatur; Mary Gay and her sister, Missouri Stokes, are listed as domestics.

Toward the turn of the century Mary Gay writes of Civil War times and is the author of four books, The Transplanted, Life in Dixie During the War, The Pastor's Story, and Prose and Poetry. In Life in Dixie During the War for which Joel Chandler Harris wrote the introduction, Miss Gay gives an eyewitness account of the war years in Decatur. She was 33 years old when the war began and although her book is highly sentimental, she recounts the ransacking and devastation of her house and surrounding areas, revealing much priceless local history. During this time, the main portion of the Union army camped in Decatur, with General Garrard's Calvary selecting the Gay acreage as their headquarters. In a short time the men had demolished the barn and used the planks to make rough shelters for themselves. Here they remained until after the Confederate Army evacuated Atlanta after a six week siege. According to Miss Gay's obituary in the Atlanta Journal, "during the Civil War Miss Gay was prominent in soldier welfare work and it was through her efforts that the Alexander H. Stevens Memorial Institute at Crawfordsville, Georgia, was founded. At the end of the Civil War, Miss Gay toured Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee in order to secure funds to rebuild the Baptist Church at Decatur which had been destroyed." During the war time she stored Confederate goods in her house, crossed through Union lines

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

The Atlanta Journal, November 7, 1918, p.16  
 Boddie, John B., Historical Southern Families.  
 Clarke, Caroline McKinney, The Story of Decatur, 1829-1899, Decatur, 1973  
 Gay, Mary, Life in Dixie During the War, Atlanta, Foote & Davis, Co., 1901  
 Lovett, Howard M., Grandmother Stories from the Land of Used-to-Be.  
 Macgregor, Elizabeth, personal inspection, October 29, 1974.  
 Thomas, Ken., Researcher, Historic Preservation Section

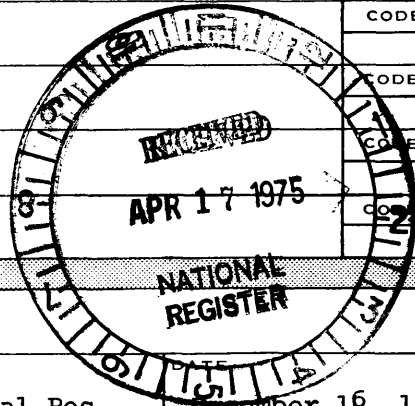
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° SEE CONTINUATION SHEET	"				
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approximately 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:

Elizabeth Z. Macgregor, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Res.

STREET AND NUMBER:

270 Washington Street, S.W., Room 703-C10

CITY OR TOWN:

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name

JACKSON O'NEAL LAMB

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

April 7, 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

5-6-75

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

5.1.75

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Georgia	
COUNTY	DeKalb	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	MAY 6	1975
DATE		

(Number all entries)

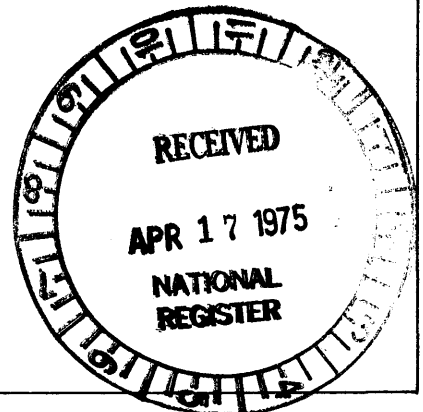
8. Significance

to carry messages to Confederates and secured food for many of the Decatur women and children after the Union army occupation of Decatur.

The Mary Gay House is a newly rediscovered landmark in Decatur. Presently the house is unoccupied and in potential danger of being removed from its presently original site or torn down; however the local historical society has brought awareness to the house and its situation which will aide in the preservation of this mid-nineteenth century Decatur structure.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM: 16/750180/3740420



Property <u>Gay, Mary, House</u>	BOUNDARY REVISION
State <u>Ga.</u>	INCREASE
Working Number <u>2.13.79</u>	DECREASE
	MOVE <u>X</u>
TECHNICAL	CONTROL
Photos <u>16</u>	<u>pl</u>
Maps <u>1, sketch</u>	<u>2.15.79</u>
<u>map + new location</u>	HISTORIAN

one of very few examples of antebellum architecture in **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**  
 location, built ca. 1820, remodelled 1850 & 1900; relocation only alternative to demolition, if moved to  
 new site (will not adversely affect integrity of new site) will be restored & used by Jr. League &  
 museum; historic assoc. & writer/historian Mary Gay; procedures for relocation compiled with  
**ARCHEOLOGIST** 2-21-79

A WELL-DOCUMENTED PETITION TO RETAIN NR LISTING **OTHER**  
 WHILE HOUSE IS BEING MOVED. **APPROVE MOVE**  
 NEW SITE RETAINS INTEGRITY OF SETTING — ORIGINAL **2/21/79**  
 SITE HAS BEEN ENCRUSTED BY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

present owner will demolish unless purchased or **REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**  
 moved — Jr. League cannot afford, but owner of well **Approve**  
 donate bldg if moved. To be "restored" to earliest period, **Lebovich**  
 only interiors preserve original qualities that make property **2/22/79**  
 significant as pre War house + for Civil War associations **BRANCH CHIEF**  
 exterior dates to 1915. House was renovated apparently after  
 changes done after Gay's death.

**KEEPER**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS BOUNDARY REVISION IS ACCEPTED

*W. M. [Signature]*

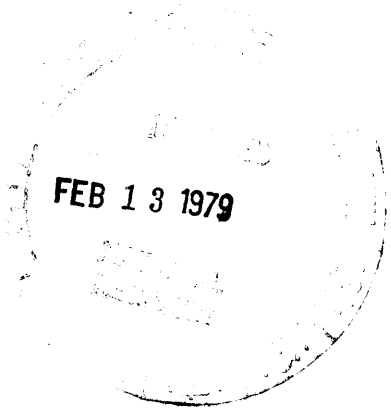
DATE 2/23/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William Lebovich  
 for CHIEF, BRANCH OF REGISTRATION

DATE Feb 22, 1979

THIS FORM IS TO BE FILED WITH THE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION.  
 State notified  Federal Register  Control Cards  ADP



FEB 13 1979

REQUEST BY THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF DEKALB COUNTY, INC.  
TO ALLOW THE MARY GAY HOUSE TO REMAIN ON THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES DURING ITS  
RELOCATION MOVE AND AFTER THE MOVE ON ITS NEW SITE.

RECEIVED  
FEB 23 1979  
CITY OF DECATUR

Justification for Relocation of Mary Gay House

The relocation of the Mary Gary House to Adair Park, Decatur, Georgia, from Marshall Street, Decatur, Georgia, is a practical, necessary move in order to save this historical structure.

The Mary Gay House property is for sale by the owners of the property for \$185,000.00. They have donated the house to the Junior League of DeKalb County, Inc. There are two options available: 1. To purchase the property, or 2. To move the house to a suitable new site. The Junior League, working with the City of Decatur, DeKalb County, and the DeKalb Historical Society, is unable to secure funding for purchase of this property. It is probably fortunate for all concerned because the encroachment of business has severely damaged the integrity of the Marshall Street property for historical restoration. The 100'X 200' lot is bordered by a used car lot, automobile repair shop, one residence (now for sale for commercial development), and another automobile dealership. A narrow two-lane side street is the only access to the property and major thoroughfares in the vicinity make additional or future access almost impossible. Parking space at the site is non-existent due to street conditions. The nearest available space is on-street and public gargage parking approximately one block away.

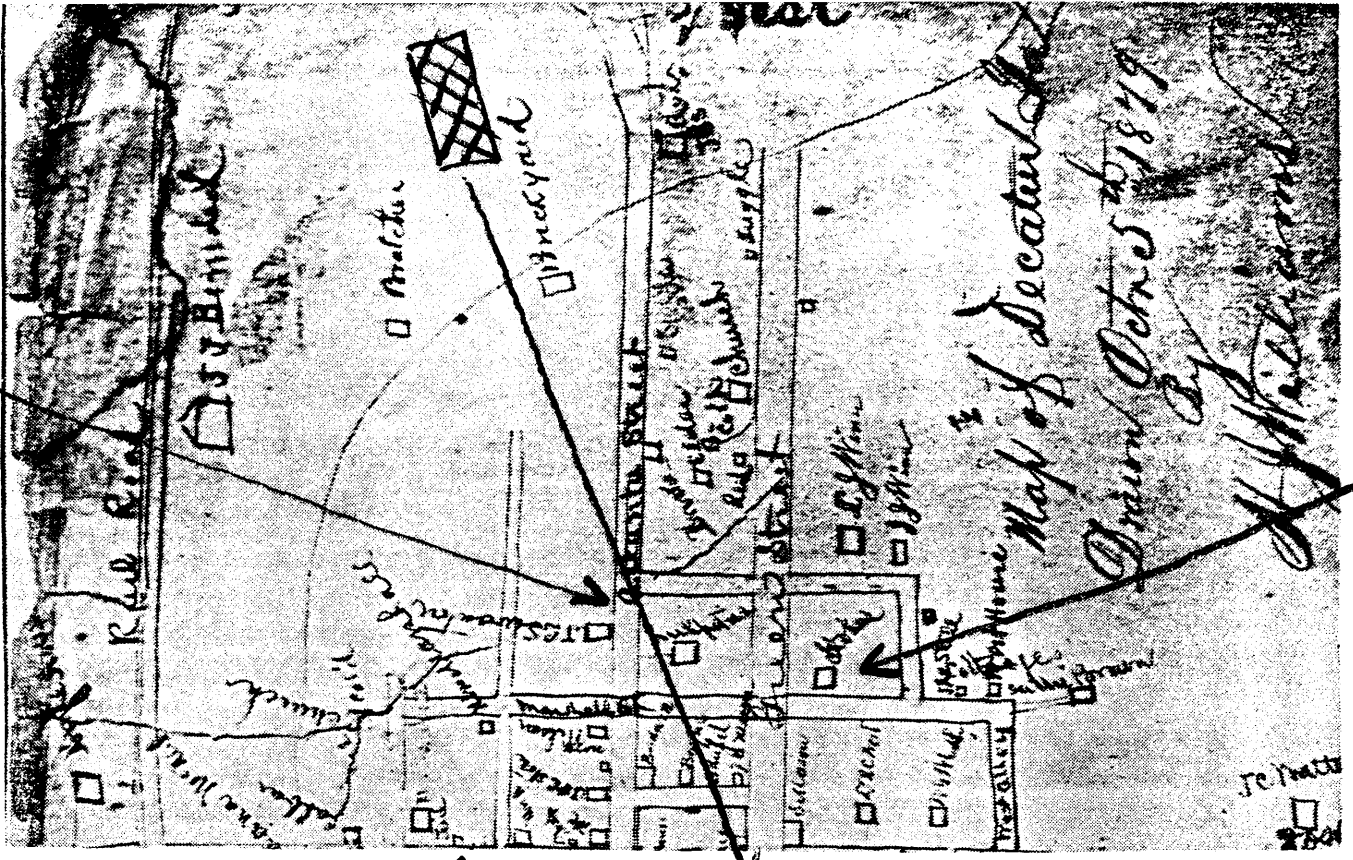
Few of the citizens of DeKalb County are aware of the house, its location, or its historical significance, due primarily to the location. Restoration plans on this restricted, out-of-the-way site would be severely curtailed. In contrast, at the Adair Park location, all of the problems inherent at the Marshall Street site are eliminated. In addition, the Swanton House (National Register) is located at Adair Park. These two significant homes will enhance one another.

The early date of construction of the Mary Gay House, its relation to the Civil War, and the infamous lady who lived there, Miss Mary Gay, make this house a many-faceted treasure. Decatur and DeKalb County are fortunate that there is available property in close proximity to the original site which is less than a mile away. History will be preserved.

Economics of the situation dictate that the Mary Gay House must be moved. There is no choice. A decision to allow this house to remain on the National Register during the move and at the new location will significantly aid in its immediate restoration.



original location of the  
Sumner House



Map of Decatur  
Ordinance Oct 5 1819  
J. W. Williams

Mary Gay House

relocation area for Sumner and Mary Gay houses

