

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA



Archivists' Favorite Collections

For this month's feature, we asked several staff members here at the Georgia Archives to share a favorite item or collection they've worked with or enjoyed exploring. Their answers reveal not only fascinating records but also the personal connections archivists form with the materials they preserve.

Kersten Toebben – Reference Archivist

Favorite Collection: Georgia Department of Transportation's photographs of historical architectural resources (Transportation – Information Office – Visual Materials, 027-06-061).

Kersten first encountered this collection while processing the photographic slides back in 2019. The images, taken between 1975 and 2000, document homes, bridges, and buildings across Georgia that were surveyed during road construction projects.

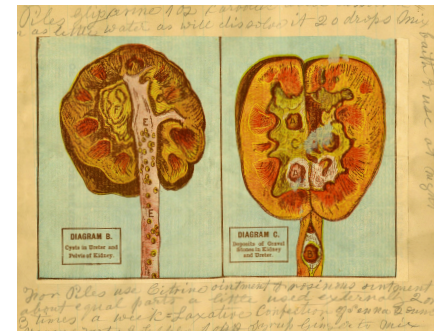
"These photographs are described in wonderful detail, and it's fascinating to see how a residential or commercial area has changed over the years," she says. Among the slides, Kersten noticed an unexpected personal touch: incidental photos of dogs captured by one DOT employee, revealing a softer side to their technical work.

Researchers interested in historical locations that might have been impacted by road construction will find this collection invaluable. The slides are arranged by county, and detailed descriptions are available on our online [Finding Aids](#).

Lily Kim - Archives Paraprofessional

Favorite Collection: Martha Lumpkin Scrapbook Collection

Lily's interest in medical history drew her to the scrapbooks kept by Martha Lumpkin, daughter of Georgia Governor Wilson Lumpkin. These volumes, filled with handwritten remedies and clippings from 19th-century newspapers, reveal how illnesses were treated at home long before modern medicine.



Martha Lumpkin scrapbooks, 1961-0211M.
Georgia Archives Manuscript Collections.

"I think these scrapbooks are a great example of the medical practices from the previous centuries," Lily says. "Women like Martha Lumpkin were treating illnesses at home and learning treatments from various sources."

Amid the medical recipes, Lily notes surprising finds, including a newspaper clipping about Jack the Ripper and an unusual cure for consumption featuring an odd mix of ingredients. This small but compelling collection offers researchers a glimpse into both historical health care and the personal curiosities of its creator.

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Robin Klemm – Outreach Archivist

Favorite Collection: [Georgia Power Company Lighting Installation Photographs \(1979-0071M\)](#).

The Georgia Power Company Lighting Installation Photographs offer a striking look into commercial life in Georgia during the 1930s and 40s. This collection of 305 black-and-white images documents the lighting installation completed by Georgia Power for a variety of businesses across the state. Often featuring “before and after” shots, the photographs were used to showcase the dramatic impact of improved lighting and were frequently published in the company’s magazine, *Bright Spots*.

Beyond their original purpose, these images now serve as visual records of the design trends and architectural styles of the era. From streamlined Art Deco facades to the interiors of small-town shops, the photos capture how businesses of the time presented themselves to customers.

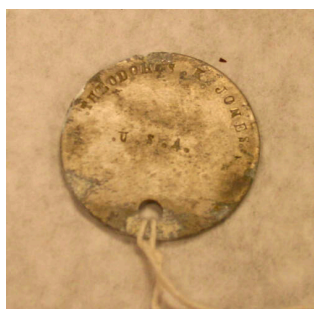
Most photos provide valuable information, like the business name, street address, or whether the image shows an interior or exterior view. In cases where original details were missing, researchers have supplemented the records with data from sources like *Bright Spots* and city directories.

This collection offers researchers a fascinating glimpse into Georgia’s commercial and architectural history. These images can be viewed online through the Georgia Archives’ [Virtual Vault](#).

Camilla Stegall – Archivist

Favorite Collection: [Theodore K. Jones World War I papers \(1969-0250M\)](#).

Camilla’s interest in the personal stories of the American military experience drew her to the Jones papers early in her time at the Archives. One item that stood out to her was Jones’ “Gas” notebook, a detailed, hand-illustrated guide to the use of gas masks during WWI. One of her favorite items to share, the notebook provides a tangible link to the realities soldiers faced during the Great War.



Tag, Identification,
2001.30.0345, Georgia
Capitol Museum. University
System of Georgia

The Jones papers are part of a broader group of WWI collections at the Georgia Archives that capture Georgians’ experiences both at home and abroad during the Great War. Researchers can also explore photos of Jones’ army ID tag in the Virtual Vault, along with other items documenting this period of history, including the [WWI Casualties Scrapbooks](#). Compiled in 1919, these scrapbooks document the Georgian casualties of the war, with pages that include names, ranks, hometowns, and often newspaper clippings, photographs, and biographical notes collected from families and official records.



Tip Top Tailors
Clothing Store, gp021
Georgia Power Company
Collection, ac 1979-0071M,
Georgia Archives

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John Whitehurst – Reference Archivist

Favorite Collection: Georgia Department of Agriculture records

For John, the appeal of these records lies in their breadth and the way they reflect Georgia's deep agricultural roots. They capture stories of those who worked the land and addressed environmental issues, all while connecting to today's growing interest in where our food comes from and how farming practices shape the environment. The records even document battles against pests like the boll weevil.

"Historians have pointed out that the fight against the boll weevil was perceived in similar ways as warfare was during the First World War," John notes. The collection's bulletins include striking maps showing the insect's spread through the South year by year.

John also highlights soil survey maps, which combine aesthetic beauty with valuable scientific data about how soil science has evolved. He reminds researchers that this collection is vast, covering topics beyond agriculture, which is another reason to consult the finding aids for unexpected discoveries.

Amanda Mros – Archivist

Highlighted Collection: Georgia Downtown Main Street Program (RG 066.09.036)

Although Amanda doesn't have a favorite collection, she's drawn to the Georgia Downtown Main Street Program records because they document building types and historic architecture across the state. The files include research on landmarks from Paschal's in Atlanta to Bainbridge's McIver Building.

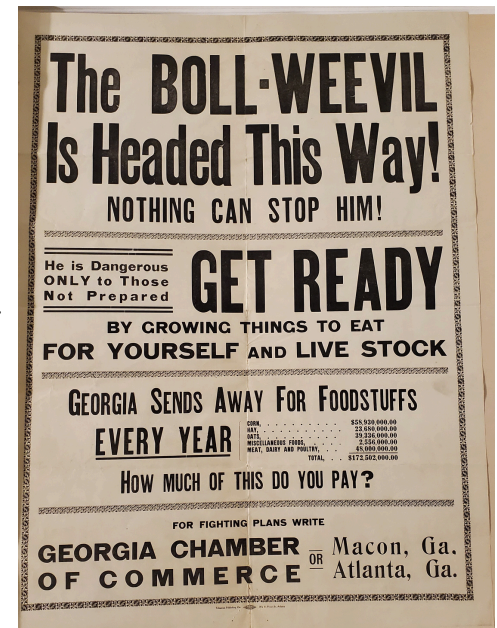
Among her favorite items are the Cuthbert Mule Barn, the colorful Blairsville Streetscape illustrations, and a Brunswick brochure with research on "The Factory that Never Was."

For a closer look, Amanda recommends checking out the Fourth Friday recording on this collection, which is hosted on the Georgia Archives' YouTube channel. This presentation features images and information, including images of some of these standout items. You can also explore the collection further through its Finding Aid.

Hendry Miller – Collection Manager

Favorite Collection: Surveyor General – State Boundary Records (RG 003-01-072)

Early boundary disputes are what drew Hendry to this series, which includes original records from the 18th and 19th centuries and research from the 1900s. These documents reveal Georgia's long history of negotiating borders with neighboring states and tie into larger themes of territorial expansion and resource use, including water rights.



Special Collections - Boll Weevil Poster, 1914, RG 48-1-1.
John Marshall Slaton Collection, ac0000-0070m.

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Hendry found the records related to the Florida boundary especially interesting. They detail surveys connected to the 1820 land lottery and interactions with Native peoples during this period.

These materials complement other Surveyor General and land survey records, offering researchers a deeper understanding of how Georgia's land history unfolded. Explore this collection through our [Finding Aids](#) online and visit the Georgia Archives to view in person.

To complement Hendry's favorite collection, check out "[Georgia's Land Lotteries and Native Americans](#)", a presentation given by Hendry that examines Native American responses to Georgia's expanding territory in the early nineteenth century. He discusses Georgia's land distribution systems, Native American interactions with officials and their own communities, and the resources available online and at the Georgia Archives.

Ashley Oscarson - Archives Assistant

Favorite Collection: [Carnegie Family Photograph Album](#)

Ashley's fascination with candid photography and turn-of-the-century life led her to the Carnegie Family Photography Albums, part of the Lucy Coleman and Thomas M. Carnegie Family Papers. The albums document the personal lives of the Carnegie family, a prominent industrial dynasty that owned Cumberland Island from 1881 to 1972, when it officially became a National Seashore.

"This collection stands out because it offers an informal glimpse into what life was like for the wealthy Carnegie family during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries," Ashley says. "The photographs are almost all candid, showing casual gatherings, weddings, and travel rather than the formal portraits you typically see during that era."

Among her favorite images are those from the family's trips to the American West and abroad. The snapshots capture the people, animals, and scenery they encountered along the way, offering rare visual records of places more than a century ago.

These albums are fully digitized and ready to explore on the Georgia Archives [Virtual Vault](#).

These favorite collections showcase the range of materials that inspire the archivists who work with them every day. From architectural history and commercial life to personal narratives and rare photographs, each one offers a unique entry point into Georgia's past, inviting researchers and the public alike to explore, discover, and connect with our state's history.



Skibo Castle, Scotland Photograph Album.
Lucy Coleman and Thomas M. Carnegie Family Papers,
ac. 1994-0003M, Georgia Archives.

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GENEALOGY TIDBITS
BY KENNETH H. THOMAS, JR.

Genealogy Events Calendar:

August 23: Friends of Georgia Archives & History (FOGAH) Annual Meeting. The program, From Researching to Publishing: A How-to Event at the Georgia Archives, includes a panel of authors discussing how to publish your book through self-publishing or with regional publishers, such as Arcadia. (This will not cover university presses.) The program also includes a lecture on getting an article published in a magazine or journal, as well as a session on selling and marketing your book, which I will lead. Presenting authors will be selling copies of their books, and annual FOGAH Christmas ornaments will be available for purchase at the meeting as well.

Check FOGAH.org for membership information and meeting updates.

Beginner's Focus:

Be sure you know how to use the "catalog" feature found at Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. On Ancestry.com, you can search by keywords in order to find certain record groups and collections that you may not have found otherwise, but it can be tricky to use the correct search terms. On FamilySearch.org, you can search for a county's records to see what has been microfilmed and digitized. For example, entering 'United States, Georgia, Muscogee' will display available records for Muscogee County.

Society/Library Focus:

Smyrna, Georgia, operates an independent library system, and its central library in downtown Smyrna maintains its own genealogy collection separate from the Switzer Library in Marietta. This collection is certainly worth checking out. The library, located at 100 Village Green Circle in Smyrna, is open daily and its genealogy collection is accessible whenever the library is open. The collection has a very heavy concentration on published Virginia county records books. For more information, visit their website here: library.smyrnaga.gov/#section=home.

DNA:

Should you copy your results to other DNA company sites or take a separate test for each company? My philosophy is that it's better to have your actual

DNA (continued):

DNA on each site, in case new testing methods become available. But if you can't test the person again and want to copy their DNA to another site, remember there are two types of tests: 1. The spit test are used by Ancestry.com and 23andMe.com; 2. Mouth swab tests used by FamilyTreeDNA.com and MyHeritage.com. The spit tests can be copied to other sites, but you cannot transfer the mouth swab tests to Ancestry.com or 23andMe.com. You can use this guide to better understand transferring DNA results from Ancestry.com to FamilyTreeDNA.com: <https://help.familytreedna.com/hc/en-us/articles/4415446123663-Understanding-Autosomal-DNA-Transfers>.

African American Genealogy Focus:

In 2009, as part of my job as Historian with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, I donated a collection about Sapelo Island history that includes the genealogy of the African American families who historically owned land on the island. None of it is digitized, so researchers must visit the Georgia Archives in person to view the materials. The research, conducted by professional genealogist Mae Ruth Green between 1980 and 1984, includes family histories and interviews.

Website News:

The Library of Congress Chronicling America website is "migrating" to a new format this month. This website is a great place to find newspapers from across the United States. For more details, check out the Library of Congress website: www.loc.gov/ndnp/migration/.

Georgia Archives Research Tidbit:

Did you know the governors of Georgia once issued passports? These documents granted people the right to journey westward through Indian Territory and beyond. You may be surprised to discover that your ancestors applied for these passports and used them to travel west, while others obtained them but did not go. There are some great clues found there. The Georgia Passports, covering 1785-1820, were originally edited by Mary G. Bryan, Director of the Georgia Archives, and published by the National Genealogical Society in 1959 and 1964 in booklets. They were later compiled into a book by Dorothy Williams Potter, *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers, 1770-1823* (Nashville: Gateway Press, 1982), which also includes other southeastern states. The book, along with the original materials for Georgia, is available at the Georgia Archives.

Contact Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., P. O. Box 901, Decatur, GA 30031, or email him through his website, kenthomasongenealogy.com.

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New Exhibit

***Georgia Stone: The History of the Georgia
Marble and Granite Industries***

From August 16 through November 15, visit the Georgia Archives to explore *Georgia Stone: The History of the Georgia Marble and Granite Industries*.

The exhibit highlights the development of these industries from the 1800s to the present, featuring maps, photographs, letters, and artifacts that document their influence on Georgia's communities, economy, and national landmarks. Admission is free during regular operating hours.

2025 Preventive Conservation Workshop

The Georgia Archives Conservation Department will host the *2025 Preventive Conservation Workshop: Care of Archives, Art, and Artifacts* on October 27–29, 2025.

This three-day program is ideal for staff of cultural institutions, as well as anyone interested in preserving historical or artistic items. No prior conservation experience is required.

Led by the Georgia Archives' Paper Conservator, Sigourney Stanford, the workshop will cover the causes of material deterioration, environmental control, pest management, proper storage, preservation policies, and emergency planning. Participants will also have the chance to discuss specific preservation concerns and problem-solve with peers.

Offered in a hybrid format, attendees may participate in person at the Georgia Archives in Morrow or online via Microsoft Teams.

Registration is \$50 and includes handout materials and snacks. Space is limited to 30 participants, and the deadline to register or cancel is October 24, 2025.

To register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/522ranfh>.

**Coming Up at the
Georgia Archives:**

August 16 - November 15

Exhibit

Georgia Stone: The History of the Georgia Marble and Granite Industries

August 23, 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

From Researching to Publishing:
A How-To Event at the Georgia Archives

Visit GeorgiaArchives.org or FOGAH.org for more information.

September 12, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch & Learn

Prose to the People
with Katie Mitchell, author of
*Prose to the People: A
Celebration of Black Bookstores*

October 4, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Archives & Genealogy Day
Visit GeorgiaArchives.org for
upcoming information.

October 10, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch & Learn

The Proof is in the Dough
with Kathryn Beasley, author of
*The Proof is in the Dough: Rural
Southern Women, Extension, and
Making Money*

October 27-28

*Preventive Conservation
Workshop: Care of Archives, Art,
and Artifacts*

Visit GeorgiaArchives.org for
more information.