

Happy Archives Month from the Georgia Archives!

From genealogy workshops and historical presentations to community outreach and an upcoming exhibit, October has been a busy month at the Georgia Archives. In celebration of Archives Month, staff have connected with researchers, students, and history enthusiasts through programs and activities, both at the Archives and throughout the region.



Guests, friends, and partners in the Georgia Archives lobby for Archives & Genealogy Day
October 3, 2026

The month began with Archives & Genealogy Day on October 3, bringing together researchers of all experience levels for a day focused on family history. Laura Carter, a retired librarian and genealogist, led a hands-on workshop where participants put their research skills to work. A second track featured presentations from the Georgia Archives, the Digital Library of Georgia, and the Georgia Public Library Service, introducing attendees to resources for exploring their family histories. The day concluded with a panel discussion in which presenters answered questions and shared research advice.

Family history also took center stage at the October Lunch & Learn, featuring Michael N. Henderson, author of *Got Proof! My Genealogical Journey Through the Use of Documentation*. Henderson shared discoveries from nearly four decades of genealogical research, including his family's connections to colonial Louisiana and the American

Revolution. His research and efforts to bring greater recognition to overlooked Patriots of color are also highlighted in the traveling exhibit *First in Our State: A Revolutionary Achievement*, on loan from the Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society and the City of Sugar Hill. The exhibit will remain on display at the Georgia Archives through November 20. Henderson will also be honored with an Excellence in Advocacy Award at the upcoming Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC) Awards Ceremony.



Michael N. Henderson presenting at the October Lunch & Learn
October 9, 2026

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The Revolutionary era was also the focus of a special America 250 program recorded at the Archives. Members of the James Waldrop Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution brought historical figures to life in *Conversations Across Time: The Women Who Knew Lafayette*, a program exploring the lives of women connected to the Marquis de Lafayette and the American Revolution.



Left to right: Dori Johnston, Phyllis King, Deborah Riddle, Janie Holste, and Sarah Moon. Recording *Conversations Across Time* at the Georgia Archives.

Throughout the month, Georgia Archives staff have also participated in professional development, outreach, and educational activities. Several staff members traveled to Frankfort, Kentucky, for the Southeastern Archives & Records Conference, joining archival professionals from across the region to share ideas and learn from colleagues. In Moultrie, an outreach presentation explored Georgia's colonial and Revolutionary-era records and how they can be used to research the state's early history. Meanwhile, the Archives welcomed students and community groups for building tours, class visits, and presentations, offering a closer look at its collections, preservation work, and the resources available to researchers.

The month will conclude with the official opening of the Appling Sword exhibit on October 31. Made possible through generous donations from the Colonel Daniel Appling Chapter of the United States Daughters of 1812 and others, the exhibit offers another opportunity to explore Georgia's history through surviving artifacts. Additional details about the exhibit will be announced soon.

For those who missed a program or would like to revisit a presentation, several recordings are available on the Georgia Archives YouTube channel. These include all four Archives & Genealogy Day general session presentations, Michael N. Henderson's October Lunch & Learn, and *Conversations Across Time: The Women Who Knew Lafayette*. The channel also features past programs covering Georgia history, genealogy, and archival research.

[CLICK HERE TO
WATCH
PRESENTATIONS
AND SPECIAL
PROGRAMS](#)

Although Archives Month is drawing to a close, the work of preserving and sharing Georgia's history continues year-round. From helping researchers discover family connections to introducing students to primary sources, the Georgia Archives remains a resource for anyone interested in exploring the state's past.

GENEALOGY TIDBITS BY KENNETH H. THOMAS, JR.

Beginner's Focus: Understanding State Records

One thing beginners and experienced researchers alike should understand is how much recordkeeping practices can vary from state to state, even among neighboring states. Knowing these differences can help you determine what records might be available and where to look for them. In this first installment, we'll take a look at marriage records.

Georgia has recorded marriages in courthouse books since around 1805, although marriage licenses containing additional information, such as ages, parents' names, and witnesses or bondsmen, did not become a requirement until the early 20th century. North Carolina, on the other hand, began recording this type of information on marriage licenses around the 1870s, while South Carolina did not begin keeping civil marriage records until 1911.

These differences are important to keep in mind when researching across state lines. In South Carolina, for example, finding evidence of an earlier marriage may mean looking through newspapers, church records, or family Bibles. Even in Georgia, not every marriage made it into the courthouse records, so it's always worth checking other sources, including estate records and pensions.

Society/Library Focus:

Always take time to evaluate what a local archive or special collections department has to offer, including those at colleges and universities. Some have excellent materials, even if it's just one particularly valuable collection. Many also maintain vertical files that can be useful for research.

Consider the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, for example. You may not think to look there, but its archives and special collections department, established in 1973, holds an excellent collection of Charlotte-area materials, including manuscripts by local historians, postcards, local histories, and more. Charlotte also has an excellent local history collection at its downtown public library. The Carolina Room is scheduled to reopen downtown in spring 2027, so check before visiting to see whether it's open.

Don't overlook the resources available within a local community. Public libraries, colleges or universities, local historical or genealogical societies, or museums can all be valuable resources for your research.

DNA:

Ancestry.com has begun rolling out a new "Tree Compare" feature in its DNA section. The feature is currently available to some users and is expected to become more widely available. It shows when someone else has the same person or ancestor in their family tree. If their information doesn't match yours, you may need to work together to sort out the differences.

African American Genealogy Focus:

It's always a good idea to double-check how county courthouse records are labeled, particularly marriage books identified as "White Marriages" or "Black Marriages." Clerks sometimes made mistakes, so be sure to check both. (continued on next page)



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GENEALOGY TIDBITS (CONTINUED)

In today's digitized world, there is also another consideration to think about. While Southern courthouses historically made these distinctions, the organizations digitizing the records, such as FamilySearch.org or Ancestry.com, may not have preserved those labels when making the materials available online.

Website News:

Ancestry.com has recently posted digitized Baptist records from the Georgia Baptist Collection at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. From what I've been told, you cannot search directly by the church you're interested in. Instead, you'll need to locate the collection under its title: Georgia, U.S., Mercer University Baptist Church Records, 1805 - 2000.

Georgia Archives Research Tidbit:

When researching a particular Georgia county, it's important to remember that not all records are available in the same place. Some may be on microfilm at the Georgia Archives, others may be available online through FamilySearch.org, and some may be accessible only in their original form.

Start by checking which county records are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives. Then compare those holdings with what's available on FamilySearch.org, including its Full Text Search feature. Keep in mind that not everything digitized by FamilySearch can be viewed from home. Some records have access restrictions and may require a visit to a FamilySearch Center operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

It's also worth checking whether the Georgia Archives holds original records that haven't been digitized and must be viewed in person. And don't assume that records no longer held at a county courthouse necessarily ended up at the Georgia Archives. For example, the Inferior Court Minutes for County Purposes for Muscogee County were first transferred to the Columbus Museum and are now held by the Columbus State University Archives.

The important thing is to find out what records exist, where they're held, and how you can access them. It never hurts to ask questions about the county you're researching.

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

COMING UP AT THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

NOVEMBER

November 13 American Indian Heritage Symposium and Lunch & Learn

12 pm - 1 pm

*Since Time Immemorial:
Navigating Culture,
Memory, and Collaboration
with the Miccosukee
Archives*

by Hannah Jancosko and
Desiree Billie

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

*Printing Native Americans
and "the West" in Early
American Almanacs*
by Dr. Matthew Sparacio

More details available on
GeorgiaArchives.org.

DECEMBER

December 11 12 pm - 1 pm Lunch & Learn

*Finding Sarah and Mary:
Unraveling African
American Genealogy from
the Ground Up*

by
Dr. Jacqueline
Jones Royster