

# THE CIVIL HISTORY

The Regional Newsletter of  
The Friends of the National Archives and  
The National Archives at Atlanta

September 2010

## Ancestry Day at the National Archives

September 18<sup>th</sup> was a red-letter day for the National Archives at Atlanta!

In partnership with the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. (AAHGS) Metro Atlanta Chapter, the National Archives at Atlanta welcomed over 350 people. They came to hear Lisa Arnold, content manager with Ancestry.com, and Reginald Washington, archivist and genealogist from the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The session was a great opportunity to learn more about the new features on Ancestry.com and to get answers to questions about how to use Ancestry.com. Reginald Washington gave a fascinating description of ancestral records in the Southern Claims Commission.



Pictured left to right: Reginald Washington, National Archives; Lisa Arnold, Ancestry.com; Jim McSweeney, Regional Administrator of the National Archives at Atlanta; and Gene R. Stephenson II, president of AAHGS.



Emma Davis-Hamilton, Vice President of the AAHGS, with Lisa Arnold. Emma was the chairman of the planning group for the program and the major force behind its success.



In the photo above, Susan Sloan tells potential members about the Georgia Genealogical Society. Numerous organizations had displays in the lobby of the National Archives.



Every seat was taken!



## Alien Files Find New Home at the National Archives

For the first time, more than 300,000 case files on alien residents of the United States who were born 1909 and prior are now open to the public at the National Archives at Kansas City. These files, known as “Alien Files” (commonly referred to as “A-Files”) were transferred to the National Archives from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and are only a small part of the millions of case files that will eventually be transferred and opened to the public.

“The A-files are a key to unlocking the fascinating stories of millions of people who traveled to the United States in search of opportunity, including my own grandfather” said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. “They include information such as photographs, personal correspondence, birth certificates, health records, interview transcripts, visas, applications and other information on all non-naturalized alien residents, both legal and illegal. The snapshot of American life that develops from each file can, in some cases, serve as a one-stop-shopping for researchers.”

See <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/aliens/a-files-kansas-city.html> for information on requesting A-Files. A-Files may be viewed in person by visiting the National Archives at Kansas City by appointment or copies of files may be ordered for a fee.

## National Archives Receives Original Nuremberg Laws from Huntington Library

In a transfer ceremony at The Huntington Library, Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero accepted on behalf of the U.S. government the original Nuremberg Laws presented by Steven S. Koblik, Huntington president. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. deposited the documents at the Library for safekeeping at the end of World War II. He died in December of 1945 in an automobile crash before he could discuss their final disposition.

The Laws, which were signed by Hitler in 1935, are considered to be the official blueprint of racial policies against Jews in Germany. Individuals were defined as Jews if three or four of their grandparents were Jewish. They were stripped of their German citizenship and prohibited from marrying German citizens.

The Nuremberg Laws will join millions of other documents in the National Archives World War II holdings relating to the Third Reich, the Holocaust, and the trials at Nuremberg.



## Join Us As We Honor our Veterans!

### **From Bunker Hill to Kabul: The Search for Family Stories in the National Archives**

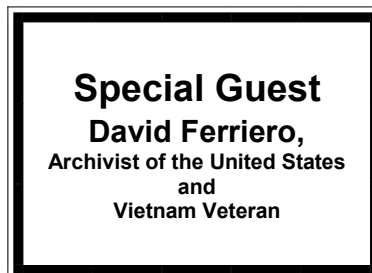
November 6, 2010  
9:30

**What did you do in the war, Grandpa?** The program begins with a presentation by Nathan Jordan, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. Nathan is an Archives Technician at the National Archives at Atlanta. His family history is somewhat unusual in that most of the men in his genealogy served in the military, beginning with the American Revolution; the Creek War; four ancestors in the Civil War; World War I; World War II; and continuing to Nathan’s tour in Afghanistan. He grew up hearing stories about his family’s military service, and he has used sources in the National Archives to substantiate (or not) those stories.

**World War I Aviation.** Nathan’s presentation will be followed by Narayan Sengupta, the author of *American Eagles: U. S. Military Aviation in World War I*. Sengupta’s book is the story of U. S. World War I combat aviation—the pilots, their planes, their aerodromes, their stories and what happened to them after the war. In 1918, the Germans shot down and killed Teddy Roosevelt’s youngest son, Quentin, in the skies over France. Before his death, Quentin had lived in the home of Sengupta’s great-great grandmother. This, and a love of history passed to him by various family members is what started him to research American World War I aviation. He will be available to sign copies of his book after his presentation.

**What did YOU do in the war?** In an open dialog we invite you to share your stories and memories of military service. If you have interesting stories about your ancestors in the Armed Forces or just stories about your own service, we invite you to tell us about them.

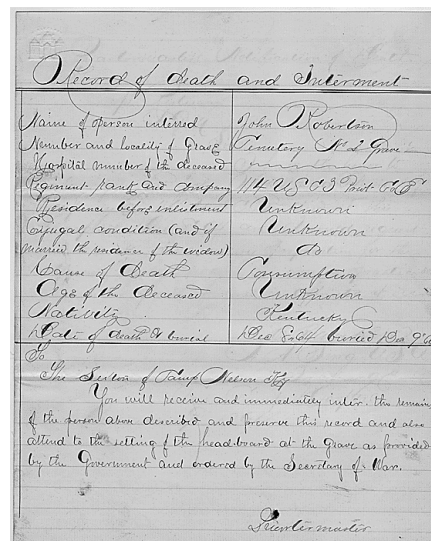
After lunch, the National Archives at Atlanta reference staff will provide assistance in researching military records and in requesting personnel files from the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records in our St. Louis office.



# Cemetery Records



Hickory Grove Cemetery, southeast corner, 1939



Death and Interment Record for John Robertson

Willie Morris once wrote “I love the South because it helps me remember. It helps me know who I am. When I am there, it haunts me that all my people—my great-grandparents, my grandfather and grandmother, my aunts and uncles, my father—lie close by in the dark earth. *Be with me*, my father whispered to me when he was dying. I am aware that I am among them and that they will always be with me.”

As any genealogist knows, visiting cemeteries and graveyards to record information from markers is essential to “filling in the blanks” in family histories. It harkens back to earlier days. In rural areas throughout the county, and especially in the South, visiting the cemetery was a family ritual. In my family, everyone gathered at MawMaw’s house for Sunday dinner. After coffee and dessert, someone would wander through the yard and pick anything blooming. Then everyone piled in the car to visit the family plot in a cemetery where the graves dated from the mid-1800s. As the flowers were arranged and set out, everyone talked about the departed family members. It was a time of remembering.

In the early days of our country, when settlers first moved to a new area, family cemeteries were a necessity. Often two or more families established a burial ground together. Sometimes these areas grew into regular cemeteries, but in other cases, the families moved away, and the cemeteries were forgotten. Occasionally today developers discover abandoned cemeteries.

Hidden in the ubiquitous records of the Federal government at the National Archives at Atlanta are numerous records of cemeteries.

## Tennessee Valley Authority

The records from the Tennessee Valley Authority document the agency’s massive operation to remove cemeteries from areas which would flood once dams were built along the Tennessee River.

The cemetery relocation files consist primarily of permits granting consent from the family of the deceased for disinterment and relocation and witnessed documentation regarding the contents of each grave upon disinterment. Disinterment documentation usually contains the deceased’s birth date, cause of death, grave marker inscriptions, and closest family member at the time of death. The name of the deceased’s new cemetery, new grave site number, and new grave markers are included if applicable.

## Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General

The files from this agency contain several series of records related to Civil War soldiers. The Sexton’s Reports of Burials, 1864 provide the decedent’s name, rank, unit; when and where he died; and when and where he was buried.

The Records of Death and Interment at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, 1864-1865 provide the decedent’s name, rank, unit, cause and date of death, and burial location. The Records of Death from the Colored Refugee Home and the Freedman’s Hospital are for “contraband” slaves who escaped or were brought within Union Lines.

In addition we hold microfilm for “Register of Confederate Soldiers, Sailors, and Citizens Who Died in Federal Prisons and Military Hospitals in The North, 1861-1865” (M918) and “Card Records of Headstones Provided for Deceased Union Civil War Veterans, ca. 1879-1903 (M1845).

For an index to various cemetery records, see the website of the Friends of the National Archives Southeast at [http://www.friendsnas.org/db\\_cemeteries/index.htm](http://www.friendsnas.org/db_cemeteries/index.htm)

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
WWW.FRIENDSNAS.ORG

## Coming Events

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### Save the Date!

April 16, 2011  
Civil War Symposium

**Civil War**

Civil War Antiques Roadshow –  
In partnership with  
Georgia Public Broadcasting

Details to follow

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