

Exploring Revolutionary Georgia from New Angles

The Georgia Archives was glad to welcome attendees on April 10 and 11 for the 2026 April History Symposium, *Tracing Footsteps: Beyond the Founding Story in Revolutionary Georgia*. As part of our America250 programming, this year's symposium focused on stories and perspectives that are often left at the edges of Revolutionary history and invited attendees to think more deeply about how that history was experienced, remembered, and recorded.

Across four presentations, the symposium examined the Revolution as far more complicated than a simple conflict between Britain and the colonies. The sessions highlighted divisions within communities, shifting loyalties, and the very different ways the era shaped the lives of Black Georgians, women, Loyalists, Indigenous people, and others whose experiences do not always fit neatly into familiar public narratives.

Friday's program opened with the April Lunch & Learn, *Whose American Revolution Was It—And Whose Is It Today?* presented by Dr. Gregory Nobles. His talk encouraged attendees to see the Revolution as a broader continental conflict involving many different people across North America and to consider what that history continues to mean during the semiquincentennial year. That afternoon, Dr. Robert S. Davis shared the life and legacy of Austin Dabney, placing one of Georgia's most well-known Revolutionary stories in the broader context of slavery, military service, and freedom in Revolutionary Georgia.

On Saturday, Dr. Greg Brooking explored the role of Royal Governor Sir James Wright and the political tensions that made Georgia's path to independence especially complex. The symposium concluded with Dr. Katherine Brackett's presentation on Nancy Hart, which traced how Hart's story moved from lived experience into legend and how it has been used over time to shape ideas about patriotism, gender, and memory.

The symposium invited attendees to look at Revolutionary Georgia from different perspectives and to think more carefully about how that history has been remembered and shared. Thank you to our speakers and to all who attended. If you were unable to attend or would like to revisit any of the presentations, they are available on the Georgia Archives YouTube channel.

Links to Recorded Sessions:



Whose Revolution Was It?
by Dr. Gregory Nobles



The Story of Austin Dabney
by Dr. Robert Davis



Sir James Wright and the Price of Loyalty in GA
by Dr. Greg Brooking



'War Woman' Nancy Hart
by Dr. Katherine Brackett

[View the Complete Symposium Playlist](#)

REVOLUTION IN 1776

Exhibit on View:

MAY 15 - JULY 18, 2026

GEORGIA'S RECORDED COPY OF THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
ON VIEW SELECT DATES:

MAY 15 | JUNE 12 | JUNE 30 | JULY 10

A New America250 Exhibit Opens at the Georgia Archives This May

As the nation marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the Georgia Archives will present a new exhibit exploring Georgia's place in that history. ***Revolution in 1776: Georgia's Signers and Copy of the Declaration of Independence*** opens May 15 and runs through July 18, 2026.

The exhibit highlights the lives of Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, and George Walton, while also examining Georgia's recorded copy of the Declaration of Independence, entered into an official state volume in 1777. Because of its significance and the need for long-term preservation, Georgia's recorded copy will be on view to the public on four select dates only. The exhibit will be open Tuesday through Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Georgia Archives in Morrow. Admission is free, and schools, historical societies, and community groups interested in arranging a visit are encouraged to contact Robin Klemm at Robin.Klemm@usg.edu.

Records and Information Management Month: Support for Georgia Agencies

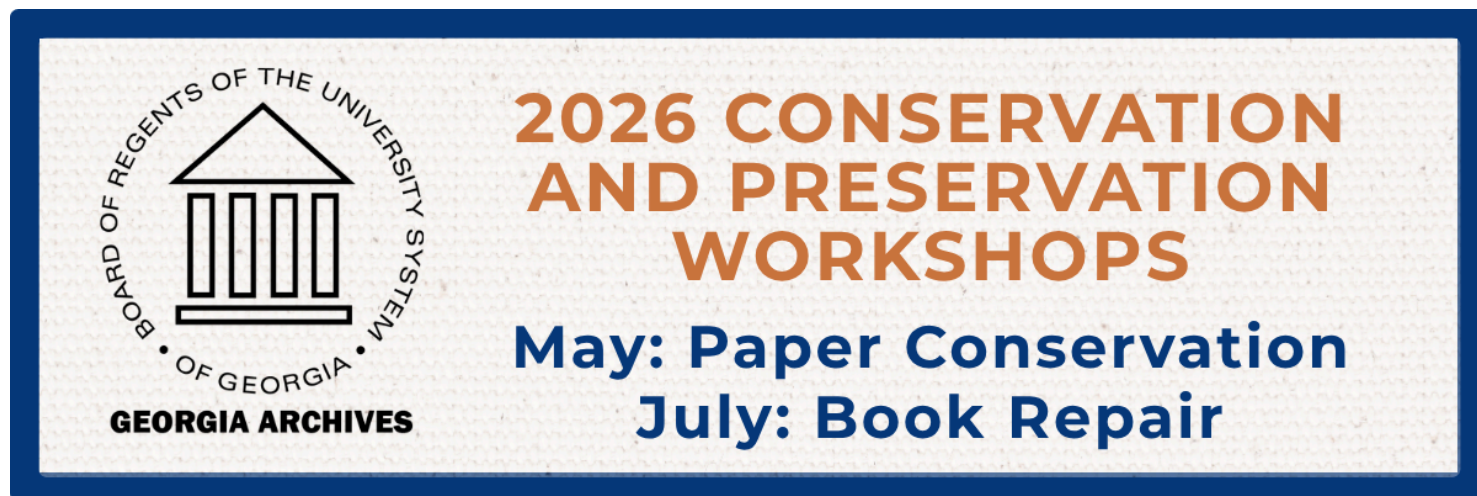
April is Records and Information Management Month, a time to highlight the work that helps records remain organized, accessible, and useful over time.

The Georgia Archives offers free records management training and on-site assessments for local governments, state agencies, and University System of Georgia entities. These services are designed to help agencies strengthen their records programs and better manage the information they create and maintain.

Training sessions are offered virtually, typically run one to two hours, and can be tailored to meet an agency's specific needs. Topics may include basic records management, records inventory and destruction, digitization strategies, retention schedules, and best practices.

On-site assessments may include help with processing records, evaluating storage conditions, recommending storage solutions, and providing guidance on records management needs.

Agencies interested in learning more or scheduling a training or assessment may contact Rebecca Wood at Rebecca.Wood@usg.edu or 678-364-3783.



The banner features the Georgia Archives logo on the left, which includes a classical building icon and the text "BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA" and "GEORGIA ARCHIVES". To the right, the text reads: "2026 CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION WORKSHOPS" in orange, "May: Paper Conservation" in blue, and "July: Book Repair" in blue.

Build Preservation Skills at the Georgia Archives

Two workshops remain in the Georgia Archives' 2026 Conservation and Preservation Workshop Series. Introduction to Paper Conservation, offered May 18 to 20, and Introduction to Book Repair, offered July 20 to 22, are both three-day, in-person workshops priced at \$350 each. Designed for archives, libraries, museums, and anyone caring for personal collections, registration includes materials, lunch, and snacks. Register online at Tinyurl.com/GAArchivesWorkshops2026.

GENEALOGY TIDBITS BY KENNETH H. THOMAS, JR.

Calendar:

May 27-30, National Genealogical Society (NGS) Family History Conference

Check the [National Genealogical Society](#) website for information and deadlines. Be sure to notice all the various options they offer, from their magazine, which has great articles about research sources, to their quarterly, which has many in-depth articles on methodology. They also have some great book reviews on the latest in genealogy writing.

Beginner's Focus:

Beginner's Focus: Middle names are something that beginners need to be aware of and not just accept based on a previous family historian's word. Middle names did not come into common use until around the time of the War of 1812, in other words, the era of 1810-1820. If you were to have a family Bible, you might notice how they dealt with the naming of the children. Many times, someone with the same first name but born later with a middle name is assumed to have been named, full stop, after the older ancestor.

One example, my ancestor Joseph Harrison (1808-1888) who lived outside Charlotte, NC, never used a middle name in any legal records or in the census. His son, born in 1866, was named Joseph Smiley Harrison, and so now people are giving the older man, born in 1808, the middle name Smiley. The name Smiley comes from a local minister, and a lot of children born in the 1860s were named for him. So, it is a major error to casually assume and repeat the middle name for the earlier person. Beware. You have been forewarned.

Society Focus/Library Focus:

The Atlanta History Center, 130 W. Paces Ferry Rd. NW, Atlanta, has a small genealogy book collection as well as many resources for genealogy in its main reference room. These include the [Franklin Garrett Necrology Database](#), which is also available online. If you decide to visit, be sure to check times and make an appointment if necessary. They also schedule beginner genealogy classes that you might want to take advantage of. The website is: [atlantahistorycenter.com](#). Under the "Learning and Research" tab, click on the Kenan Research Center link to learn more.

DNA:

[FamilyTreeDNA.com](#) announced that as of March 2, any future autosomal tests, which they call FamilyFinder tests, will transition to a new targeted next-generation sequencing panel. If you are already using the site, any older test results won't be changing, but any new tests you take will include more analysis. So, check out the site to learn more.



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

GENEALOGY TIDBITS (CONTINUED)**African American Genealogy Focus:**

“Lost Friends” is a series running in the *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research* by Mike Becknell, in which he abstracts notices from the 1880s published in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist church-sponsored newspaper published in New Orleans. The notices he has abstracted so far relate to formerly enslaved people who were advertising in search of missing family members. In these notices, people mention their former enslaver, various locations, ages, and the last time they saw them. His abstracts focus only on those looking for South Carolina people. It would be great if someone would work on similar abstracts for people looking for lost relatives from Georgia.

The *Southwestern Christian Advocate* does appear to be available online through the [Internet Archive](#), possibly in a mostly complete run. In addition, the [Historic New Orleans Collection](#) maintains a searchable “Lost Friends” database that is not yet complete but already includes more than 2,500 advertisements.

Website News:

French Genealogy Websites: These are a selection from *Family Tree Magazine’s* March/April 2026 issue. If you are truly interested, you need to track down a copy of the magazine. Here are several in the free category that are exclusively French:

- Francegenweb.org,
- La Revue Francaise at rfgenealogie.com
- Geoportal at geoportail.gouv.fr
- Napoleon.org.

Georgia Archives Research Tidbits:

The Georgia Archives has loose courthouse papers, often called just ‘loose papers,’ from estate records, probate, or other parts of a county courthouse. The counties I have used or know about are Hancock, Jasper (see the book by Robert S. Davis listing many of them, but the originals carry much more information), and Jefferson Counties. As far as I know, these are not available online. If you are researching someone in these counties, or any other for which such papers may exist, you MUST visit the archives, not the county courthouses, to use them.

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****MAY****May 8, 12 pm - 1 pm
Lunch & Learn**

*Indigenous Sovereignty
in the 18th Century
and Today*

by Dr. Matthew Sparacio,
Georgia State University

Exhibit

May 15 - July 18

*Revolution in 1776: Georgia’s
Signers and Copy of the
Declaration of Independence*

JUNE**June 12, 12 pm - 1 pm
Lunch & Learn**

*Georgia Remembers
the Revolution*

by Dr. David Parker,
Kennesaw State University

**June 27, 10 am - 4 pm
Genealogy @ the
Georgia Archives**

*Preserving Your
Family History*

In partnership with Georgia
Genealogical Society

JULY**July 10, 12 pm - 1 pm
Lunch & Learn**

Georgia @ 250

by Larry Thomas,
Genealogist and Historian