



Contact: Robin Klemm
Telephone: 678-364-3807
Email: Robin.Klemm@usg.edu
Website: GeorgiaArchives.org

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September 2026 Lunch & Learn

Raising the Dead in Rose Hill Cemetery

By Kathleen O'Neal and Liz Riley

The Georgia Archives will host its September Lunch & Learn presentation, *Raising the Dead in Rose Hill Cemetery*, presented by Kathleen O'Neal and Liz Riley. The program will take place on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Georgia Archives (5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30260). This event is free and open to the public, and no registration is required.

Learn how two friends fell down a rabbit hole of Macon history while inventorying graves in Rose Hill Cemetery, the South's first rural garden cemetery, established in 1840. What began as a simple idea grew into an ambitious mission to create a free, searchable online database of every burial in the cemetery.

Over the past year and a half, Kathleen and Liz have documented more than 16,000 internments across Rose Hill's 63 acres. In this program, they will share the cemetery's history and beauty, along with the discoveries, challenges, joys, and frustrations of undertaking such an extensive documentation project.

About the Speakers

Kathleen O'Neal has four generations of ancestors buried in Rose Hill Cemetery. She majored in history at Sewanee: The University of the South, and after college spent a few years waiting tables and guiding rafts down the Ocoee and Chattooga rivers before going to law school at Mercer University. She spent most of her legal career with the Georgia Secretary of State's office in Macon, and upon retirement, she opened a successful kayak rental business on the Ocmulgee River. Four years ago, she sold it so she could have more time to hike through Rose Hill, Scotland, and Ireland and dive deep into Macon's history.

Liz Riley is a lifelong Maconite with deep roots in the city; many of her ancestors who arrived in Macon in the mid-1800s are buried in Rose Hill Cemetery. Liz attended Mercer University, Georgia College and State University, and Middle Georgia State University. She holds graduate degrees in business and writing. After working for 15 years in corporate IT, Liz became a professor teaching IT and business courses at Middle Georgia State University. In her spare time, she loves gardening, exercising, traveling, and occasionally taking on freelance writing projects. Liz has recently retired and is still sorting out that transition.

About the Georgia Archives

The Georgia Archives is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Georgia Archives identifies, collects, manages, preserves, provides access to, and publicizes records and information of Georgia and its people, and assists state and local government agencies with their records management.