

THE CIVIL HISTORY

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

January 2011

News and Events

Revisiting the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement through an Activist's Lens: A Documentary Photography Exhibit in Black & White

by Dr. Doris A. Derby



Dr. Doris A. Derby, currently the Director of African American Student Services and Programs at Georgia State University, is a veteran of the Civil Rights Movement. A "foot soldier" of the movement, Derby was a member of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She worked for nine years in Mississippi and took thousands of photographs to document those years. Her photographs depict a time and a place during a turbulent period.

The exhibit is free and will be on display until February 28, 2011.

Lunar New Year Stamp Ceremony



To welcome the Year of the Rabbit, the U. S. Postal Service is issuing the fourth stamp in celebrating the Lunar New Year. The ceremony will be at the National Archives at Atlanta at 11:00 on January 22, 2011. Free and open to the public.

Continuing the Journey of Generations: A Celebration of Black Family History

In partnership with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the National Archives at Atlanta is proud to host our annual Black Family History symposium. The program will be at the National Archives at Atlanta from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 26, 2011.

See www.blackfamilyhistoryday.com for more details and to register. Seating is limited, and registration is required.

The Civil War: America's Long Struggle

The period from 1861 to 1865 was America's most intense national experience. The brutal war between the Confederate States of America and the United States of America continues to be one of the most researched, analyzed, and studied topics in American history. Huge numbers of professional historians, journalists, filmmakers, amateur historians, and the general public are fascinated by this event. The Civil War transformed the lives of all who were swept up in it—whether on a battlefield or in a hospital, on a farm or in a factory.

One hundred and fifty years after the war, we see interesting—and different—experiences the general public had learning about this long nightmare. Below are personal stories from a few staff members at the National Archives at Atlanta.

Much like politics, all history is local. As a child growing up in San Francisco, my interest in history was confined to the California Gold Rush, the Earthquake and Fire of 1906, the beatnik and counter culture movements of the 1950s and 1960s, and of course, the beloved heroes of my youth: Willie Mays, Rick Barry, and Jim Plunkett. While I recognized the historical and social significance of the "War Between the States," the battlefields of Gettysburg, Manassas, and Antietam were far beyond the fog of the Golden Gate. During graduate school, I developed a true and tragic sense of the magnitude of this great conflict.

Imagine the surprise of this transplanted Californian and current Atlanta resident when I made a significant genealogical discovery a couple of years ago: an ancestor on my father's side of the family, one Vernon H. Vaughan, born in Alabama in 1838, was a decorated Confederate Officer. This gave me a whole new perspective on the "War of Northern Aggression." As fate would have it, President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Vernon H. Vaughan Governor of Utah in 1870; according to Wikipedia, "he served a single uneventful year [actually October 31, 1870, to February 1, 1871] and was not reappointed." Ultimately, in true bi-partisan fashion, Vernon H. Vaughan served both the Confederate and Union causes.

—Jim McSweeney

I do not associate my first impressions of the Civil War with Gettysburg or Antietam or Appomattox, but with learning about my own family's history, as that is how my grandfather related many significant historical events to me. He told me the story of how some of General Sherman's troops marched through my hometown of Monticello, Georgia, and stopped at my great-great-great grandparents' house a few miles outside of town. While there, the Union soldiers ate a big breakfast, killed some pigs, loaded up on supplies, and ransacked the house. Among the items they destroyed during their visit was the family piano, on which they poured molasses and feathers from a bed they cut open. Some of my relatives live in the restored house today and proudly display the piano.

—Nathan Jordan

Growing up in Las Vegas, the Civil War was a neat story wedged between the Revolutionary War and the World Wars. I didn't know anyone who had a personal family connection to the Civil War. Most people I knew had ancestral roots through New England but their families had moved West prior to 1860. The Civil War was taught as the story of North versus South or the good guys versus the bad guys. It was widely accepted that the Southern Rebels wanted to form their own country to further the slavery institution and the North merely wanted to keep the country whole. There was no question that Abraham Lincoln was the nation's best and most loved President, and it was his determination that ultimately saved the Union. Lee surrendered, the enslaved were freed, and the good guys won the war. The end.

—Rob Richards

I first learned about the Civil War at birth. When I was a child I thought that "history" meant the Civil War; I didn't know about anything else. I grew up sitting on the front porch of my grandparents' house listening to my grandfather tell stories he heard from his grandparents about the "recent unpleasantness."

As I got older, I broadened my knowledge of history, and I later married a man who majored in history in college. His major areas of interest were Ancient Greece and Rome and, of course, the Civil War since he was born in Vicksburg, and his family lived near the battlefield. He told me stories about the little boys in his neighborhood climbing up and down the hills at Vicksburg playing "war." When he died he was reading two books—one on Pompeii and one on Grant at Vicksburg. For him, as for a great many people, the Civil War was a life-long interest.

—Mary Evelyn Tomlin

Growing up in Nebraska, the great grandson of a Union veteran that homesteaded in the Cornhusker State, I inherited a very northern view of the war. My father didn't even want me to watch the TV series *The Gray Ghost* about Mosby's Rangers. I was in my 40s when I finally learned I had a Confederate ancestor. Of course, he was on my mother's side.

—Joel Walker

Civil War:

AMERICA'S LONG STRUGGLE



A CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM AND MORE...
APRIL 16TH 2011

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ARCHIVES AT
ATLANTA

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Coming Events

Civil War Antiques Roadshow

In partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting, the National Archives at Atlanta is proud to announce the filming of a Civil War Antiques Roadshow at our facility in Morrow, Georgia.

The event will follow **The Civil War: America's Long Struggle**, a symposium commemorating the beginning of the Civil War 150 years ago. Panelists include:

Daniel Stowell, Abraham Lincoln Library
Eric Leonard, Andersonville National Historic Site
Kenneth Noe, author of *Reluctant Rebels*
Shane Bell, National Archives at Atlanta
Trevor Plante, National Archives at Washington

The events will be held Saturday, April 16, 2011,
beginning at 9:00.

Details to come on our website.

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