

# THE CIVIL HISTORY

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

July 2011

## Slavery and Freedom in Black and White:

### The African American Experience in 19th Century Newspapers

*Harper's Weekly*, William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*, the *New York Herald*, and the *Savannah Daily Herald* bring the "news of the day" to their readers . . . but the "news of the day" is from the early 1800s through 1865.

*Slavery and Freedom in Black and White: The African American Experience in 19th Century Newspapers* opened to an enthusiastic crowd on Friday, June 8th with rave reviews. This exhibit from the private collection of Christine Mitchell features twenty-six original newspapers ranging from a 1792 *Connecticut Courant* featuring an article about William Wilberforce and his attempts to end the Atlantic Slave Trade in Great Britain to an 1865 *Harper's Weekly* recounting Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address. Other papers in the exhibit include accounts of the Nat Turner insurrection, fugitive slaves, Robert Smalls, the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, plus many other news stories from the day.

Ms. Mitchell has been collecting the newspapers since 1990 with the original objective of teaching children their history through original documents. Her children are now grown, but she continues to collect and share these papers with children and adults. The exhibit will be on display at the National Archives at Atlanta until October 15.



A large, diverse group gathered on July 8th to formally open the exhibit. Speakers for the event were Dr. Adam Tate, history professor at Clayton State, and Janis Ware, publisher of *The Atlanta Voice*.

## What's Going on at the National Archives?

### FNAS Goes Digital!

The Friends of the National Archives-Southeast Region, Inc. is pleased to announce that they now have the capability to offer Webinars to its membership and the general public thanks to the support of TechSoup and Citrix, Inc.

A Webinar is the term used for a *Web-based seminar*, lecture, or presentation delivered via the Internet. The first webinar will be presented by J. Mark Lowe who will discuss "Using Federal Records Without Visiting the Castle." It will be offered at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 8, 2011.

The webinar is free, and you may join in from your home computer. Register at <http://friendsnas.org/webinarSch.htm>

Watch our website (<http://www.friendsnas.org/>), like us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/FNASAtlanta](http://www.facebook.com/FNASAtlanta)), or follow us on Twitter (follow @Friends NASE) for future notices of our virtual presentations.

### Civil War Symposium a Big Success!!!

"Civil War: America's Long Struggle" was one of the most successful programs ever offered by the National Archives at Atlanta! Nearly 300 people attended the symposium and 50 individuals displayed Civil War artifacts.

The combination symposium and program "Civil War Treasures in Your Nation's Attic" attracted a wide range of scholars and average citizens. Attendees came from as far away as Maine and Washington state.

Below, left to right, visitors review artifacts brought by attendees; Speaker Trevor Plante, Civil War expert at NARA in Washington; and Archivist David Ferrero review documents from the personal holdings of Nathan Jordan, student employee at the National Archives at Atlanta.



### Out of War, a New Nation

The Civil War had a greater impact on American society than any other event in the country's history. It was also the most traumatic experience endured by any generation of Americans.

At least 620,000 soldiers lost their lives in the war, 2 percent of the American population in 1861.

So begins an article by James McPherson, one of the country's foremost Civil War historians. His article is in *Prologue*, NARA's quarterly magazine. Even though 150 years have passed since the firing on Ft. Sumter, Americans are still obsessed with the long struggle.

Read McPherson's article at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/spring/newnation.html>

### Confederate Pension Records

State agencies, not the National Archives, are repositories for Confederate pension records. **The veteran was eligible to apply for a pension to the state in which he lived, even if he served in a unit from a different state.** Generally, an applicant was eligible for a pension only if he was indigent or disabled. If you request a pension file, in your letter to the repository state the Confederate veteran's name, his widow's name, the unit(s) in which he served, and the counties in which he and his widow lived after the Civil War. Some repositories also have records of Confederate Homes (for veterans, widows, etc), muster rolls of state Confederate militia, and other records related to the war.

The Georgia pension applications are also available through Ancestry.com. Georgia first began giving pensions in 1877 to Confederate soldiers who had lost a limb. The law was gradually broadened to include soldiers who were disabled due to their military service and to indigent soldiers. Indigent widows of Confederate soldiers who died in service or as a result of their service began receiving pensions in 1890. The law originally applied only to women married to a soldier at the time of the war, but the law was later extended to any woman married to a Confederate veteran. Pension funds also paid medical expenses for final illnesses and funeral expenses for indigent soldiers and widows.

Read about what is available at <http://cdm.sos.state.ga.us/cdm4/TestApps.php>. The Georgia pension applications are also available through Ancestry.com.

## Finding Your Family in Unexpected Places

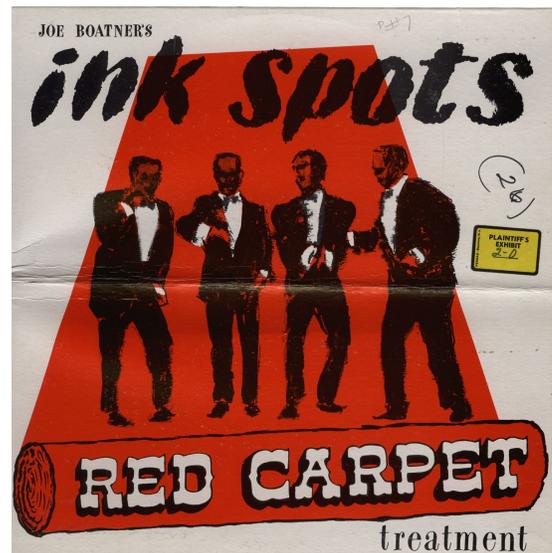
The holdings in the National Archives are diverse, representing a wide variety of federal records. Some collections of records are clearly of interest to family historians, such as the World War I Draft Registration Cards. Other collections appear to be simply “bureaucratic impersonal records of the federal government” and one would think it unlikely that information about his family would be in any of the files. **Not so.**

Enter Judy Ridenhour, NARA volunteer extraordinaire. Judy was working on a mundane holdings maintenance task, when archivist Guy Hall mentioned that he had a request from someone in Canada about the Ink Spots. Judy immediately said that her relative, Charlie Fuqua, was a member of The Ink Spots. Looking through the file she found numerous references to him, and in the process, learned a great deal about his career and The Ink Spots.

The story of The Ink Spots is complicated, encompassing federal court records from numerous courts. The case in our holdings is from the U. S. District Court in Miami.

For those who are not musically literate, The Ink Spots were a popular vocal group in the 1930s and 1940s. Their influence on American music is undisputed. They were formed in 1934, and Fuqua was one of the founding members. They were performing in Indianapolis when, in 1934, they accepted a booking at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York, and it was a turning point in their career.

However, through the years the members of the group changed and those who dropped out continued performing with other groups but called themselves The Ink Spots. The file indicates that Charlie Fuqua was the owner of the Service Mark for the name Ink Spots issued by the U. S. Patent Office, and “other groups were enjoined from using a part of the Service Mark or name INK SPOTS in any manner so as to mislead any individual or the public into thinking that they are obtaining the services of, listening to or being entertained by . . . musicians and/or entertainers rightfully using the Service Mark “Ink Spots.”



Judy Ridenhour reviewing the files on the Ink Spots.

The point to this story is that interesting information on your family's history can be found in lots of records in the National Archives.

All you have to do is old-fashioned research. You probably will not find a family tree, but you may find information about your ancestors' lives, the tragedies they suffered, and the triumphs they experienced.

Visit the National Archives at Atlanta and start your search!

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

## View Our Video

In association with "Civil War: America's Long Struggle," a video titled *Civil War Treasures in Your Nation's Attic* was produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting.

View it at <http://www.gpb.org/civil-war-treasures>



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