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The Atlanta Historical Society: Its Archival and Library Holdings

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Atlanta Historical Society

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The City of Atlanta, Georgia, is fortunate in having rich traditions and a dramatic past. In order that both present and future generations might have a proper appreciation of their heritage, a group of concerned citizens met in 1926 to found the Atlanta Historical Society, Inc. A portion of the Charter of the Society states that, "the sole purpose of said corporation shall be to promote the preservation of sources of information concerning the history of the City of Atlanta in the State of Georgia, the investigation, study and dissemination of such history, and to arouse in the friends and citizens of Atlanta an interest in its history."

Through the years, the Society has accumulated priceless collections of books, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, pictures and artifacts. These holdings, through the unselfish contributions of members and friends of the Society, have been enlarged and diversified to the point that they are of research value to the academic community, the serious historian and the author, as well as the layman.

The Research Library of the Society consists of approximately 3,500 volumes. It is, of course, a specialized collection, concentrating on the history of Atlanta, its citizens and its activities. The Library is particularly strong in biography, the Civil War period and publications from the 19th Century. A complete file of Atlanta City Directories from 1859 is available. Business and economic growth of the city are well documented in the periodicals City Builder, and its successor Atlanta Magazine, covering the period 1916 to date. The Society's Atlanta Historical Bulletin, published since 1927, is available for use together with a detailed index of contents. The Atlanta

*Mr. Eltzroth is Staff Archivist of the Atlanta Historical Society.
Journal Magazine (1919 to date) has been bound and partially indexed.

ARCHIVES

Broadly speaking, the Archives of the Society are divided into the following general categories: Official Records of the City of Atlanta; Private Collections; Organizations, Clubs and Societies; Newspapers and Periodicals; Maps, Plats and Property Files; Visual Arts; Subject Files; Personality Files; and Genealogy.

The OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA in the custody of the Society undoubtedly form the most basic and valuable research tool among the holdings. Particularly noteworthy are the Minutes of the City Council and the Board of Aldermen which record every official act of the City for sixty-two years, from the first Council meeting in 1848 to 1900. City finances are well documented from 1856 to 1891, including the entry made after the city's capture during the Civil War: "Balance on hand October 1st, 1864--$1.64." There is a record of Business Licenses issued between 1867 and 1910, in addition to a collection of published City Codes from 1863 to 1942. The principal files are:

- **Board of Aldermen:** Minute Books, 1875-1900
- **Board of Fire Masters:** Minute Books, 1893-1919 Rough Minutes, 1924-1929
- **Board of Water Commissioners:** Minute Book, 1908-1911
- **City Clerk's Office:** Census, 1885, 1890 Council reports adopted, 1915-1917 Execution Dockets (Fi-Fa's),

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1861-1862, 1892-1907
Finances: Cash Accounts, 1869-1891
Receipts and Expenditures, 1856-1881
Receipts, 1884-1888
Day Book (Receipts), 1889-1891
Licenses--Automobile, 1904-1910
Licenses--Bell Boys, 1930
Licenses--Business, 1867-1910, 1923
Licenses--Dogs, 1894-1920
Miscellaneous, Real Estate Sales, 1891; Yellow Fever Refugees, 1897; Purchases, 1903-1904

Commissioner of Public Works:
Accounts, 1888-1889
Pay Rolls, 1894-1896
Invoices, 1891, 1896-1897

Comptroller:
Duplicate Purchase Orders, 1904-1905

Council:
Minute Books, 1848-1899
Rough Minutes, 1851-1856
Ordinance Book, 1851-1860

Fire Department:
Rules, Regulations and Directives, 1919, 1931, 1937, 1958
Personnel records, 1883-1938
Seniority Rosters, 1938-1969
Fire Station Time Books, 1903-1960
Record of horses, 1907-1914

Mayor's Office:
Court Book, 1861-1864
Letter Book, 1889-1892
Warrant Book, 1905
Police Court Docket, 1871-1872

Publications: City Code, 1863, 1866, 1868, 1870, 1873, 1875, 1879, 1886, 1891, 1899, 1924, 1942
Charter, Amended to 1909
Annual report of officers, 1884-1889, 1891, 1892 [w/maps], 1893-1894 [w/maps and photographs], 1895 [w/maps], 1897-1904 (Contains Roster of Officials, Mayor's address, reports of Committees, City Officers and Departments)

Tax Assessor and Collector: Tax Digest, 1858-1862
Real Estate Assessment, 1861, 1862, 1868
Street and Poll Taxes, 1873
Tax on Sales, 1870-1883

City of Kirkwood: Census, 1908
Tax Digest, 1910, 1911
Pay Roll, 1917-1920

City of West End: Council Minutes, 1868-1893
Ordinance Book, 1883-1891

A detailed descriptive inventory of the City of Atlanta holdings is available for use in the Archives of the Society.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS number 451 at the present time. The majority relate to the history of Atlanta, but many reflect the varied interests of the original collector in such fields as art, world travel, the military, and music or science, to mention but a few of the categories. Most deal with politics and business in Atlanta and Georgia, and concentrate in the 19th Century. Some of the more outstanding collections follow. Detailed descriptive inventories are available for those marked with an asterisk (*).

Robert Lee Avery, Sr.: Information relating to the
practice of medicine, 1894-1908, Board of Health and Variola Hospital, 1894, Drug Store Accounts, 1906-1908.

Dr. Robert Battey Papers: Letters, 1872-1881, of the first physician to practice gynecology in the South, include communications from Dr. J. Marion Sims, "the father of gynecology."

Piromis Hulsey Bell: Collection of biographical material relating to Dr. Crawford W. Long, discoverer of anesthesia, includes Long correspondence and memorabilia.

Carrie Berry: Diary, 1864-1866, written as a child residing in Atlanta during the siege, and journal, 1868-1874.

Haralson Bleckley: Scrapbook, correspondence, and drawings concerning the Plaza Plan for Atlanta, 1909-1943.

Elijah A. Brown, Jr.: Walker Iron and Coal Company convict labor reports, 1889; Dade Coal Company, Rogers Railroad, Chattanooga Iron Company, and Walker Iron and Coal Company, earnings and expense sheets, 1889; Atlanta temperature charts, 1898-1899; deeds and documents regarding lots in the Cherokee Land Lottery.

Harriet Johnson Brown: Minute Book of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, 1870-1890; file on the Committee On Interracial Cooperation, 1922-1926.

*Governor Joseph Emerson Brown: Correspondence, 1864-1894; Account Books, 1846-1877 (excellent picture of economic, medical, educational and domestic situation); data regarding the Western and Atlantic Railroad and Dade Coal Company, 1872-1876; Dade Coal Company minutes and financial records, 1876-1881.

Governor Joseph Mackay Brown: Correspondence, 1885-1919, including official correspondence as Governor, 1909-1911, 1912-1913; material relating to his political campaigns of 1908, 1910, 1914; correspondence of his campaign manager, Render Terrell, 1914; original manuscripts of "The Karl Oter Letters" and his published novel Astyanax, 1907.

Julius L. Brown: Correspondence, 1861-1900; material regarding Georgia Mining, Manufacturing and Investment Company, 1889-1895; "Investigation of the Penitentiary Companys 1896" transcript; transcript of proceedings, "William Walters et al. vs Western and Atlantic Railroad et al.," 1895;
"Theaters of 1870's" scrapbook.

Mayor James M. Calhoun: Correspondence, 1834-1864, includes three letters from cousin, John C. Calhoun, two from General John B. Hood, and material relating to the siege and surrender of Atlanta, 1864.

Jesse Neal Carter: Photocopy of diary extracts describing Atlanta in July and September, 1857.

Herbert E. Choate: Scrapbook and charts concerning revision of the City of Atlanta charter, 1922.

George W. Clower: Various Atlanta business advertising items, 1885-1931.

Governor Benjamin Conley: Correspondence, 1851-1875; legal documents, 1826-1849, 1860-1869.


James R. Crew: Correspondence, 1850-1865, especially valuable for description of Atlanta in wartime.

Jane Louisa Crew (Mrs. James R.): Diary, March 24-December 31, 1865.

*Leo Max Frank: Correspondence with family, attorneys, public officials, and publishers, 1913-1915, and ephemeral material relating to his indictment for the murder of Mary Phagan and his lynching.

General John White Geary: Typescripts of letters, 1864, describing Union operations around Atlanta.

*Lemuel Pratt Grant: Correspondence, 1838-1857, concerning railroad construction in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee; correspondence and drawings, 1862-1865, concerning railroad and fortification construction near Atlanta and Augusta; account books, 1841-1865; diary, 1839-1845; a history of all railroads constructed up to 1845; a form book, "List of Negroes Hired and Impressed," Augusta, 1864-1865.

*Cornelius R. Hanleiter: Diary, 1861-1865, covers his experiences as commander of a Confederate battery stationed near Savannah and Charleston.
Sara Huff: Diary, 1887-1891; manuscript, "Trail of the Pioneers," biographies of pioneer Atlanta women; manuscript of portions of My 80 Years in Atlanta, 1937.

Emma E. Latimer: Letter and ephemeral material concerning her appointment as one of the first three teachers in Atlanta, 1871; letters regarding first Volunteer Fire Company, 1867.

Martha Lumpkin: Scrapbooks with diary entries, 1846-1895; information regarding naming of Marthasville and Atlanta; location of the city by Governor Lumpkin; comments on her personal life.

Samuel W. McCallie: A series of four scrapbooks, indexed, compiled while State Geologist, 1893-1925, concerning geology and conservation in Georgia.

McNaught-Ormond Papers: Correspondence of William McNaught, James Ormond and Thomas Scrutchin, Commission Merchants; Minute Book of the Fulton County Export and Import Company, blockade runners; and McNaught personal papers containing correspondence with several insurance companies for whom he served as agent and in which he had a financial stake in the years preceding the Civil War.

Richard Peters: Record Book, 1848-1862, of cattle and angora goat breeding business; manuscripts pertaining to animal breeding, 1860-1887; herd register, 1884-1886.

Police and Crime: Three anonymous scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, 1901-1905.

Public Affairs: Two anonymous scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, indexed, and titled "Public Events 1937," Apparently compiled in connection with "research work--Atlanta Public Forum," cover subjects from adult education to Youth Organizations.

Samuel P. Richards: Diary, 1848-1909, recording social life in depth, especially during the Civil War.

Mary Connally Spalding: Family Expense Books, 1878-1911; Scrapbooks, 1870-1949. Excellent record of life in an upper income household, particularly in regard to education, social life, theater, and cultural interests.

Mrs. F. J. Spartling: Scrapbook of the Woman's

Spiller-Burr Papers: Correspondence and business papers of a firm manufacturing pistols during the Civil War.

Volunteer Fire Companies: Rosters and Minute Books, 1856-1922, of Fire Company No. 1, Hook and Ladder No. 1, Mechanic Fire Engine Company No. 2, Blue Eagle Fire Company No. 6, and Tallulah Fire Company No. 3.

Among the Private Collections are numerous items of correspondence, memorabilia, and manuscripts of literary figures. The current revision of American Literary Manuscripts by the American Literature Group of the Modern Language Association will include entries from Society holdings for the following individuals:

Myrta Lockett Avary
Orelia Key Bell
Earl Derr Biggers
James B. Cabell
Erskine Caldwell
Marie Campbell
Samuel Langhorn Clemens
Olive Bell Davis
Lloyd C. Douglas
Mary Baker Eddy
Corra Harris
Joel Chandler Harris
Ernest Hartsock
Daniel Whitehead Hickory
A[dolf] A. Hoehling
Stanley F. Horn
Charles W. Hubner
Sidney Lanier
Helen Dorch Longstreet
Margaret Mitchell
Minnie Hite Moody
Frances Newman
Flannery O'Connor
Byron H. Reece
Grantland Rice
James Whitcomb Riley
Mildred Seydel
Frank Lebby Stanton
Thelma Thompson Slayden
Mark Sullivan
James E. Warren, Jr.
Lollie Belle Wylie

The ORGANIZATIONS, CLUBS AND SOCIETIES section of the Archives presently includes 211 separate holdings. Individual collections vary in extent from single rosters to voluminous minutes and scrapbooks. Organizations represented range from the American Legion to the Zeta Tau Alpha Alumnae Association, and include the Bell House Boys, the Butterfly Club, the Don't Worry Club, the Every Saturday Club, the Honorable Order of the Blue Goose, the Northside Boys of 1900, the Order of Old Fashioned Women, the Pioneer School Boys, the Semi-Centennials, and the Ten Club, the Atlanta Association for Reinterment of Kentucky Confederates, the Anti-Tuberculosis Association, the Equal Suffrage Party of Georgia, the Ladies' Hospital Association, the Sheltering Arms Day Nursery Association, and the Kenmore Association.
The collections contain a wealth of biographical, social, and cultural information.

Although the Society's NEWSPAPER COLLECTION includes examples of 68 of the 137 published in Atlanta, extensive runs of only sixteen are available for in-depth research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Evening Capitol</td>
<td>July 4-December 31, 1885, January 2-July 1, 1886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Evening Commonwealth</td>
<td>December, 1874-June, 1875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Constitution</td>
<td>1868-1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Constitution</td>
<td>1871-1874, 1878-1880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Examiner</td>
<td>July, 1857-March, 1858</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>1906-1939</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Herald</td>
<td>1873-1875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Intelligencer</td>
<td>July, 1867-1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Intelligencer</td>
<td>1860-1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal (Microfilm) (Original)</td>
<td>1883-1932, 1933-1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Rotogravure Section</td>
<td>April, 1919-March, 1920, 1925-1940, January-March, 1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Era</td>
<td>1866-1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily News</td>
<td>January-May, 1875, July-December, 1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The People's Party Paper</td>
<td>May 5, 1893-May 11, 1894</td>
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The Newspaper Collection also includes examples of 80 different papers published in Georgia (outside Atlanta) between 1801 and 1920. Every area of the state is represented, but none of these paper files are extensive. Among the 38 out-of-state newspapers, comprehensive runs of Civil War issues from Cincinnati, New York, and Utica are available. Each issue in the Irvine Newspaper Collection, 1795-1881, contains some reference to American Indians. Finally, the Special Interest Newspaper Collection consists of isolated issues of fifty-three different publications advocating such organizations or movements as Churches, Schools, Prohibition, Children, Government, Insurance, Literature, the Military, and the Theater.

The PERIODICALS COLLECTION numbers 190 titles, ranging from Aero Digest to Youth's Companion. The majority of these magazines date from the mid-19th Century and contain information relative to Atlanta. But many are retained because of age, format, or content bearing on fashions, furnishings, customs, and other social affairs. Notable holdings include: Atlanta Magazine, 1961-date; Ballou's Pictorial, 1857; City Builder, 1916-1960; Confederate Veteran, 1895-1932; Demorest's Magazine, 1875, 1881-1882; Frank Leslie's Illustrated, 1853, 1862; Frank Leslie's Lady's Magazine, 1869; Georgia Mineral Newsletter, 1948-1964; The Kennesaw Gazette, 1888-1889; Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1851-1882; Harper's Weekly, 1861-1865, 1866; Scientific American, 1855, 1858; The Southern Architect, 1890-1892; Southern Cultivator, 1858; and Uncle Remus's Home Magazine, 1907-1912.

The Society possesses a comprehensive collection of MAPS, PLATS AND LAND ABSTRACTS. Atlanta maps date from 1853, and include Vincent's map of 1853, Cooper's of 1868, Hanleiter's Directory Map of 1870, Rugger's Bird's-Eye View of 1871, Daniell's Map of 1877, Folger's of 1883, Hyde's of 1889, Saunders's Bird's-Eye View of 1892, Poates' map of 1893, Latham's of 1894, and the Gannett map of 1895. The Hopkins city atlas of 1878 and Baylor's of 1894 are also available, as well as a DeKalb County atlas of 1915. Plat Books of the Mitchell and Adair collections trace property sales and development from the 1870s to the 1920s. The McElreath and Mitchell collections of abstracts of title document land.
transactions in the City of Atlanta from the original grants to the 1920s. A large quantity of Georgia, United States, and foreign maps are held by the Society.

The VISUAL ARTS COLLECTION contains photographs, drawings, art work in various media, and slides which provide an excellent pictorial documentation of the growth of Atlanta. The bulk of the collection is filed by subject and is available for use. But only 1,100 of the more than 30,000 items have been catalogued, indexed and mounted. Copy negatives have been produced for the items which have been processed. The other holdings may be copied by the researcher in accordance with the published policy of the Society's Board of Trustees.

The fine arts section is comprised of the Wilbur Kurtz Collection, the Rich's Collection, the Trust Company of Georgia Collection, and the John Groth Collection of Gone With The Wind illustrations. Also available are many woodcuts of the Civil War period, with emphasis on Atlanta, from Harper's and Leslie's magazines.

Most non-personal ephemeral material, such as pamphlets, advertising, brochures, and newspaper clippings, is maintained in the SUBJECT FILE. Many of these Subject Collections are extensive and most contain cross-references to Private Collections. Some of the more comprehensive subjects are Architectural Drawings, Atlanta Public Schools, Banks, Catalogues, Churches, Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895, Girls' High School, Gone With the Wind, Metropolitan Opera, Music, Recipes and Cook Books, Railroads, Stone Mountain, and Washington Seminary. County histories are included in this collection.

The PERSONALITY FILE contains approximately 1,600 folders of ephemeral biographical material, speeches, and publications of individuals. These holdings also are cross-referenced to the Private Collections.

GENEALOGY of Atlanta families is represented by 76 bound volumes and 245 manuscripts.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES which have been prepared for previous researchers are available from the Archives of the Society. They include the topics of Business Records, Civil War (The March to the Sea), Diaries, Economic Growth, Jewish Community, Life in Atlanta, 1860-1864, Public Health Services, Publishing in Atlanta, 1861-1864, and Social Work in Atlanta.
THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES, located in the headquarters of the Atlanta Historical Society at 3099 Andrews Drive, N. W., Atlanta, Georgia, is open to researchers Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except holidays. None of the holdings circulate, and the leaflet "Rules for the use of manuscripts and material in the Atlanta Historical Society Collections" is available upon request. To use the material more effectively, researchers are advised to telephone, at 261-6055, or write the Archives, P. O. Box 12423, Atlanta, Georgia 30305, prior to arrival.