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DATA IN THE RAW: A GUIDE TO ATLANTA'S ARCHIVES

David B. Gracy II

Atlanta boasts a collection of archival enterprises as rich as is to be found anywhere in the United States. Within its metropolitan area are federal, state, university, corporate, historical society, professional organization, religious, and private foundation repositories--archives young, old and a-borning; archives large, small, and in between; archives of national, local, and regional significance; archives housed in modern, well-equipped facilities and stuck away in proverbial nooks and crannies; archives whose treasures predate the United States and archives whose holdings span no more than the present century. Of course it is the holdings--the irreplaceable, one-of-a-kind resources--that make each operation unique. And each truly is unique. By the same token, however, it is the very number and variety of archival programs that give Atlanta its unmistakable luster as a jewel in the nation's archival crown.

The Atlanta Historical Society, a private institution in Buckhead which administers the Tullie-Smith House Restoration and the Swan House Museum and has published the *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* since 1927, holds unquestionably the largest collection of material bearing on the city itself. But because of Atlanta's central role in the history of Georgia and the South, the Society's files contain much more. McElreath Hall, the new, modern archives and administration building, houses more than 750 private collections of papers and records, a collection of city directories dating from 1859, maps, architectural drawings, periodicals and newspapers, photographs, and specialized collections of Atlanta imprints and genealogical material, in addition to the official records of both the City of Atlanta and Fulton County.

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The City records date from the first City Council meeting in 1848, while those of Fulton County (which include the records of the former Campbell and Milton counties) date from 1828. The financial records, which survived the Civil War, especially document the city's motto "Resurgens," as they display the rise of the treasury from a balance on hand on October 1, 1864, after the city's fall to Sherman's Army, of \$1.64. The Society's extensive private manuscripts collection, which reflect particularly business and politics in Atlanta from the period of the Civil War through the end of the nineteenth century, ranks among the most interesting in the state. Included are the papers of Dr. Robert Battey, the first gynecologist in the South, the governors Brown, engineer Lemuel Pratt Grant for whom Grant Park is named, material relating to the Leo Frank lynching case, blockade-running merchants McNaught, Ormond and Scrutchin, and a variety of organizations, such as the Georgia Writers Association, the Don't Worry Club, the Honorable Order of the Blue Goose, and the Order of Old Fashioned Women.

Dwarfing the Society in size of holdings, but not in reputation, is the Federal Archives and Records Center in East Point, whose building sprawls over seven acres and services more than 660,000 cubic feet of records, each cubic foot containing 1,500 to 2,000 pieces of paper. That is enough paper to build a wall thirty inches high all the way round Atlanta's perimeter highway. Though the idea for a network of regional centers for federal records was as old as the National Archives itself, implementation was not achieved until after World War II, when the flood of war-generated records threatened to swamp the ship of state with their sheer bulk. The records centers were set up at first merely to control the unimaginable quantity of files, that is, they were designed solely as records management agencies. Among material the East Point Branch received were the draft registration cards from World War I, including that of Al Capone, Chicago mobster, who listed his occupation in 1917 as "butcher." Archival operations were first established within the regional records centers in 1969 to facilitate removal of historically valuable records from the records management branches and to ease pressure on the bulging National Archives in Washington.

The archives branch at East Point holds about 23,000 cubic feet of records, or approximately 3 percent of the total. (This, incidentally, is a standard figure

for the amount of federal records worthy of preservation.) None of the files in the archives are, or will be, less than 20-25 years old. Most of them, some 22,000 cubic feet, were created by the United States courts in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee, the area served by the East Point facility. Including civil, criminal, patent and copyright, equity, naturalization, and admiralty cases, they date from 1716 and contain suits brought by Eli Whitney to defend his patent on the cotton gin. Within this record group are dockets of Confederate Courts and the files of U. S. Marshalls who reestablished federal control in ex-Confederate areas. The other 1,000 cubic feet are divided between records of executive agencies in the South and materials disbursed from the National Archives. Executive department records include those of the Cherokee agency in North Carolina, the Seminole agency in Florida, and Internal Revenue Service assessment lists, 1867-1917. From the National Archives, the East Point Branch obtained records of fortifications prepared in the South by the Corps of Engineers since 1807, and of New Deal-World War II agencies such as the National Recovery Administration, the Office of Price Administration, and the Committee on Fair Employment Practices. Of course, the archives branch maintains copies of microfilm publications of the National Archives, including the United States Census. More than 8,500 reels are on hand, and additions are being received regularly.

The Georgia Department of Archives and History, in its white marble monolith at the junction of the three interstates downtown, occupies the finest archival facility in Atlanta, and one of the best in the nation. The Department was established in 1918 in response to a growing concern for records of the Revolutionary and Civil War periods. Like the federal program, however, effective measures for controlling and handling the records of state government did not evolve until Georgia faced the records volume crisis following World War II. The official records, dating from the founding of Georgia as a colony in the 1730s, include executive department correspondence and minutes, journals of legislative sessions and constitutional conventions, records of the state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad, judicial records, the files of the adjutant general's department relating to the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Indian Wars and the Civil War. An extensive records management program ensures the orderly and continual influx of modern state-created records. On

microfilm, the state archives has acquired colonial records from the Public Record Office in London and significant files from more than three quarters of the counties. The microfilming is continuing. In a section of the archives devoted to historical manuscripts are preserved records of churches, businesses, educational institutions, and various organizations and societies, as well as the papers of many notable Georgia statesmen, generals, authors, artists and scholars. Among these are collections of correspondence of Governor John Brown Gordon, papers of architects Henry J. Toombs and Philip Marye, and those of humanitarian Rhoda Kaufman. Finally, the state archives is a center for genealogical research because of its original holdings and its accumulation of appropriate microfilm publications.

Five universities in the metropolitan area support historical manuscripts programs of various dimensions. This list excludes schools, like Oglethorpe University, that maintain only their own records, even though Oglethorpe's accumulation over 150 years no doubt is significant in the history of education in Georgia.

Though Atlanta University west of downtown had received manuscripts several decades before, its Negro History Collection within the Trevor Arnett Library did not achieve separate identity until 1963. Since then it has become a primary source of information for Afro-American, American, and urban studies. The earliest files concern slavery in the colonial period but these are not extensive. The records become more voluminous as the years pass, with strong holdings reflecting abolitionist activity, relating life during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, and concerning work in social areas in the twentieth century. Records illuminate the activities of the Neighborhood Union in Atlanta, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. Papers of black scholars and artists include those of W. E. B. DuBois, John Hope, and W. C. Handy. A fine *Guide* to the Negro History Collection was completed in 1971.

The Interdenominational Theological Center Library, near the Atlanta University Campus, houses possibly the most comprehensive historical manuscripts collection in the United States on Negro religious history. One of the three major divisions of the material, Africana, holds information on Africa collected through the Stewart Missionary Foundation

at Gammon Seminary, a member institution of the ITC, and spans the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Slavery and Anti-Slavery Propaganda Collection, 1788-1890, is composed largely of printed material. The largest of the three divisions, which dates primarily in the nineteenth century, concerns Negro church history in the United States. Minutes, reports, journals and other papers, buttressed by a significant collection of church periodicals, record annual and general conferences, meetings, conventions and activities of five denominations. Within this group are the papers of the Reverend Samuel W. Williams, Baptist minister, civil rights leader and educator, which contain, in addition to files reflecting these concerns, material on the Friendship Baptist Church, the oldest Black congregation in Georgia. More than a dozen archival and manuscripts collections, dating into the 1960s, relate to the operation of ITC and its members, including Gammon and Turner seminaries. Among the others are extensive records of the Freedmen's Aid Society and Southern Education Board, which functioned at least into the 1920s, the American Missionary Association, and the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in the South during Reconstruction.

The Special Collections Department atop the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University holds more than a quarter million historical manuscripts. Dating from the mid-eighteenth century, the collections fall into three principal fields: the history of Methodism, the history of the South, particularly in the Confederate period, and Southern literary figures. Recently the repository has begun to develop a fourth focus on Southern women. Among the holdings on Methodism are papers of John Wesley, who brought Methodism to this country, and of Methodist bishops, missionaries, and other Church officials, as well as organizational records. Representative holdings of prominent Southerners include records of the Burge Family of Newton County, Georgia; letterbooks of Joseph M. Brown, concerning the Western and Atlantic Railroad; papers of Henry W. Grady; the Candler family of Atlanta and Coca-Cola; and journalists Emily Woodward, Julian LaRose and Julia Collier Harris. Confederate period material includes items of President Jefferson Davis, Vice President Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, many soldiers' accounts of the war--both Union and Confederate--and records of the Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association. Joel Chandler Harris, creator of Uncle Remus, and Ralph McGill, prize-winning editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, head the list of Southern authors.

The Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University reflects the current trend in historical research away from the traditional areas of study. Founded in 1971 to support a newly-established doctoral program in history at the University, it is one of six labor archives in the country. Within the general field of organized labor, it collects broadly, taking not only union records, but also material that illuminates labor's longstanding activity on social issues and civil rights. The holdings touch every state in the South, but at this early date are stronger for Georgia, Florida, and Alabama than for more distant areas. Though five collections date in the nineteenth century, the bulk of the material was created during the last forty years. Representative collections include the voluminous records of both the international and southern offices of the United Textile Workers of America, 1930s-1970s, and the southern regional office files of the International Woodworkers of America, 1943-1959, of the AFL-CIO organizing offices for the Deep South, 1930s-1970, and of the Service Employees, 1958-1970. Among the finest bodies of local union records are those of the Atlanta, Birmingham and Jacksonville typographical unions, 1890s-1970s, of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Macon), 1884-1949, and of the Atlanta Lodge No. 1, the founding lodge, of the International Association of Machinists.

One of the youngest repositories in Atlanta is the archives of the Southern School of Pharmacy of Mercer University. In addition to the records of the school are prescription books of six pharmacies and papers of H. Custer Naylor, owner of Lane Drug Stores, 1929-1953. These materials are open to the public upon approval of the Dean of the School.

Anniversaries, which stimulate reflection and quicken interest in the past, have brought many archives into existence in the United States, one of them in Atlanta. To "properly commemorate" the centennial of the Atlanta Public Schools in 1972, the System began assembling and collecting all material it could obtain on its development. Laudably, the project was not dismantled upon publication of a centennial history. Among the records accumulated and open for study are minutes of the Board of Education since 1869, material on changing curricula, a collection of publications of the system and its schools, payroll records (1900-1928), and photographic items, both movie

and still. In addition, the archives has acquired file folders full of historical data about each school in the system, biographical information on system administrators, employees, and students, as well as materials of Parent-Teacher Association groups from several schools.

Though archives are found more often in conjunction with governmental and educational agencies, some flourish under the auspices of private organizations and corporate endeavors. The Georgia Association of Educators, a private organization promoting teacher interests, maintains not only its own records since its founding in 1973, but also those of its predecessors--the Georgia Education Association and the Georgia Teachers and Education Association, 1920s-1973.

Founded in 1968 after the assassination, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Social Change, a private organization, has established a significant collection of materials bearing on the life of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in the 1960s. More than 16 major collections include, in addition to the papers of Dr. King, the records of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Congress on Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, headquartered in Atlanta, the Episcopal Society for Racial Equality, the Montgomery Improvement Association, and the papers of many individuals associated with these organizations, such as Atlantans Julian Bond and Andrew Young. The papers of Mrs. Coretta Scott King especially carry the Movement forward since 1968. The holdings of original materials are supplemented by an oral history project consisting at present of more than 200 interviews, a considerable photograph collection, and a laudable microfilm program that secures for research in the Center collections of papers and records unavailable to it in the original.

Several firms maintain their noncurrent records in their own archival operations for their own use. Few of these collections are accessible for research. The Coca-Cola Company too holds most of its records in confidence, yet has effectively employed certain of its holdings in advertising. A complete file of advertisements since 1886 is readily accessible. Also in the visitor center at the company's headquarters is a variety of interesting memorabilia describing the rise of the beverage and the company it spawned in Atlanta in the 1880s.

Atlanta is a principal center of archival activity in the United States. Not only in terms of the different kinds of archival operations and of the priceless holdings of its repositories, the city is alive also with developing programs. More than half of the twelve repositories described above have been established within the past decade. And presently at least one repository percolates in the minds of planners.

To the researcher and to the archivist, then, Atlanta beckons and bids welcome.

CHECKLIST OF ARCHIVES IN ATLANTA

1. Atlanta Historical Society, 3099 Andrews Drive, N.W., Atlanta 30305, phone 261-6055, hours 9:00-5:00 M-F.
2. Georgia Department of Archives and History, 330 Capitol Avenue, S. E., Atlanta 30334, phone 656-2381, hours 8:30-4:30 M-F, 9:30-3:30 Sat.
3. Federal Archives and Records Center, 1557 St. Joseph Avenue, East Point 30344, phone 526-7477, hours 8:00-4:30 M-F.
4. Negro History Collection, Trevor Arnett Library, Atlanta University, 223 Chestnut Street, S. W., Atlanta 30314, phone 681-0251, hours 9:00-5:00 M-F.
5. Library, Interdenominational Theological Center, 671 Beckwith Street, S. W., Atlanta 30314, phone 522-1744, hours 9:00-5:00 M-F.
6. Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, 1380 Oxford Road, N.E., Atlanta 30322, phone 377-2411, ext. 7688, hours 9:00-6:00 M-Sat.
7. Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University, 104 Decatur Street, S.E., Atlanta 30303, phone 658-2477, hours 8:00-12:00, 1:00-5:00 M-F.
8. Archives, Mercer University Southern School of Pharmacy, 345 Boulevard Street, Atlanta 30312, phone 688-6291, open by appointment.
9. Archives, Atlanta Public School System, Community Affairs Division, Administration Building, 224 Central Avenue, S.W., Atlanta 30303, phone 659-3381, hours 8:30-4:00 M-F.
10. Georgia Association of Educators, Division of Research, 3951 Snapfinger Parkway, Decatur 30032, phone 688-6291, open by appointment.
11. Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Social Change, 671 Beckwith Street, S.W., Atlanta 30314, phone 524-1956, hours 9:00-5:00 M-F.
12. Coca-Cola Company, 310 North Avenue, N.W., Atlanta 30301, phone 897-2121, hours 10:00-3:00 M-F.