New Workshops Coming to Metro Archives This Spring

Save Your Story: Write Your Family History

Have you ever wondered how to get started with writing your family’s history? On Saturday, April 27, personal historian Deborah Wilbrink will give a free, three-hour workshop that will get participants outlining, writing, and sharing their family histories. The workshop will take place from 9:30am to 12:30pm in the West Reading Room in Metro Archives.

Community Archiving Workshop

Please join us for Community Archiving Workshop on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at the Nashville Public Library. Learn more about CAW here.

Upcoming First Fridays

Our First Fridays are now held from 12:30-2:00pm at the Bellevue YMCA/FiftyForward Turner Center

April 5th, 2019: Author and public historian Gordon Belt will offer insights on leadership adapted from his most recent book, John Sevier: Tennessee’s First Hero.

May 3rd, 2019: TBD - See Metro Archives website for updates.

June 7th, 2019: Author Kurt M. Vetters will present on his recently-published historical novel, Freedom Spring.

July 5th, 2019: No meeting.

If you are interested in presenting for a First Friday, please contact Kelley Sirko at 615-862-5880 or by email at Kelley.Sirko@nashville.gov.
**Artist in Residence Program**

The Metro Nashville Archives Audiovisual Conservation Center is pleased to announce its first ever Archives Artist in Residence Program. The program's goal is to break down walls between archive and community, to engage in collaborative preservation, and to support focused preservation through creative access.

The award is open to emerging and mid-career multimedia or performance artists 18 older with strong ties to Nashville/Davidson County. One artist will be selected to work directly with archivists on staff to choose materials for preservation from a list of prioritized collections, and to integrate that material into a new work. The new work will premiere in late summer 2019 in Nashville at the Fort Negley Gallery during the city's Wedgewood-Houston Art Crawl.

- Details and applications instructions are attached here.
- The deadline to apply is April 1, 2019.
- Please send any questions to Kelli.Hix@nashville.gov.

**Collections in Progress**

**Boxes...and boxes of Bredesen**

Our ongoing project to process the Philip N. Bredesen Mayoral Papers is coming along. After making a descriptive folder-level inventory of nearly 1500 folders, and going through over 200 boxes containing over 240,000 documents, we are finally ready to start arranging and re-housing the collection.

Mayor Bredesen's papers will take you through Nashville's rapid growth during the 1990s. In this collection, you will find documentation on the construction of what is now known as Bridgestone Arena, which, interestingly enough, was voted to be the loudest arena in sports back in 2017. Ever been curious about what it takes to relocate an NFL franchise? Take a look at the reports, correspondence, and accounts of moving the Houston Oilers to Nashville and the construction of the football stadium during Bredesen's term as Mayor.

In this collection, there is plenty to explore in terms of urban growth and development, politics, and the workings of the Metro Nashville government. We hope to have it arranged, re-housed, and have a finding aid completed by late spring/early summer this year.

*(Pictured above: The 1996 Olympic Torch Relay flag, found in the Philip N. Bredesen Mayoral Papers)*
The Seeing Eye, African-American Newspapers, and a Deadly Love Triangle

What do these three things have in common? They are all the latest topics discussed by Metro Archives’ own Sarah Arntz in the Nashville Public Library’s Nashville/Community History Blog series! If you ever wanted to know more about Morris Frank and the first school to train service dogs to assist the blind, or if you were ever curious about the prominent African-American newspapers in late 19th/early 20th century Nashville (and the powerful publishers behind them), or if you just want to hear a tragic love story, then check out Sarah’s latest blog posts.

(Pictured left: Morris Frank with “Buddy”, Nashville Banner, 1929)

Recent Acquisitions and Completed Projects

The Metro Nashville-Davidson County Board of Parks and Recreation has recently given us a collection of slides, taken sometime in the 1980s and 1990s. Though many are unidentified, these slides include everything from Metro Parks to shots of downtown Nashville, aerials, various Parks events, and swimming pools. They are currently in the process of being digitized.

In 2015, Betty Ann Hadley of Nashville, Tennessee donated a number of family items to Metro Archives. The donation included 11 handwritten journals by her mother, Elizabeth Lois Meguiar Hadley, born in 1894. Many historical events occurred in the time period covered by the Hadley records, including World War I and World War II, and the family letters, documents, and journals record, for example, how the Civil War affected the prewar and postwar lives of regular citizens.

These unique journals, which have now been transcribed and indexed, are available for viewing on our website.

(Pictured above: The journals of Elizabeth Lois Meguiar Hadley. Pictured center: Senior citizens activities, Board of Parks and Recreation Slides, c.1980s)

Remembering Georgiana McConnell

From the Metro Archivist, Ken Fieth

Hovering there I’ve chased the shouting wind along and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air...
Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace, where never lark, or even eagle, flew.
The television broadcast ended at midnight, every night, with a baritone voiceover recitation of “High Flight” by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee. Waiting for the test pattern (Yes, I was home waiting for a test pattern. Being out at midnight in the Nashville of those days meant liquor store holdups or changing the car license plate). Besides, watching those Navy jets silently glide through the sky will always be a fond memory. I didn’t know until later in life that Pilot Officer Magee wrote those lines during the Second World War, when jet aircraft were a good idea that had a lot to be figured out.

But Georgiana already knew. Native Nashville Georgiana McConnell knew well the flight capabilities of those aircraft. She took her solo flight in a Cub J-3 on October 1, 1944, paying for her lessons by working at Vultee aircraft plant during the war (now Carlyle Aerostructures). During this time, she also went to night school to learn aircraft maintenance.

I first met her in 1994, the year she returned to the air in a Cub for her recertification 50 years after her solo flight. Over the years, Georgiana began to donate documents to the Archives as part of her collection. Being the niece of Brower McConnell, she obtained a great deal of Nashville aviation history. Her Uncle Brower was tragically killed in a ground crash while escorting Charles Lindberg to Nashville in 1927. Georgiana gave us materials on her uncle, including many photographs of her uncle and other famous flyers of the age. This included one great image of pioneer aviator James Doolittle. Later on, she gave us an autographed image of James Harding, flying in one of the machines that he used to circumnavigate the world in 1924.

I came to find out that Georgiana had a first of her own. In 1959, Dr. Randolph Lovelace and Col. Don Flickinger, who created and administered astronaut testing, were curious to see if women could indeed be astronauts. They began looking for expert pilots with many hours of flight time. Their first was Jerri Cobb (1960), who passed easily. As a show of support and encouragement, McConnell sent her a congratulatory letter. Soon after, Georgiana received an invitation from Dr. Lovelace to become part of the testing program.

Listening to her talk about astronaut testing in the 1960s was indeed fascinating. She spoke of the physical and mental tests administered and the sometimes (in today’s medical world) rudimentary testing methods - physical tests such as riding a bicycle while wearing a mask, electrical shock to test reaction to pain, and putting ice water in her ears to test for vertigo. One of the worst for her was putting a tube down her stomach, fully awake, there to remain for 30 minutes to test reactivity to lack of oxygen at high altitude.

If the sitting in a room for 30 minutes with a tube down her throat wasn’t enough, she told me that the mathematical calculations were very difficult.
(I sympathize - many people, including me, fled to a Humanities degree to avoid college algebra). At the end of the testing program, she wasn’t selected. She always said it was her oxygen reaction test. If she said so, but my though is math had some culpability there.

The first 13 women selected were to become “The Mercury 13”, and yet still did not reach space - the first woman was Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova in 1963.

NASA - here’s the deal - we would have beaten the Soviets hands-down if those first 13 women had been given an equal opportunity to fly into space for their country.

No, she didn’t make The Mercury 13, but she was one of only a handful of women, and the only one from Tennessee, to participate in the Space Program in its infancy. For the Metro Archives, she WAS a part of The Mercury 13.

In 2009, she donated her entire collection to the Archives. The Georgiana Tippett McConnell Collection (1900-2009) consists of genealogies on the McConnell and Tippett families, documents related to the Second World War, Nashville aviation, general aviation, and to her life as a native Nashvillian. She passed from time in 2012, living a full-spirited life, serving her family, her nation, and her community.

Fair skies, Georgiana.
As a division of the Nashville Public Library, the Metro Archives collects and preserves the historically valuable records of Nashville and Davidson County.

The Metro Archives is open Monday-Friday from 9:00-6:00, Saturday from 9:00-5:00, and Sunday from 2:00-5:00.

Visit us or visit our website at www.nashvillearchives.org.

Like us on Facebook!

615 Church St.
Nashville, TN 37219
Ph: 615-862-5880
Contact us