



THE SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS

TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS:
THE NEWSLETTER
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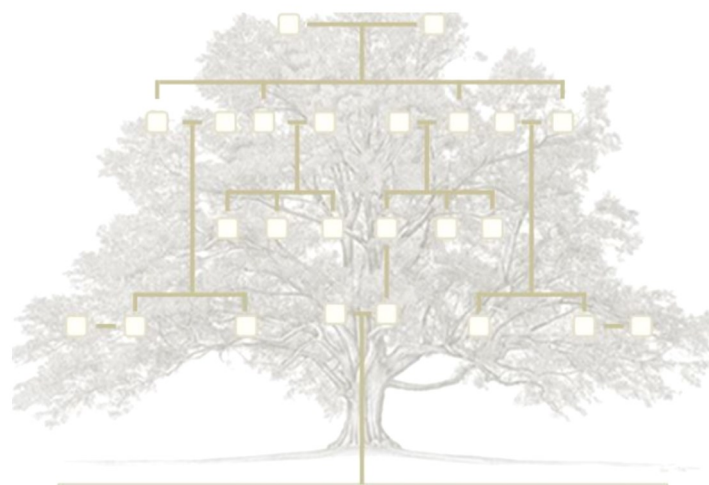
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STA Information

New STA Mailing Address:

Society of TN Archivists
PO Box 974
Franklin, TN 37065



THREE-PART HARMONY: ARCHIVES, GENEALOGY, & YOU

Society of Tennessee Archivists 2016 Annual
Meeting Saturday, October 29, 9:00am to 2:30pm

Hosted by:

Williamson County Archives
611 S. Main St., Franklin, TN 37064

Cost:

Free Admission
AND
the sessions will be presented in real-time
online with Facebook Live.

Presenters include:

Melissa Barker

"Today in the Archives: A Success Story"

John Baker

"The Washingtons of
Wessington Plantation"

Carol Roberts

"I See Dead People:" Using FindAGrave for
Research and Preserving Cemeteries

President's Message

Gerald Chaudron

"Time it was, And what a time it was," the opening lines from Simon and Garfunkel's song "Bookends," come to mind when I think about the recent TAM/TPT/STA joint conference. Indeed, it has been a busy six months since the STA meeting at Pickwick Landing, as we moved from one conference to another in such a short time period. The 2015 meeting was blessed with a lovely setting and gorgeous weather, and we had a range of interesting presentations from Tennessee and beyond. Our meetings are enjoyable because they are relaxed affairs with like-minded people and topics of discussion which we are all pretty familiar with. The 2016 meeting was quite a different animal: the museum and preservation people have some perspectives which I was not familiar with. The sessions discussed issues which archivists don't always have to deal with but also raised questions about the areas we do have in common and how we can cooperate better. Clearly our members in smaller communities are probably already involved with museums and historic places but the larger institutions may not have that involvement at all.



Gerald Chaudron

To be part of a larger state conference was exciting. The program was packed and there were many tours organized to fill the days and evenings. While I can say that after STA meetings I go home relaxed and thoughtful, after the joint conference I returned exhausted with so many ideas and conversations running through my head. And there is no doubt that museum and preservation people know how to enjoy themselves. I want to congratulate the organizing committee on putting together this event and to thank TAM and TPT for their hospitality. TAM president Adam Alfrey was especially welcoming and he shares my belief that it would be beneficial to all three cultural heritage organizations to hold more joint meetings in the future.

STA is a small organization and our challenge is to maintain our relevance. To that end, engaging with TAM and TPT is useful and a periodic infusion of new viewpoints can only be helpful. As I have often said, we cannot afford to confine ourselves to our silos. Let's pursue the opportunities to work within the broader cultural field. Perhaps the museum and preservation people can learn from us as we learn from them.

Gerald Chaudron

President

SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS

Vice-President's Message

Kathleen I. Smith

Greetings from the Vice-President's desk,

The view up on this lofty perch is amazing! I recommend all of you become future vice-presidents of STA. I hope everyone who attended our joint meeting with the Tennessee Association of Museums and Tennessee Preservation Trust in March have recuperated. It was a great meeting with tons of fun activities. I enjoyed meeting folks from other disciplines and finding out what common issues we had as a group of "preservers of history and culture." One of the most exciting ideas I came away with after the conference were the many opportunities to collaborate with other institutions. Let us know what you thought of this joint conference and whether this idea of having joint meetings with Tennessee groups of border-state organizations is something there is interest in for the future.



Kathy Smith

This March conference also served as the Southern Archives Conference for 2016. The next meeting of SAC is to be held in Alabama but prior to a 2018 meeting there needs to be some serious discussion about the organization and participation of the states in the conference. As of right now SAC is made up of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. Here is a link from our website about the history of the organization. <http://www.tennesseearchivists.org/Origins%20of%20the%20Southern%20Archivists%20Conference.pdf> Since I have been in Tennessee (about 1996) participation in SAC meetings has declined precipitously. The last two meetings 2014 and now 2016 have had SAC tagged on to other larger meetings that have given SAC little or no time or energy. I am calling out to all STA members to let me know what your thoughts are about the continuance of SAC and what you would like me to bring to the table when the vice-presidents of the four organizations get together in Atlanta at SAA this summer.

In other news, I didn't have a chance to participate in History Day this year but I hope that those who did will let us know about their favorite projects and any fun stories about judging the contest. STA gives an award every year to the student who best uses primary resources in their project. I think it is important that we continue to be present at such competitions to encourage youngsters to embrace history and the use of primary documents in their research.

I am looking forward to working this next year as your vice-president so please if you have any questions or concerns call on me and I will see what I can do to assist you. Happy Fall!

Kathy Smith
Vice-President,
SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS

Tennessee Archivists

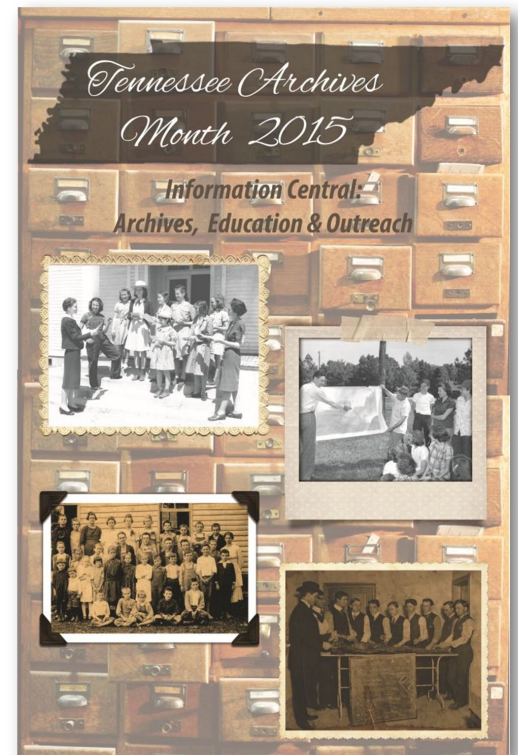
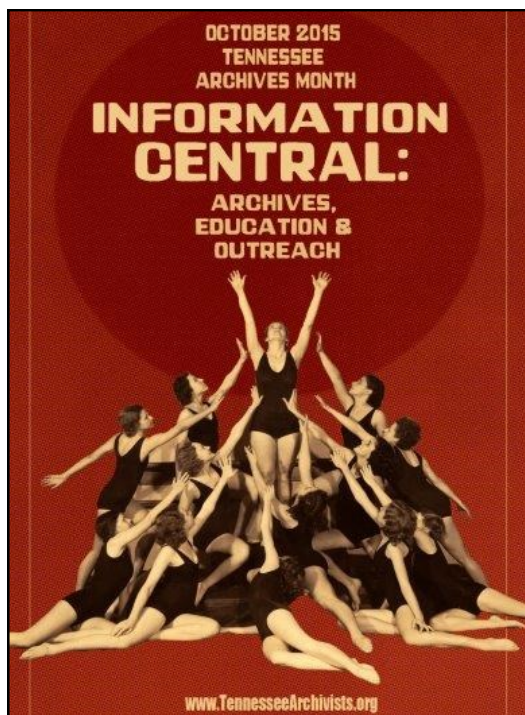
Information Central: Archives, Education, and Outreach / 2015 Meeting

Meeting Review

The Society of Tennessee Archivists' 2015 annual meeting was held from October 21 until October 23 at Pickwick Landing State Park. Nestled among beautiful scenery and significant history, it proved to be an excellent location to promote archives across the state and wrap up another successful year for STA. Prior to conference registration, conference attendees that chose to come early were treated to a tour of Shiloh National Military Park by Park Ranger Chris Mekow. Once the instructional sessions began, attendees were busy learning about the many archives, collections, and

research opportunities the state has to offer. Those in attendance were educated and entertained by presenters, students and professionals alike, from all across Tennessee. Conference sessions fo-

ocused on a broad range of topics, including the Digital Public Library of America, using GIS to explore Tennessee history, German POW letters in Lipscomb University's archives, and workflows and best practices in outreach activities. Other interesting sessions were on World War II prisoners of war in Lawrence County and a session on the African American geography of Tennessee. To cap off the festivities, a banquet was held at the state park hotel which included delicious food, door prizes, and a lecture on the Battle of Shiloh from keynote speaker Dr. Timothy Smith.



Tennessee Archivists

Information Central: 2015 Meeting



NPS Park Ranger Chris Mekow giving a pre-conference historical tour of Shiloh National Military Park.



Dr. Wayne Moore, TSLA ""Using GIS to Explore Tennessee History with Archival Primary Sources."



Elizabeth Rivera, Beaman Library, David Lipscomb University. "German POW Letters at Beaman Library."



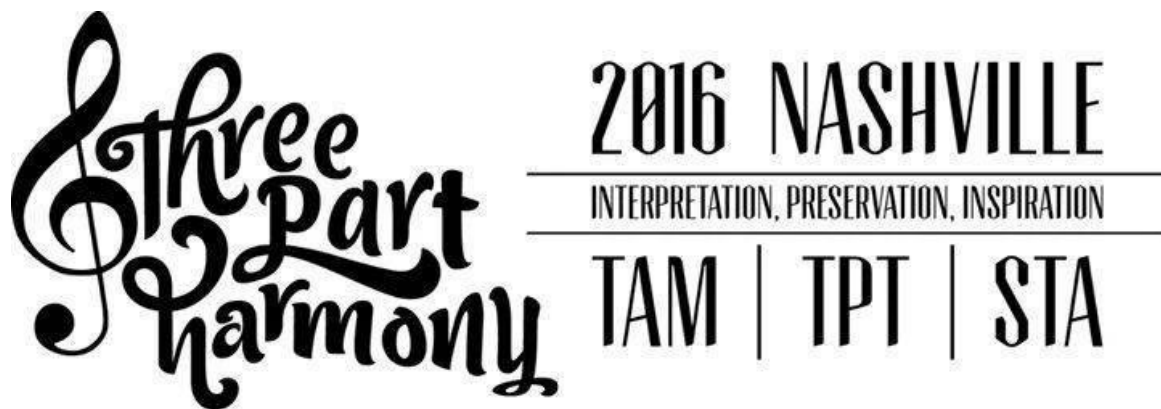
STA Student Scholarship recipient Dallas Hanbury, MTSU.

Tennessee Archivists

Three Part Harmony / 2016 Meeting

Meeting Review

On March 15-18, 2016, the Society of Tennessee Archivists (STA) joined forces with the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) and the Tennessee Preservation Trust (TPT) at the Inn at Opryland in Nashville for the first-ever joint conference. The meeting included sessions on best practices in archives, museum management, and historic preservation. Besides the informative sessions, there were many opportunities to get out and explore the many museums and archives in the Nashville area. There were also several dinners and receptions at locations including Vanderbilt University Library, the George Jones Museum, and the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum. Free admission or discounts were given to many Nashville museums and other attractions throughout the weekend to conference attendees. The joint meeting served to be a wonderful collaboration for all involved.



Tennessee Archivists

Three Part Harmony: 2016 Meeting



Conference attendees that graduated from MTSU's public history program.



Ken Fieth, Metropolitan Government Archives, "Singing in the Stacks: The Quartet Behind Nashville Public Library's Latest Interactive Exhibit."



Myers Brown, TSLA, "Go on Take the Money and Run...and Preserve, Interpret, and Inspire!"



Kathy Smith & David Sowell enjoying the auction and dinner held at the Musician's Hall of Fame and Museum.

Tennessee Archivist

2016 Thweatt Award Recipients

Sara Harwell



Sara Harwell has been a life-long student of history. From her earliest schooldays she was interested in preserving information and documenting history. This passion led to her to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree at Lipscomb University, an Master of Library Science at Peabody College and a Master of Arts at Vanderbilt University. During her college years she often worked in libraries or archives honing her skills and further encouraging her love of history. The majority of her professional career has been in academic and government archives. She has worked at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, in the Special Collections and University at Vanderbilt and most recently at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. At the time of her retirement Sara was the Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Archivist for the DCHS. An outspoken advocate for the preservation of primary resources and for their use by the public, Sara has been active in local and national archival

organizations. She served for many years in the leadership of the Society of Tennessee Archivists culminating in 2005-2006 when she was president. Through the years she has mentored many who chose to join her in the fulfilling occupation of archives. Though she retired in early 2016 no doubt we will continue to see Sara as she is drawn in to archival projects throughout Tennessee. Thank you for your over 40 years of service!

John F. Baker, Jr.

Genealogist John F. Baker, Jr. of Springfield, Tenn., is author of his first and recently published book "The Washingtons of Wessyngton Plantation: Stories of My Family's Journey to Freedom," published by Atria, a division of Simon & Shuster, NY.

When John was in the seventh grade, he saw a photograph of four former slaves in his social studies textbook. When he learned that two of them were his grandmother's paternal grandparents- Emanuel and Henny Washington, he began the lifelong research project that would become his book on the Wessyngton Plantation in Robertson County.



Tennessee Archivist

2016 Thweatt Award Recipients

Founded in 1796 by Joseph Washington, a distant cousin of President George Washington – the First President of the United States, Wessyngton Plantation covered 15,000 acres in Robertson County and held an enslaved population of 275 African-Americans (the largest slave population in Tennessee) whose labor made it the largest tobacco farm in the United States, and second largest in the world. Today, Wessyngton is still a working farm and private residence. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Wessyngton Plantation House

Baker tells the story of his ancestors, who were enslaved on Wessyngton Plantation, as well as the story of the hundreds of other African-Americans connected with the plantation for more than two centuries. It is the story of family, faith, and community. For more than thirty years, Baker has been using his research to unravel his family history and others. Much of his research was conducted at the Robertson County Archives, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and other institutions. In 2003, Baker incorporated DNA testing to expand his research and founded the Wessyngton DNA Project. The Wessyngton DNA Project included descendants of enslaved families at Wessyngton Plantation from 1796-1865, and descendants of the plantation's owners.

In addition to collecting information from his own family members, Baker has had the honor of interviewing more than twenty-five children and grandchildren of former Wessyngton slaves, ranging in ages from 80 to 107. They shared many first-hand accounts of life on the plantation told by their ancestors who were enslaved there.

On 13 October 2015, Baker and his family's descendants dedicated a memorial to African-Americans buried at Wessyngton, 1798-1928. In February, 2014, Tennessee State Museum produced an "ambitious and ground-breaking" exhibit on the "Slaves and Slaveholders of Wessyngton Plantation, with John Baker serving as advisor and contributor.



For his contributions to African-American history, historical and genealogical research, the Society of Tennessee Archivists is pleased to award the 2016 John H. Thweatt Award for Archival Advancement to John F. Baker, Jr.

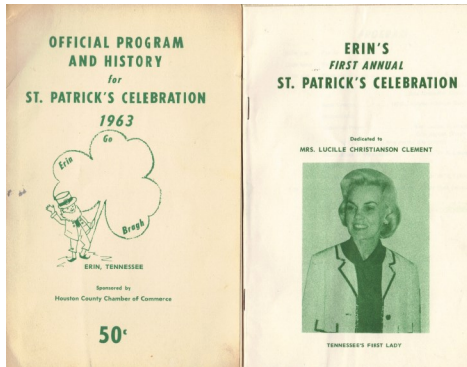
Tennessee Archivist

Article

Houston County Irish Celebration Records Collection

By Melissa Barker

Houston County Archivist/Records Manager



Irish Celebration
Program (1963)

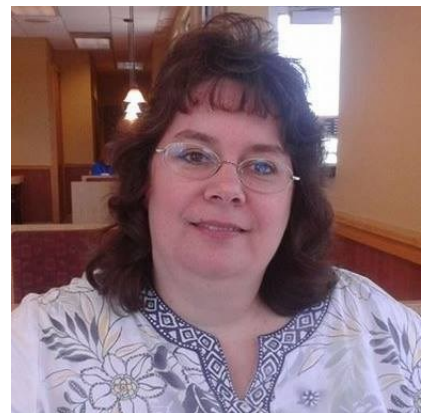
Houston County was built mainly by Irish immigrants and without the railroad there would not have been a Houston County. In 2016, we celebrated the 54th Irish Celebration with a week full of events such as beauty pageants, mud bogs, a carnival, and of course a grand parade that took place on March 19th. A county that has a little over 8,000 people in the entire county swells to about 20,000-30,000 on Irish Day when we have the parade. We even have people who come from Ireland to join in the festivities.

Aspects of the Irish Celebration include the choosing of a Lord High Mayor each year. This person represents our community as an upstanding person who has contributed their volunteer time and helps to make Houston County a better place. Also selected are five
(continued next page)

In 1963, Dr. O.S. Luton of the Houston County Area Chamber of Commerce decided that Houston County, Tennessee, should have a parade. He believed that every community should have an annual parade commemorating something. He also believed that an annual event like this would bring the community together to celebrate their accomplishments and their rich history. So, the annual Irish Celebration was born. The leaders decided that this celebration would take place on the 3rd Saturday of March each and every year, and it has since 1963. The idea to celebrate the Irish came from the fact that the

railroad
that ran
through

Melissa Barker



Melissa Barker is a Certified Archivist currently working as the Houston County, Tennessee Archivist since 2010. She is also a Professional Genealogist lecturing, teaching and writing about the genealogy research process, researching in archives and records preservation. She conducts virtual webinar presentations all across the United States for genealogical and historical societies. She writes a popular blog entitled *A Genealogist in the Archives*. In 2016, she became the Reviews Editor for the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) magazine *FORUM*. She has been researching her own family history for the past 25 years. She lives with her husband in Tennessee Ridge, Tennessee.

Tennessee Archivist

Continued.....

(continued from previous page) Barker, *Houston County Irish Celebration Records Collection*

Emerald Award Winners who are also citizens who have given of themselves to our community and are being recognized for those contributions. And of course you can't have a parade without a Grand Marshall, and we choose one every year. A theme for the Irish Celebration is also chosen each year. This is done by our school children. The children are asked to come up with a theme and to draw a poster with that theme to be judged. In 2016, our theme was "Get Your Shamrock On."



Irish Celebration
Memorabilia

The Houston County Archives has just completed processing the "Houston County Irish Celebration Records Collection." This manuscript collection contains six boxes of memorabilia, photographs, and artifacts from each and every Irish Celebration. There are items such as photographs from the very first Irish Celebration in 1963 which honored a hometown girl named Lucille (Christianson) Clement who was the wife of Frank G. Clement, then Tennessee Governor. Also in the collection are event programs for beauty pageants where Miss Houston County is chosen each year. Most of the items in the collection came from the Houston County Historical Society when they donated their entire records collection containing materials collected since 1984. Once Houston County had an archive they decided their large collection of records needed to be in the archives. Since 2010, when the Houston County Archives was established, we have been receiving donations of Irish Celebration memorabilia, artifacts, and photographs. We will continue to add to our Irish Celebration Records Collection each and every year with new items and hopefully with donated items from previous years.

The Houston County Irish Celebration Records Collection is open to the public and can be seen at the Houston County Archives which is located in the basement of the Houston County Courthouse located at 4725 East Main Street, Erin, Tennessee. The Houston County Archives and Archivist Melissa Barker can be reached by phone at 931-289-4839 or by email at houstoncountyarchives@hotmail.com. You can also follow the archives on Facebook at this link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/190560887647081/>. The Houston County Archives is always accepting record donations of anything having to do with Houston County or any of its people. If you have something to donate, please contact us. Remember: Don't Throw It Away!! Give It To The Archives!! SAVE OUR HISTORY!!

Tennessee Archivist

Article

The Archives of Appalachia: The Jennings Collections

By D. Jean Rushing, MA History

MALS candidate, Archival Studies

Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University



Joe Jennings

Courtesy of the Archives of
Appalachia

The Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University is pleased to announce the re-opening of an important collection along with the opening of a new, related collection. Since 1979, the Archives offered access to the Joe Jennings Collection which documented Jennings' service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs between 1931 and 1957, most notably his work with the Eastern Band of Cherokee in Western North Carolina. Unfortunately, the voluminous collection of 190 document boxes had been minimally processed nearly thirty years ago and a sizable addition could not be easily worked into the existing order. That, along with an archivist's hunch that the papers contained a hidden collection on Jennings' wife, Aubry Faulkner Jennings, prompted a review of the collection's usefulness and accessibility in the fall of 2014 (See related article in *Tennessee Archivist Newsletter*, 38, 1: 2015). Based on the review, the Archives made the commitment to assign its advanced Graduate Assistant from the Archival Studies program to reprocess the entire collection and incorporate the addition. As a result of the reprocessing, the Archives now has two distinct but related collections: the Joe Jennings Bureau of Indian Affairs Records and the Joe and Aubry Jennings Personal

Papers. Though related, the two collections clearly have their own unique provenance which required separate appraisal, arrangement, and description. The newly opened collections offer several new access points for researchers. Jennings' Bureau records focus on his career in educating the American Indian population at reservations throughout the United States beginning in 1931; culminating with his superintendency at the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina between 1945 and 1955. The Jennings' personal papers, with predominate dates between 1914 and 1967, reflect their private relationships, activities, and interests that influenced Joe and Aubry as they lived and worked among the American Indian population. Most importantly, the personal papers now reveal the early twentieth century gendered experiences of Aubry Jennings, an educator, artist, and prolific writer whose primary context apparently remained embedded in her roles as a wife and mother. Both collections offer researchers important access to primary sources related to American Indian education history, Cherokee history, and minority and gender perspectives.



Aubrey Faulkner Jennings

Courtesy of the Archives of
Appalachia

Tennessee Archivist

Membership

Not a Member of STA? Then Join!

Membership is open to any individual or institution interested in the work of historical preservation. There are three categories of membership: *Regular, Associate and Institutional*.

Regular members are those who are employed in the field of archives, historical manuscripts, library special collections, or records management.

Associate members are those interested in allied disciplines, students and others who do not qualify for regular membership; they enjoy all the privileges and benefits of regular membership except voting at the Annual Meeting and holding office.

Institutions (ie. state, local and private archives, historical societies, libraries, businesses, government agencies and other organizations) are encouraged to maintain membership in order to receive STA publications and web updates.

Membership is on a calendar-year basis and dues are as follows:

- Regular - \$30.00 per year
- Associate - \$10.00 per year
- Institutional - \$30.00 per year

Please include institution name, phone number, and email address (if applicable). Make checks payable to **The Society of Tennessee Archivists** and mail to:

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