

THE CIVIL HISTORY

The Regional Newsletter of
The Friends of the National Archives—Southeast Region and
The National Archives at Atlanta

July, 2012

Coming to America: Celebrating the Immigrant Experience

We are a nation of immigrants. It's been said many times, but we are a country that many people want to make their own. Neil Diamond's song captures the story of thousands of immigrants who came to America—people who came so far with a dream.

Their reasons for coming were varied—turmoil in their homeland, persecution, discrimination. But, they all had one thing in common—a dream for a better life.

The United States is a relatively young country. It is filled with people of all backgrounds, religions, and cultures. The earliest settlers in the St. Augustine, Florida, area were Spanish; Africans who were captured and chained together on slave ships and brought to America settled primarily in the South; Scots and Irish settled in Tennessee and North Carolina; and the Acadians made their way from Nova Scotia south to Louisiana.

Most immigrants endured what is today considered unbearable conditions—overcrowded ships, disease, and limited food. Most had very few personal belongings with them. But, in addition to their meager personal items, they brought with them their customs, tradition, music, food, etc, and many of those linger today.



Americans today are mobile. We move constantly from place to place. It's rare to find a family that never leaves its home. But most of these immigrants never went back to their homeland. They never saw their family back in the "old country."

The challenge for all immigrants is to meld into society all the while retaining their own traditions. If they are successful, it broadens and enriches our sense of what it means to be an American.

Ellis Island: The Lost Mural

July 21 – December 31, 2012

On July 21, 2012, the National Archives at Atlanta proudly unveiled Andrew Sabori's "The Lost Mural," a recreation of a mural that hung at Ellis Island, titled "The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America."

The original mural, commissioned by the WPA in 1938 and painted by Edward Laning, was displayed at Ellis Island until the early 1950s at which time a storm destroyed most of the mural. In 2003 Sabori visited Ellis Island, the Smithsonian, and other cultural institutions to find out more information about the original mural. He subsequently uncovered a photograph of the original and decided to recreate it for exhibit and educational purposes. We are proud that "The Lost Mural" will adorn our Exhibit Gallery through the end of December 2012!



“Genealogy John” to Present Seminar

The Friends of the National Archives, Southeast Region are pleased to present John Philip Colletta, renowned author and speaker. He will be speaking on:

1. U.S. Passengers arrival, 1820-1930s
2. U. S. Naturalizations, 1790–1930s
3. Lesser-Used Federal Records; Sources of Rich Detail about Ancestors' Lives
4. Sixteen Repositories, One Life: Uncommon Original Sources Portray a 19th Century immigrant.

Date: Saturday, August 25, 2012

Time: 10:00–4:00

Cost: \$20

Register at http://friendsnas.org/events/120825_regOnline.htm with Paypal or a credit card. To register by snail mail go to http://friendsnas.org/events/120825_regMail.htm



Were Your Ancestors From Ireland?

In this painting by Samuel B. Waugh, Irish immigrants debark at New York in 1847. The round building on the left is Castle Garden.

Irish Potato Famine

Beginning in 1845 and lasting for six years, the potato famine killed over a million men, women and children in Ireland and caused another million to flee the country.

In the 1800s more than three million Irish peasants subsisted solely on potatoes which are rich in protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins such as riboflavin, niacin and Vitamin C. It is possible to stay healthy on a diet of potatoes alone. The Irish often drank a little buttermilk with their meal and sometimes used salt, cabbage, and fish as seasoning. Irish peasants were actually healthier than peasants in England or Europe where bread, far less nutritious, was the staple food.

The Famine began quite mysteriously in September 1845 as leaves on potato plants suddenly turned black and curled, then rotted, seemingly the result of a fog that had wafted across the fields of Ireland. The cause was actually an airborne fungus (*phytophthora infestans*) originally transported in the holds of ships traveling from North America to England.

The Center for Immigration Research (CIR) at the Balch Institute created a series to promote access to information about immigrants who came from Ireland to the United States during the era of the Irish Potato Famine, 1846-1851. It was extracted from ship passenger lists in the records of the U.S. Customs Service (NARA Record Group 36).

These materials identify 604,596 persons who arrived in the Port of New York, 1846-1851, and the ships on which they arrived. Additional information includes age, town of last residence, destination, passenger arrival date, and codes for passenger's sex, occupation, literacy, native country, transit status, travel compartment, passenger port of embarkation, and the identification number for the ship manifest.

For those with an Irish ancestry, this resource is invaluable. You may access it on the NARA website at <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP44>

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

Secret City in the Tennessee Hills: From Dogpatch to Nuclear Power

Saturday, September 15, 2012

The National Archives at Atlanta is the repository of nearly 5,000 cubic feet of records from the Atomic Energy Commission including its predecessor agency, the Manhattan Engineering District, commonly known as the Manhattan Project.

Pre-registration is required. Registration is free and limited to 200 participants. To Register you may email joel.walker@nara.gov or call 770-968-2530. The symposium is free.

Registration deadline is September 10, 2012

Friends of the National Archives—Southeast Region
5780 Jonesboro Road
Morrow, GA 30260

George Jacobs, President.....706-867-1940

Linda Geiger, Vice President.....706-268-3311

Emma Davis, Second Vice President....edavis24@yahoo.com

Helen Lissimore, Secretary.....404-817-3436

Arden Williams, Treasurer.....404-523-6220

Jim McSweeney, NARA.....770-968-2505

Regional Liaison, james.mcsweeney@nara.gov

Mary Evelyn Tomlin, NARA.....770-968-2555

Editor, *The Civil History*, mary.tomlin@nara.gov



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