

***“Aviate, Navigate,
Communicate: A History
of Aviation Advancement
in Nashville”***

The Metro Archives will present an exhibit that briefly covers the history of aviation advancement as the city of Nashville experienced it. Though Tennessee was not the first to witness achieved flight, there were still many achievements and firsts to be had after the Wright Brothers’ innovative flight near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. From completing the first airmail postal delivery to the first night flight, the state of Tennessee and the city of Nashville have provided many contributions to the advancement of aviation technology.



Tennessee National Guard observation plane, 1938.

The aviation exhibit will open in the West Reading Room on Tuesday, March 28, 2017, and will run until the end of May.

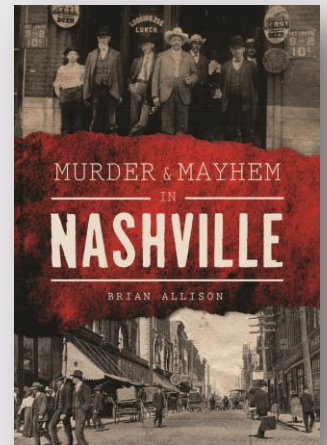
Upcoming First Tuesdays

Our “First Tuesdays at the Metro Archives” are free events that are always on the first Tuesday of the month from 12:30-1:30pm in the Commons Room on the third floor, West Wing of the downtown Nashville Public Library. Our presentations feature a diverse group of speakers discussing various people, places, events, and traditions that highlight Nashville’s rich history.

March 7th: Debbie Watts will speak about women in Nashville.

April 4th: Brian Allison will talk about his new book, *Murder and Mayhem in Nashville*.

May 2nd: Personal historian Deborah Wilbrink will give a reading and book signing for *Time to Tell: Your Personal & Family History*.



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

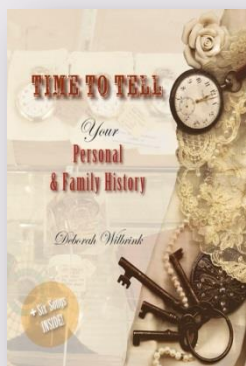
Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 18th: Metro Archives will host a book reading by Betsy A. Thorpe. This special event will feature Thorpe at 12:00pm in the 3rd floor Commons Room of the downtown Nashville Public Library at noon. She is the author of *The Day the Whistles Cried*, and will share with attendees an exclusive sneak peek into her next forthcoming creative nonfiction book, *Trouble on Happy Hill*.

Wednesday, February 22nd: The Tennessee Great War Commission will meet in the Commons Room of the downtown Nashville Public Library from 12:00-2:00pm.

March-June: As 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I, the Metro Archives will host an exhibit in the 1st floor art gallery of the downtown Nashville Public Library depicting our involvement in the "war to end all wars."

Saturday, May 27th: *Time to Tell: Write Your Memoir or Family History -*



Motivation and Strategies. Personal historian Deborah Wilbrink will give a workshop about how to get motivated and learn some easy ways to get your family stories from memory onto paper for posterity. You'll learn about the real benefits of a personal

history project; and you'll get some new techniques and strategies to take your project into completion with more fun and less stress. This engaging, educational presentation will help you add value and readability to any family history. Bring a photograph or small heirloom object to share. The workshop will take place in the West Reading Room in the Metro Archives from 9:30-12:30.



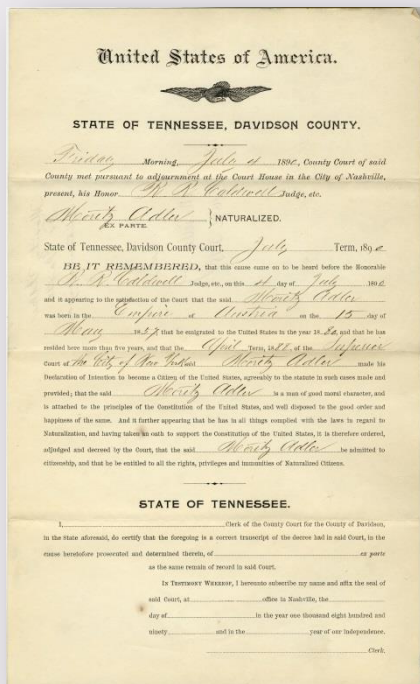
Ernest Ratterman, a WWI soldier from Nashville, 1919. (Ratterman Collection)

For additional questions regarding our upcoming events, please contact the Metro Archives at 615-862-5880.

New and Newly-Processed Collections

Lo and behold! We found more loose records from the Davidson County Court!

The Davidson County Court Loose Records is a large collection consisting of 60 boxes and over 2300 items, including official court documents, correspondence, meeting minutes, and reports. These records span from 1797 to 1978, and contain everything from adoption papers to ordinary licenses (licenses for taverns and inns to serve alcohol). This extensive collection is significant in that it details the long history of the Davidson County Court while giving a glimpse into how the County Court operated and the changes it made to Nashville and Davidson County.



Naturalization certificate for Moritz Adler, 1890, found in the addition to the Davidson County Court Loose Records collection.

So, imagine our surprise when we found an extra 13 boxes of Davidson County Court Loose Records in the closed stacks that had not yet been processed. These records provide a treasure trove of information about the institutions, committees, and departments that reported to the Davidson County Court between 1879 and 1958. Here you can find reports and resolutions from the Nashville Relief Society, the Protestant Orphan Asylum, and Randal Cole Industrial School (later Tennessee Industrial School). You will also find a wealth of records pertaining to the building of the new Davidson County Asylum, as well as the Bridge and Railway Committee papers for various bridges and railways in the county.

A World War II love story in letters.

Last year, a collection of personal correspondence was donated to us, and what a great story it told. The collection came to us in a picnic basket that had been found in a home on 15th Avenue South, and it has now been fully processed, rehoused, and digitized.

The letters belonged to William Raymond (“Ray”) Whittaker, and included a large amount of correspondence with Jane Dean, a woman he had known years before and with whom he had reconnected after his enlistment in the Army during World War II. The two very quickly fell in love and were married just a few months later.

Ray Whittaker was born in 1908 in Worcester, Massachusetts and grew up in New Rochelle, New York. He later studied medicine at Meharry Medical College, where he met Jane Dean. Their letters imply that they were romantically involved for a period of time, but then lost touch for about two years until Ray joined the United States Army in June of 1942. Jane, now a lab technician at Vanderbilt University, reconnected with Ray through correspondence while he was stationed at Fort Huachuca in Arizona. He was soon transferred to Fort McClellan in Alabama, where he was to help organize the 92nd Infantry Division.



The short distance from Nashville to Fort McClellan made it easier for the couple to visit each other, and the two secretly became engaged. They were married in Alabama on November 7, 1942.

This collection contains hundreds of letters between Ray and Jane from 1942-1943, and it's clear from reading them that the two were very much in love. According to the correspondence, Ray Whittaker was discharged from the Army for medical reasons in March of 1943, and he and Jane moved to New Rochelle shortly thereafter. A little research on Ancestry.com told us that Ray and Jane later returned to Nashville and lived here until their deaths in 1989 and 1999, respectively.

(Photo above: Ray and Jane Whittaker, c.1943, Raymond Whittaker Papers)



Interesting Finds

From Metropolitan Archivist Ken Fieth

About 12 years ago, Bill Bissel came in with an albumen photograph of his wife's uncle, John VanTien, a city policeman. I scanned the image and we talked about his uncle being either Dutch or ethnic German. Bill didn't know much about him. So, that conversation on such an unusual name stayed in my rodent-like brain. In November of last year, while processing the Nashville Civil Service Commission papers, I found the retirement papers of John Van Tien.

He was born in 1875 and retired from the force in 1940. From his retirement papers, we know he was 31 in 1906 and promoted to detective in 1926. Note the "Police" buttons on his jacket (and the strong resemblance of his jacket to

the US Army four-button blouse) and the nice “Nashville Police” badge. Interesting that the shield design has been in use over 100 years. This image may be near his hire date of 1906.

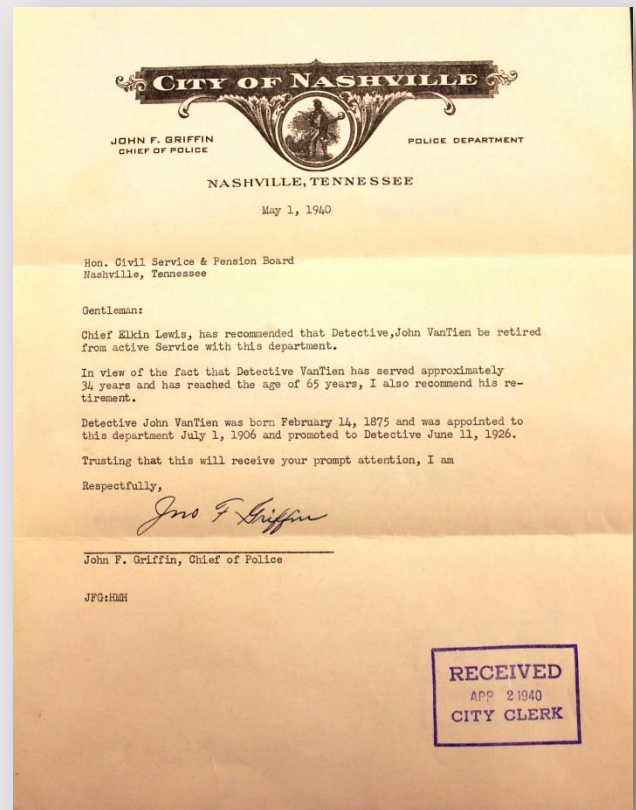
His wife Mayme died in 1946. John died in January, 1958. He and his wife are buried in Calvary Cemetery.

It’s just really neat that the image was brought in by a Friends member and over a decade later, we found the paperwork confirming the family story.

Fire Department Video Available on NPL’s Digital Library!

The closed stacks of the Metro Archives house a City of Nashville Fire Department video entitled, “Think, a False Alarm May Cost a Life.” The Fire Department created this video around 1955 to educate the public about what occurs when a fire alarm is pulled. In this video, you can see the Fire Hall for Engine Company No. 17 (3430 West End Avenue).

You can now view this video on the [Nashville Public Library Digital Collections](#) website.



Letter from Chief of Police Jno. F. Griffin recommending John VanTien’s retirement from the force, 1940 (Civil Service Commission Papers)

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.

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