



TSLAFriends

Friends of the Tennessee State Library and Archives

Issue 5

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In This Issue

[Coming Soon!](#)

[Rare Cherokee Material](#)

[Jewish History Seminar](#)

[TSLAFriends Spotlight](#)

Quick Links

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[TSLAFriends.org](#)

[Tennessee State Library & Archives](#)

[Tennessee Electronic Library \(TEL\)](#)

[Tennessee Virtual Archives \(TeVA\)](#)

Vietnam and Korea Veterans Exhibits Opening!

The Tennessee State Library and Archives presents two new exhibits honoring Veterans of both the Korean War and the Vietnam War opening in the TSLA Lobby November 9th, 2012 and running through March 1st 2013.

In conjunction with our ongoing Tennessee Remembers veterans' survey project, TSLA has prepared an exhibit featuring materials from David Brock, a Tennessean who served in the Korean War, and Christopher Ammons, a Tennessean who served in the Vietnam War.



Dear Jim,

This October, TSLAFriends turned two years old. I have mentioned previously that all of the ground work to start our organization is complete. We have a solid board, good infrastructure - and we are ready to do what we need to do for the Tennessee State Library & Archives. But what is that ... and how can you help us?

First of all, please encourage your friends to join the TSLAFriends. Membership development is one of our main goals for the coming year - and like every friends group, we want to add to our numbers. You may know of upcoming events, places where we can speak about our group - to let them know what we do at TSLAFriends (and hopefully to get them to join.)

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we also are wanting to help the TSLA acquire things that are for sale on the open market, that should be in the TSLA. Collections of manuscripts, historical photos, books with a Tennessee connection. We don't have enough "eyes and ears" yet - that's why you are important to us now, to let us know about these things. Chuck Sherrill has a list of items that we've missed already - things that were on e-bay, on the internet for sale, that should have been acquired for the TSLA but were not. We've lost them. So again, please let us know about those things that we otherwise may not know about.

And finally, I want to ask you to think about the TSLAFriends group at the end of the year - a donation. We already have two projects under our direction, the Civil War Burial project where we are listing all of the Union soldiers buried in and around Nashville. We are also doing great work on the Supreme Court project, cataloging all of the old court cases. We are looking for other ways to help the TSLA - through projects such as these plus the acquisition of "things" that should be in the TSLA. Every dollar helps - and every new member will help. Thank you again.

Steve Richards

TSLAFriends President

The exhibit tracks the wartime experiences of these two men through their own photographs, correspondence, documents, and artifacts.

It provides a unique and personal perspective on the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as seen through the eyes of two Tennesseans who served.



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TSLA Collects

Records of Masonic Lodges

The Grand Lodge of the Masonic Order in Tennessee has long been located on 7th Avenue in Nashville, just a few blocks from the Library and Archives. But not until recently did the Archives approach the Masons about their historical records. Now, records of Masons across the state are available for research at the Library and Archives.

"These records are fabulous," said State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill. "Each local lodge sent in an annual report to headquarters, and they have been preserved ever since. Some date back as early as 1810."

Records of the lodge include annual lists of members, information about those who died during the past year, details about some who were shunned for various moral infractions. "I saw one that said a certain member had been excluded because he had 'violated the chastity of a Master Mason's sister,'" Sherrill remarked. "This is true history - warts and all."

The records after 1950 are confidential, but the earlier records are available on microfilm to any visitor. The Masonic Order was an important social and political force in Tennessee, and the membership records include common folk as well as historical luminaries like Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk.



Family History Day

OK, so the whole family is stuffed with Thanksgiving turkey. Everyone is shopped out after Black Friday. So what to do with the rest of the holiday weekend?

The staff at the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) is encouraging families to stop by for Family History Saturday, a time when they can research their roots together.

The library will be open during its regular hours - 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. - on Saturday. During that time, the TSLA staff is encouraging families who are tired of feasting or shopping to learn more about all the free resources available there.

"Once people begin genealogical research, they may find it addictive," said State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill. "Our staff is prepared to help anyone, from beginners to expert researchers, as they delve into their family histories." Sherrill encourages visitors to bring notes and information acquired from older relatives or other family documents that may be useful in getting started with their research.



TSLA Friends Spotlight

Darla Brock, Public Services Archivist

How would you describe your job as an archivist?

As a reference archivist, every day is remarkably different. Patrons can ask about absolutely anything, and state government can come calling with some very serious requests. Prowling about and becoming familiar with the materials that we house at TSLA is essential. It is such an honor to have the kind of access that we do as staff members to historic documents. I feel it is my responsibility to be the eyes and hands of all of those who will never have such a privilege. I learn and discover daily as much as I can to help my patrons and serve the state.

What is the most exciting/unique piece that you have come across in the archives?

That is like asking me to choose between my children!!! I will say that one morning when I had come to TSLA very early to escape Country Music Marathon road closures, I came across a sad little record group (grouping of state records) in the stacks. The ledger books turned out to be the records of the Direct Tax Commission, and they documented the 1890s refund of Civil War Direct Tax Assessments across the state of Tennessee. The potential to use these decidedly unglamorous records to fill in genealogical information lost to us by the destruction of the 1890 Census had not been recognized. When I explained this to our lovely Archival Technical folks, they immediately slated the grouping for microfilming and spiffed up the register. I was even able to do a lecture at a national genealogical convention about this record group. Sometimes the treasures of our state records unfold over time. I was honored to be a part of that reveal.

Many of the pieces in the upcoming Vietnam and Korean War exhibit are from your father. What was his role in the Korean War?

My father David Franklin Brock served in Korea in 1952 and 1953 with the 2nd Infantry Division ("Second to None") Combat Engineers, Company D. As a combat engineer, he built bridges, roads, bunkers, and the like. As a demolitions specialist he worked with explosives and cleared and laid mines. Combat engineers often worked while being under enemy fire. All combat engineers in this conflict were trained in combat infantry, so they were at times called upon to assume the duties of an infantryman; this was the case with my father.

Thank you for your support of TSLA!

Steve Richards

President, *TSLAFriends*