



LIBRARY NEWS

Sharing stories of Georgia libraries transforming lives and communities

Volume 18, Issue 1, Summer 2020

Need back-to-school resources? Your library has you covered

New collection features more than 100 years of digitized African American funeral programs

Grow with Google funds Georgia public library programming to grow local businesses



GEORGIA PUBLIC
LIBRARY SERVICE

Need back-to-school resources? Your public library has you covered



Many libraries offer fine-free student cards, access to ebooks, online learning resources, Wi-Fi and more.

Back to school looks very different for families this fall, with some schools continuing virtual learning, others meeting in person, and some families opting to homeschool until the COVID-19 threat is reduced. Whatever your situation, your local public library has many resources to make teaching and learning easier for everyone.

In March 2020, students and their families had to quickly adapt to a virtual learning environment. Many did not have access to the internet, quality online learning resources, or electronic devices to complete homework. To meet these urgent needs, public libraries made it easier to obtain a library card online in order to use digital resources, extended Wi-Fi access to their parking lots, and some checked out devices to students.

Libraries are continuously expanding these resources. Here are some that may be useful as students head back to school:

INTERNET ACCESS

For many families suddenly faced with distance learning in the spring, public libraries met a critical internet need. In fact, there were more than 200,000 Wi-Fi sessions from library parking lots from mid-March to May 2020. In many rural Georgia communities, public libraries offer the only free high-speed access.

Internet remains available in and outside libraries, so even if libraries have to close again due to COVID-19, you can still access Wi-Fi from parking lots.

DIGITAL CARDS

Many libraries began offering digital-only cards during the spring to expand access to online resources like eRead Kids, Mango Languages, and Learning Express, which has math and reading skills improvement tests for grades four through college.

This fall, the Georgia Public Library Service will roll out an ecard service to all Georgia public libraries, allowing people to apply for a full-service library card from home.

DEVICES FOR CHECKOUT

Georgia Public Library Service provided technology funds for seven library systems in spring 2020 to purchase Chromebooks that students and others in need of a device can borrow to get their work done. There are now 500 Chromebooks available for checkout in libraries across the state. You can check with your local library for availability.

"It's me, my sister, and my niece living here, and there's no computer in the house," said college

sophomore Nykira, who gained access to a laptop to finish her semester virtually through Georgia's public libraries.

The Worth County Library also will offer devices for checkout in their rural community. According to Library Director Leigh Wiley, "We will have ebook apps loaded so the patron just has to sign into their individual account to start using them."

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

Georgia Public Library Service has provided all 408 public libraries with continued access to Beanstack, a tool that makes it easy to create and track fun reading activities. The service allowed libraries to continue their summer reading programs virtually and keep kids reading. The program will be useful year-round because it also enables teachers to sign up entire classes for reading challenges.

The Azalea Regional Library System used Beanstack to partner with the Morgan County School System during the summer by creating a video on how to use Beanstack. The library will continue the partnership this fall through a reading program with challenges.

At the Cherokee Regional Library System, librarians provide school media specialists with the names of children who participate in summer read-

ing so they can receive prizes. "We are lucky to have a great relationship with our school district's supervisor of digital learning, who works with us to enhance our partnership to benefit students," said Chelsea Kovalevskiy, assistant director of Cherokee Regional Library.

There are many other online learning resources available through your library. A few include:

- **eRead Kids** - provides a collection of 20,000 audio and ebooks for kids in kindergarten through grade four.
- **Learning Express** - includes math and reading skills for grades four through college.
- **Mango Languages** - offers 72 different online language learning courses.
- **Georgia Historic Newspapers** - gives free access to newspapers to inspire social studies, journalism, or vocabulary lessons.

The list of online library resources continues to grow and become even more vital. You can find information at georgialibraries.org/library-everywhere.

"The public library is serving as an extension of the classroom, providing students with access to books, computers, free tutoring, reading programs, and many other important resources."



Photo by Julia M. Cameron from Pexels

STUDENT CARDS

Coming soon, the Georgia Public Library Service will launch fine-free K-12 student cards across the state. Students will be automatically enrolled using their student number, which is the number used for school lunches and other services. There will be no overdue fines for student accounts; the only charges will be for lost or damaged items.

The program will provide library cards to K-12 students in all 53 PINES library systems across Georgia in the coming years, as funding allows.

The student card program was piloted at Live Oak Public Libraries in March, when the library and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System partnered to provide all 38,000 students with a card. Area students can now easily connect to public library materials and resources to help them succeed in and outside of school.

“The coordination between libraries and schools strengthens our community’s commitment to educational achievement and brings together shared efforts to support literacy and lifelong learning,” said David Singleton, director of Live Oak Public

Libraries. “The public library is serving as an extension of the classroom, providing students with access to books, computers, free tutoring, reading programs, and many other important resources.”

A handful of other public library systems have local student cards as well, including Athens, Chattooga, Cobb, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Marshes of Glynn, and Twin Lakes public libraries.

“We’ve been issuing cards for all students in Forsyth County as parents register their children for school,” said Assistant Director Stephen Kight. “We are happy to say that almost all students - more than 50,000 - now have library card accounts and have all the privileges that come with having a library card, including checking out materials, reserving study rooms, using library computers, and accessing our eResources.”

While the Georgia Public Library Service provides many learning resources for libraries to utilize, the best school and library partnerships are forged at the local level, so check with your library to learn more: georgialibraries.org/find-a-library. ■

Grow with Google

Grow your business through the local public library

Grow with Google and American Library Association fund Georgia public library programming to grow local businesses.

Georgia Public Library Service will partner with the American Library Association (ALA) and Grow with Google, the tech company's economic opportunity initiative, to connect jobseekers and small businesses with library resources to build digital skills and grow businesses online.

"Georgia's public libraries support local economic and workforce development efforts in many innovative ways," said State Librarian Julie Walker. "We're so pleased to add this partnership with the American Library Association and Grow with Google to build upon these efforts."

ALA will provide Georgia Public Library Service with \$28,000 to host Grow with Google events, manage funding for libraries to hold their own virtual events, and provide grants to libraries for innovative events supporting local jobseekers or small businesses. Grow with Google has provided ALA with this funding to support State Library Agencies, like Georgia Public Library Service, in recognition of the challenges facing libraries as they adapt services due to COVID-19.

Georgia Public Library Service supports local jobseekers and small businesses in other ways as well, including through free online resources such as the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative and Learning Express Job and Career Accelerator, and by providing crucial high-speed internet and Wi-Fi access in all 408 Georgia public libraries.

Additionally, eight public libraries in Georgia have

been selected to participate in Libraries Lead with Digital Skills, an initiative of the American Library Association and the Public Library Association.

This program is funded by Libraries Lead with Digital Skills, which was created so that local libraries can combine their own program offerings with Grow with Google training materials to offer virtual community workshops or other activities aimed at empowering small businesses to grow online or assisting jobseekers to prepare for and find work. This grant was awarded to libraries whose applications innovatively responded to the impact of COVID-19 through virtual library services.

Libraries selected include:

- The Commerce Public Library of the Piedmont Regional Library System
- DeKalb County Public Library
- Fulton County Public Library
- Live Oak Public Libraries
- The Statesboro-Bulloch County branch of the Statesboro Regional Public Libraries
- Augusta-Richmond County Public Library and two of its branches, the Friedman Branch and the Maxwell Branch

The Georgia Public Library Service program Library Initiatives for Funding Technology (LIFT) provided technical assistance to apply for the Grow with Google grants. LIFT partners with public libraries to fund technology initiatives to support libraries as they build on existing programs and expand their services to the public by identifying grant opportunities, aiding the application process, and supporting the management and reporting stages.

Learn more at georgialibraries.org/google. ■

New collection features more than 100 years of digitized African American funeral programs

FUNERAL PROGRAMS SHARE COMPELLING STORIES OF LIVES AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS A CENTURY AND ARE A TREASURE FOR FAMILIES, GENEALOGISTS, AND LEARNERS OF ALL AGES. ACCESS THE COLLECTION AT DLG.USG.EDU/COLLECTION/AARL_AFPC

Over 11,500 pages of digitized African American funeral programs from Atlanta and the Southeast are now freely available in the Digital Library of Georgia. The collection of 3,348 individual programs date between 1886-2019.

"Funerals are such an important space for African Americans," said Derek Mosley, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History archivist and lead project contributor. "The tradition of funerals is not reserved for the wealthy or privileged, but the community. It is that lasting document of someone's life. In the program is the history, and throughout this collection you see the evolution of the stories people left for future generations. I was amazed at the one-pagers from the 1940s, and by the 2000s there were full color, multiple pages, and photographs highlighting the life and love shared by the families. This collection is public space for legacy."

One of the programs that he found powerful was for Judge Austin Thomas Walden, the first

The Funeral Service

FOR

Albert Leroy Thompson, Sr.



“. . . Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make new friends . . .”

Friday, November 3, 1972 10:30 A.M.

SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH
Atlanta, Georgia

The Reverend Austin McKenna, Pastor

Black municipal judge in Georgia since the Reconstruction era. He also served in World War I as an infantryman and held many leadership positions in Georgia, including with the NAACP. His 1965 benediction was given by the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr.

He became a founder and co-chairman of the Atlanta Negro Voters League. His election in 1962 to membership on the State Democratic Committee of Georgia and his

FUNERAL SERVICES
FOR THE LATE

Mrs. Sarah Ann Bridges



SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 1971
2:00 P.M.

FREEMOUNT TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH
LUMBER CITY, GEORGIA
REVEREND HENRY, OFFICIATING

THORNTON'S FUNERAL HOME NUMBER 2 IN
CHARGE

*Home Going Celebration
for
Mother Ethel Poole*



*Sunday, December 1, 2002
2:00 p.m.*

*Nathan Temple F.B.H. Church
Hartsville, South Carolina*

Dr. D.L. Heard, Pastor

Services
Honoring
Harmon Griggs Perry
July 26, 1923 - November 23, 2003



Tuesday, December 2, 2003
- 11:00 A.M. -

Greater Hopewell C.M.E. Church
604 Cooper Street, Southwest
Atlanta, Georgia

The Reverend Herman "Skip" Mason, Jr., *Pastor*
Officiating

*Heaven's Gates Opening
for
The Services of God's Little Angels*



Gerry Lewis Riggs, Jr.
Age 7



Ilia Jawanda Riggs
Age 5



Ires'amin Trecon Sellers
Age 3 months

Wednesday, November 18, 1998 • 1:00 P.M.

Hines Memorial Chapel
595 Westlake Avenue, Northwest
Atlanta, Georgia

Minister Richard Sellers, *Officiating*
The Reverend Larry Hill, *Assisting*

FUNERAL SERVICES
FOR
Judge Austin Thomas Walden



WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 1965, 1:00 P.M.

Wheat Street Baptist Church
Rev. William Holmes Borders, *Pastor*
Atlanta, Georgia

To Remember Dovey



Circa 1977, Cornell University

Dovey Madeline Davis
Lovely, Dearly, Creative Spirit

appointment by Governor Carl E. Sanders as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1964 were firsts in Georgia for members of his race. Also, his appointment in 1964 by Mayor Ivan Allen as an Alternate Judge of the Municipal Courts of Atlanta was the first such appointment in Georgia and the South since the days of Reconstruction.

- from the funeral program of Judge Austin Thomas Walden

Documenting both urban and rural areas, the collection provides important information for genealogical research and for understanding African American life during different time periods. For example, you can read how some families migrated North to cities like Chicago and New York to pursue job opportunities. Some programs document 20 or more names in one family or in a small town, including elders in a community.

Funeral programs provide valuable social and

Images courtesy of the Atlanta Funeral Programs Collection, 1886-2020. https://digi.usg.edu/collection/aarf_jfpc

genealogical information, typically including a photograph of the individual, an obituary, a list of surviving relatives, and the order of service. Some programs provide more extensive genealogical information such as birth and death dates, maiden names, past residences, and place of burial. This data can otherwise be hard to find, particularly for marginalized populations. The records of many in these communities were often either destroyed, kept in private hands, or never created in the first place.

“The challenge for African American genealogy and family research continues to be the lack of free access to historical information that can enable us to tell the stories of those who have come before us,” said Tammy Ozier, president of the Atlanta Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. “This monumental collection helps to close this gap, allowing family researchers to get closer to their clans, especially those in the metro Atlanta area, the state of Georgia, and even those outside of the state.”

The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History began collecting funeral programs in 1994 with an initial donation by library staff. Since then, staff and the public have continued to add to the collection with a focus on the city of Atlanta. Although the materials have been physically open for research for decades, they can now be accessed beyond the library’s walls.

“I hope people will take time to read what is possibly the only account of an individual’s life and learn not only about them, but their community, the churches they served in, the work they did, and the accomplishments they made to make their small piece of the world a better place,” said Tamika Strong, archivist with the Georgia Archives. “In

learning about the person, you’re learning about the community.”

For Strong, the programs are personal.

“Through this collection, I learned about my uncle who died when he was 15,” she said. “I grew up hearing stories about him. He was smart as a whip and never complained about his long-term illness. He died suddenly just two days before his high school graduation. His legacy will live on as a part of this collection, and we will share with the next generation.”

“In the program is the history, and throughout this collection you see the evolution of the stories people left for future generations...This collection is public space for legacy.”

- Derek Mosley

He was a quiet easy going young man, and to know him was to love him, and through all of his sickness, he never complained. After his lengthy illness he quietly slipped away in the Georgia Baptist Hospital May 27, 1970.

- from the funeral program for Stanley Maddox

The collection contains contributions from the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, a special library of the Fulton County Library System; the Wesley Chapel Genealogy Group; and the

Atlanta Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. Digitization was funded by Georgia Public Library Service’s Archival Services and Digital Initiatives.

Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) leads the digitization of historical materials held by public libraries around Georgia, including the African American funeral program collection, to enable educators and students of all ages to tell the story of their community. Thanks to a robust partnership with the Digital Library of Georgia, these digitized collections are displayed and searchable within their online portal. GPLS previously led the

digitization of over 7,700 African American funeral programs from the Augusta-Richmond County and the Thomas County public library systems.

“Georgia Public Library Service is committed to inclusiveness, ensuring service to underserved communities, and showcasing the diversity and history that make Georgia special,” said Angela Stanley, director of GPLS’s Archival Services and Digital Initiatives.

She believes that those who view the collection will find stories both personal and universal, such as the program for Ethel Carter Thompson Poole. Better known as “Ma Poole,” Mrs. Poole’s obituary not only tells of her keen sense of humor and love of chocolate chip cookies, but also of her moves between various South Carolina counties - information that can be crucial for genealogical research.

The programs also reveal stories of personal triumphs. Mary Catherine Allen was only 39 years old when she passed away in 1973, but during her career became the first Black woman to hold the position of assistant underwriter at the Atlanta Branch of the Continental Insurance Company. Harmon Griggs Perry was an “award-winning photojournalist and writer chronicling African American life in Atlanta” and helped to found the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists.

Mr. Perry made history in 1968 when he became the first Black reporter to be hired by The Atlanta Journal. His first assignment for The Journal was covering the assassination and funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After leaving the paper in 1973, he became Southeastern Bureau Chief for Jet magazine and later returned to free-lancing. He devoted his career to telling the stories of Black people from all walks of life.

Funeral programs are still being accepted; to contribute to either collection, contact the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History or the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Atlanta Chapter.

Learn more about historical collections through Georgia’s public libraries at georgialibraries.org/genealogy. ■

“The challenge for African American genealogy and family research continues to be the lack of free access to historical information that can enable us to tell the stories of those who have come before us.”

– Tammy Ozier

What's your library story?

Every day, libraries across Georgia are transforming lives as they offer opportunities to build new job skills, stay active, learn to read, and much more.

Here are two library stories. You can read more or share your own at georgialibraries.org/library-story.

Courtesy of Elmer Ivon



Giving back through the library: Elmer Ivon remembers visiting the library for the first time: He was a third-grader and didn't know a word of English. Everything was new to him. His mother took him and his younger sister to the Vidalia-Toombs County Library to get to know their new community after moving from Mexico.

"It was a welcoming and diverse environment," he said. "The library was its own community. There was a librarian named Dusty Gres who did story-time in English and Spanish, and we had access to bilingual books. Eventually, we were able to read fully English books."

The Ivon family also took part in PRIMETIME family reading at the library, a program that emphasizes the importance of families reading together to discuss significant cultural and ethical themes.

Elmer became a volunteer and founding member of the teen group at the library. A developing artist, he also created puppet show backgrounds and even a teen puppet show.

"When I first met Elmer he was very shy," said Martha Powers-Jones, who led the library at the time. "As the family got more involved at the library, he became more social and I realized - El-

mer is growing up! We are so proud of how he has grown as a person using art for advocacy. He has made an impact at the library."

As a staff member for his last two years of high school, Elmer gained a personal insight into how libraries help their communities.

"I remember seeing kids who were learning English come to the library," he said. "I would reflect how I was in the same situation growing up. It was nice to see the impact I could have by giving back."

Cameron Asbell met Ivon when she took over as director at the library. "I have never seen Elmer without a smile on his face and a kind word for everyone," she said. "I knew him as a teenager, and I could see that one day Elmer is going to be someone who makes a big difference in the world."

Currently pursuing his degree in mechanical engineering at Georgia Southern University, Elmer still visits the library to find a good book and learn new things.

"As a kid, I checked out books to learn how to make puppets for library programming," he said. "Even now, when I want to develop a new skill, I go right to the library. Libraries provide a safe space

to access information, engage with the community, and learn. Now that many people are working and learning remotely, the library provides vital internet access.”

Powers-Jones kept in touch with Ivon when she became the director of Okefenokee Regional Library System, and she recruited him to draw caricatures for the library’s annual OkeCon festival.

Ivon also creates art for advocacy. Most recently, he created graphics to use as a fundraiser for the NAACP in response to the killing of George Floyd.

“Elmer and the entire Ivon family are shining examples of a library success story,” said Martha Powers-Jones. “I’m proud to have known them for so long.”



Courtesy of Nyisha Key

Making an impact in Cook County: Sometimes the best librarians never intended to be librarians. They transition from other careers and use their training and experiences to mold the lives of the people in their community.

Nyisha Key, manager of Cook County Library in Adel, Georgia, is an example.

“I’m a certified teacher with a degree in middle grades education, and I come from a family of educators,” said Key. “I spent about seven years in the classroom teaching middle school, mostly

seventh and eighth grade. I knew I didn’t plan on retiring from the classroom, so I always had my eyes open for opportunities outside traditional education.”

After spending time around the school media specialist, a light bulb came on for Key.

“I thought to myself ‘wait a minute; I’ve always loved libraries. Why don’t I become a librarian?’”

Not only did Nyisha pursue a master’s degree in librarianship, she started working as a circulation assistant at Houston County Library. She felt this would be a good opportunity to get hands-on experience while earning her degree.

That’s when her career began to take off - quickly. She began working at Houston County Library in 2009, shadowing the branch manager until he left for a new position and she took over in early 2010.

Although Key transitioned into management quickly, she drew from teaching experience when it comes to leading and developing her team.

“I’m a positive person, and being positive is about always looking for solutions instead of focusing on what’s wrong. That’s what helps you progress and move forward,” said Key.

Her classroom experience also influences her commitment to childhood literacy programs.

“The research tells us that the prime time to teach kids to read is the first five years,” she said. “I’m passionate about any program that’s pushing children to develop their literacy skills in that period.”

Key embraces all opportunities to uplift all people in her community.

“I tell my staff that we are not a small town library; we are a library in a small town. Our service is not restricted by where we are located. We’re always looking for ways we can serve better, serve with excellence, and we can be an example of good service and teamwork in our community.” ■

Tell us YOUR library story by emailing communications@georgialibraries.org or using #GeorgiaLibraries.



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Information presented in this newsletter will be provided in alternative formats on request. For more information about Georgia's libraries, visit georgialibraries.org

Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels



Discover your business potential with online, self-paced entrepreneurial mindset training through your local public library. Learn more and get started: georgialibraries.org/eli.