

Inside GHS

Using Technology to Explore the Past



GHS Reading Room

photo by Russ Bryant

The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is home to an unparalleled collection of primary source materials on Georgia history. For 168 years, GHS has provided research services that are almost entirely dependent upon traditional card catalogs and other paper-based guides, along with the institutional knowledge of its reference staff. In response to modern research needs and in an effort to expand

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the reach of its educational resources, GHS has embarked on a technological quest to open the pages of Georgia's history to anyone with access to the World Wide Web. The *Expanding Audiences for History: Access for a New Century* technology initiative is a multi-phase endeavor centered on the implementation of an online public access catalog (OPAC) as part of an integrated library system (ILS) and the creation and implementation of an interactive, user-friendly Web site that will provide instant access to library research tools and educational resources to researchers from across the state and around the world. The effort has received national attention and support from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS awarded \$150,000 in grant funds towards Phase II project activities, serving as the lead source of funding for the initiative that is allowing GHS to take a technological leap into the 21st Century.

Phase II of the *Expanding Audiences for History* technology initiative focuses on creating access to GHS's unique collections and wide-ranging educational offerings by eliminating the need for an on-site visit or specific research request to determine GHS holdings. Instead, access to the GHS catalog is available online—free of charge, 24-hours a day, seven days a week from a variety of remote locations, including homes, businesses, schools, and libraries.

The updated Web site will provide researchers with the ability to conduct cross searches between GHS collection holdings in the online catalog and all educational resources and publications that will be available on the new site. Future project phases will include the digitization of select GHS resources, a history education resource center for school teachers; and an interactive Historical Marker Tour which will allow users to map and

explore over 200 historical markers throughout the state of Georgia.

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board Update On Activities

When will GHRAB have another grant cycle?

GHRAB grants provide financial assistance to local organizations to help preserve and provide access to Georgia's historical records. GHRAB has applied for NHPRC funds to conduct a local government regrant program in 2008 – 2009. The Board should receive word about approval in January 2008. Look for further news after that date.

When was the last grant cycle?

In 2006, GHRAB awarded 31 grants to local organizations in 26 counties. Most projects will terminate July 2007. Several can serve as a model for organizations interested in renovating jail cells into records storage space, processing records from re-housing to DACS-compliant (Describing Archives; A Content Standard) written finding aids and their entry into the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), developing a system-wide records management program and centralized storage area, or how a small library can promote the identification, preservation, and use of historical records. Two projects will have statewide impact on improving disaster preparedness for superior courts and counties.

Can I apply for a circuit rider archivist visit?

An application date will be set in 2008 for the Circuit Rider Archivist Program, which provides free on-site consultation visits from a professional archivist who can give advice and assistance in the care of historical records. GHRAB has just approved 52 organizations against the April 1st deadline to receive visits from July to December 2007. With support from the Georgia Archives and Clayton State University, the Board will continue the program through June 2010.

Is your organization represented in Georgia's online directory?

The Directory of Historical Organizations, which is maintained on the Georgia Archives website, has been improved to give organizations the ability to update their own information. Fields have been added that will allow the Georgia Archives to respond more quickly in the event that your organization faces a disaster. In addition, we are working to get all organizations in the Directory included in GEMA's GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping of Georgia's sites and institutions with cultural heritage collections.

Who won GHRAB awards this year?

GHRAB will announce the winners of the 2007 Outstanding Archives Awards Program in September. Over 70 organizations and individuals have been honored through this program. By publicly recognizing excellent archives and records work in Georgia, the Board hopes to inspire others. The next nomination deadline is June 1, 2008.

To obtain more information, contact GHRAB at ebarr@sos.state.ga.us or 678-364-3718.

Grant Deadline Reminder: NEH Challenge Grant Applications Due on November 1, 2007

NEH challenge grants help institutions and organizations secure long-term improvements in and support for their humanities programs and resources. Awards are made to museums, public libraries, colleges, research institutions, historical societies and historic sites, public television and radio stations, universities, scholarly associations, state humanities councils, and other nonprofit entities.

Because of the matching requirements, these NEH awards also strengthen the humanities by encouraging nonfederal sources of support. Both federal and nonfederal funds must provide long-term benefits to the humanities. Challenge grant funds should not merely replace funds already being expended on the humanities, but instead should reflect careful strategic planning to strengthen and enhance the institution's activities in and commitment to the humanities.

Activities supported

Challenge grants most commonly augment or establish endowments that support humanities activities in education, public programming, scholarly research, and preservation. Institutions may use the income from invested funds to meet ongoing humanities-related costs. Examples include:

- faculty and staff positions,
- fellowships,
- lecture or exhibition series,
- visiting scholars or consultants,
- publishing subventions,
- maintenance of facilities,
- faculty and staff development,
- acquisitions
- preservation/conservation programs.

Where clearly related to improvements in the humanities, direct expenditures from challenge grant awards are allowable. Such expenditures, however, must be for items that have inherent longevity such as:

- materials that enhance library or museum collections,
- construction or renovation of facilities,
- equipment, and
- fund-raising costs (totaling no more than ten percent of grant funds).

Direct grant funds may also be used for bridging support, where the challenge grant provides for endowment income to meet the same expenses in the future. Bridging funds up to the equivalent amount of projected endowment income may be used to cover expenses during the grant period while the endowment is being established.

Activities not supported

Challenge grant funds, federal or nonfederal, may not be used for:

- direct expenditures for operations or programs,
- recovery of indirect costs,
- awards or stipends for students below the graduate level, or
- support for short-term projects eligible for grants from other NEH programs.

Program staff recommend that draft proposals be submitted six weeks before the deadline, November 1, 2007. Time restraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date. Contact the staff of NEH's Office of Challenge Grants at 202-606-8309 or at challenge@neh.gov.

GHS Calendar

- **August 29, 2007** – Coastal Georgia Center, Savannah
 - *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* by Vincent Carretta
- **November 15, 2007** – First Baptist Church, Savannah
 - *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters* by Elizabeth Brown Pryor
- **February, 2008** – Various locations
 - **Georgia Days: 275th Anniversary of Georgia's Founding**

From the Affiliates

Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute Archives

"What Ever Happened to Polio?" an exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Salk vaccine will open August 15 at Warm Springs.

Created by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the exhibit opened in Washington, D.C. on April 12, 2005, the 50th anniversary of the announcement that the Salk polio vaccine was safe and effective. The exhibit closed last fall, and the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute is bringing the exhibit to Warm Springs with the help of a grants from Rotary International, Rotary Clubs of Georgia, and the Georgia Humanities Council.

The exhibit examines polio from the patient's perspective and also as a scientific and cultural phenomenon that continues to influence our behavior today.

Both Warm Springs and Rotary International have played significant roles in the history of polio. Franklin D. Roosevelt established his polio treatment center in Warm Springs and made it a national symbol of comprehensive rehabilitation for people with disabilities. Rotary International has worked with the World Health Organization on the worldwide eradication of polio since the 1980s, an enormous task that may be accomplished in the next few years.

The exhibit is located in the lobby of Roosevelt Hall on the campus of Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute. Starting on August 15, the exhibit will be open from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The exhibit will remain in Roosevelt Hall at least through calendar year 2008.

White County Historical Society

White County is celebrating its 150th year. Our Sesquicentennial Celebration continues all year with schools participating in "A Walk Through White County History". Other special events include: August Celebrity Auction and Wine Reception, Blackstock Vineyards; Sept. 15 Miss White County Sesquicentennial Pageant; Sept. 22

White County Historical Society (cont.)

10:00 - 4:00 parade, festival on the square, Time Capsule; Sept. 29 11:00 - midnight Family Fun Day, Celebrity Country Music Concert and Fireworks. Join us for the fun and celebration. For further information contact White County Historical Society 706 865-3225 or White County Chamber of Commerce 706 865-5356.

White County Historical Society's 5th Annual Quilt Show will be held at the Historic White County Courthouse 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. October 11-13 and 18-20. About 100 quilts and wall hangings will be displayed. Some for sale. \$2.00 admission.

Social Circle Historical Society

On Saturday, August 11, 2007, from 10 am to 4 pm, the Historic Preservation Society of Social Circle will host its annual home tour, featuring seven unique and historic cottages, including the former home of renowned author Wylly Folk St. John. "The Cottage Tour" will provide a rare opportunity to tour several of Social Circle's most fascinating cottage homes. Highlights of the tour include: the Adams-Malcom-St. John-Hunt home (c.1914); the Day-Kitchens house (c. 1911); and the Gibbs-Barton-Westrick home (c. 1910).

Pre-tour ticket prices are \$18 for individuals or \$15 each for groups of 10 or more. Tickets may be purchased the day of the tour for \$20. Will-call tickets may be picked up on the day of the tour at tour headquarters, Gunter Hall, 432 West Hightower Trail, Social Circle. Parking is free. Proceeds benefit the continuing restoration, landscaping and upkeep of HPSSC Headquarters, [Gunter Hall](#) (c. 1832).

For more information, call 770-464-1866 or visit www.historicsocialcircle.com.

Also on August 11, Social Circle Better Hometown will host Social Circle Heritage Day, in honor of the city's 175th Anniversary. This free event will be held at the city's Visitors' Center and the adjacent Dally Mule Barn.

From the Stacks

Oral Histories: Making the Digital Leap?

By John Dickinson, Project Cataloguer, Georgia Historical Society

Most institutions have either collected or been given oral histories to care for and preserve. Making these interviews available to our patrons is sometimes a difficult task. Maintaining the necessary equipment can be expensive and the resources are often infrequently used. The expense of maintaining equipment becomes even more of an issue for institutions that wish to give their patrons access to the actual recordings. Institutions occasionally elect to transcribe the interviews in an effort to reduce wear on original tapes, making the issue of preservation one of paper management rather than tape management. Some institutions choose to keep the interviews on their original tapes, understanding the theory that no transcription can replace the emotion often conveyed through the spoken words of the interview subject.

In today's digital age, however, there are alternatives to cassette players and other expensive equipment. Converting analog sound files to digital files can be a simple process, enabling institutions to place their audio files within easy reach of their patrons. Once files have been converted, the original tapes can be stored in the proper manner for future use should the need arise.¹

Once the decision is made to begin the digitization process, there are a few choices that need to be made. How will the digital copies be made? Will the digital file be kept for preservation? How will patrons access the files? These questions are merely the beginning. Once addressed, however, your institution will be well on its way to providing your patrons with digital access to your collections.

The process of actually making a digital copy of a sound recording is perhaps the one task that can bog down a digital archive project. Today, with the advent of the digital revolution, we are inundated with a wide variety of hardware and software choices. From iPods to smart phones, patrons are often ahead of most institutions when it comes to the latest technology. However, given the wide array of playback devices, making a digital file universal is easier than one might imagine. Almost all devices will play Wave (or WAV) files. In fact, the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) recommends using the WAV format as a standard for all digital recordings.² Once the file format has been selected, going from tape to digital file is a simple process.

There are a wide variety of digital sound recorders available on the Internet. Many of them are free or very inexpensive.³ Then, you will need a tape player with a headphone jack and a 3.5mm male-to-male stereo cable (available at any electronics store). Plug the cassette player into the microphone jack on your PC (or the line-in jack) and you are ready to begin digital recording. A set up like this can cost as little as twenty dollars to get started. If you have a larger scale project, more sophisticated components can be purchased.

Once your digital files have been created, deciding how to preserve the digital copy should be addressed. Some institutions create CD copies of the files while others prefer to keep copies on their server (or a hard drive). However you decide to maintain your original digital files, remember you still have your cassette originals should anything happen (granted, it is easier to make multiple back up copies of your digital files to store in offsite locations).

And finally, patron access to these files can be as easy as preparing a CD for use on institutional PCs. Using programs like Microsoft Media Player or Real Player, patrons can listen to the sound recordings without the need to purchase or maintain expensive equipment. Files can also be placed on a network and accessed from a variety of locations, or even placed online for patrons to access remotely. The most expensive item you will need to consider buying will be headphones.

However your institution decides to make the recordings available, the process does not have to be expensive or time consuming. Once files have been moved to a digital format, migration to other digital formats can be as simple as the click of a mouse. Many programs on the market today can facilitate the format change with ease. However, thus far, the WAV file format has withstood the test of time in the digital world, not an easy task with the prevalent quantum leaps in technology.

¹ When possible, a drier climate is preferred, with a humidity level of about 40%. Also, there are simple steps to ensuring the viability of the media your institution is storing: all cassettes have an erase lock-out device, activate them; rewind your tapes; store your materials in plastic cases or containers; store cassette cases spine up to shed falling water; keep tapes off the floor. Additional information can be found at <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/conservation/magnetic-media.html>

² International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives Technical Committee Report Version 3, December 2005.

³ A Google search for 'digital sound recorder' will provide your institution with a wide variety of choices for recorders.

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...to collect, preserve, and
share Georgia's history

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News to Share?

Send us information about your Affiliate Chapter for publication in the next issue of *Highlights* such as:

- Special Events
- Exhibits and Programs
- Membership dues and meetings
- New employees

Items will appear in the **Fall 2007** issue.

Dated events should cover the dates: **October 15, 2007 – January 15, 2007.**

Please compile the information in **press release format** and mail, fax, or email to GHS. Submissions should be **75 words or less**, and should include the **dates, times, locations, and fees** for events, as well as a **contact phone number and/or email address** for the public.

***Deadline to submit information is
September 15, 2007***

*The Georgia Historical Society
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Savannah, GA 31401*

***Highlights***

A bulletin for the Affiliate Chapters
of the Georgia Historical Society