

GEORGIA HISTORY | TODAY

Whatever
Happened
to Georgia's
**DIXIE
HIGHWAY?**

KENNETH H. THOMAS, JR.
John Macpherson Berrien Award Winner



The Past Never Changes, But History Does

By Stan Deaton, Georgia Historical Society

In 1922, Georgia's Rebecca Latimer Felton became the first woman to serve in the U.S. Senate. She was a staunch supporter of women's rights and Progressive Era reforms. She was also a virulent racist.

She famously said in an 1897 speech that if it took lynching to protect white women from black men "then I say lynch a thousand a week." It was a provocative and outrageous statement even in the racially charged atmosphere of the dawn of the Jim Crow era, and it sure is now.

The Georgia Historical Society and Georgia Public Broadcasting included that statement in a segment on Felton in a recent broadcast of *Today in Georgia History*. We felt it essential to highlight not only Felton's opposition to child labor and the convict lease system but her support of lynching as well.

A viewer complained that we were unnecessarily stirring up racial tension by including Felton's words and that we should have only focused on the positive aspects of her life. I assume she meant "positive" by our modern standards; Felton would have most assuredly thought that her racial views were a positive aspect of her life.

Many people assert that professional historians should only "celebrate" our past and focus on events and people in history that make us feel good about ourselves. Above all we should stick to the "facts." But history is a discipline, and the critical examination and interpretation of historical evidence is an essential part of what professional historians do.

Good history goes far beyond a dry recitation of "facts." Facts are highly subjective, selectively chosen to buttress a particular viewpoint, and they never speak for themselves.

Our past—like our present—is a complex maze of interlocking economic, political, social, and cultural forces that historians struggle to understand and recreate. No account of the past is ever completely impartial, because no human endeavor is or can be.

The best historians constantly ask new questions of old sources and re-examine previous interpretations in light of new evidence. The past never changes, but history—the telling of the past—does.

Certainly much of our past is heroic and inspiring. That's often what draws so many of us to love it in the first place. But to examine it uncritically simply to make ourselves feel good or confirm what we already know would be indoctrination, not education.

Rebecca Latimer Felton's words may make us very uncomfortable today, but we need to understand how accomplished and educated people like her could have ever thought what she believed, and how her beliefs shaped the society in which she lived and those who came after her. Leaving out the parts of people's lives that may seem distasteful to us today does a disservice to everyone.

History is about what we've achieved, but also about what we've failed to achieve. And history with boundaries cheats us all. A healthy debate about the meaning of American history in all its complexity and messiness is an essential part of a vibrant constitutional democracy.

Stan Deaton, Ph.D., is the Senior Historian at the Georgia Historical Society.



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ON THE COVER

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GEORGIA'S DIXIE HIGHWAY?

Image Source: Dixie Highway Trail Blazer Sign. Courtesy of Ed Jackson



Feature Story Page 3 – DIXIE HIGHWAY ARCH. Courtesy of Ed Jackson

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WHATEVER
HAPPENED
TO
Georgia's
DIXIE
Highway
?

by Ed Jackson

Old Dixie Rd.

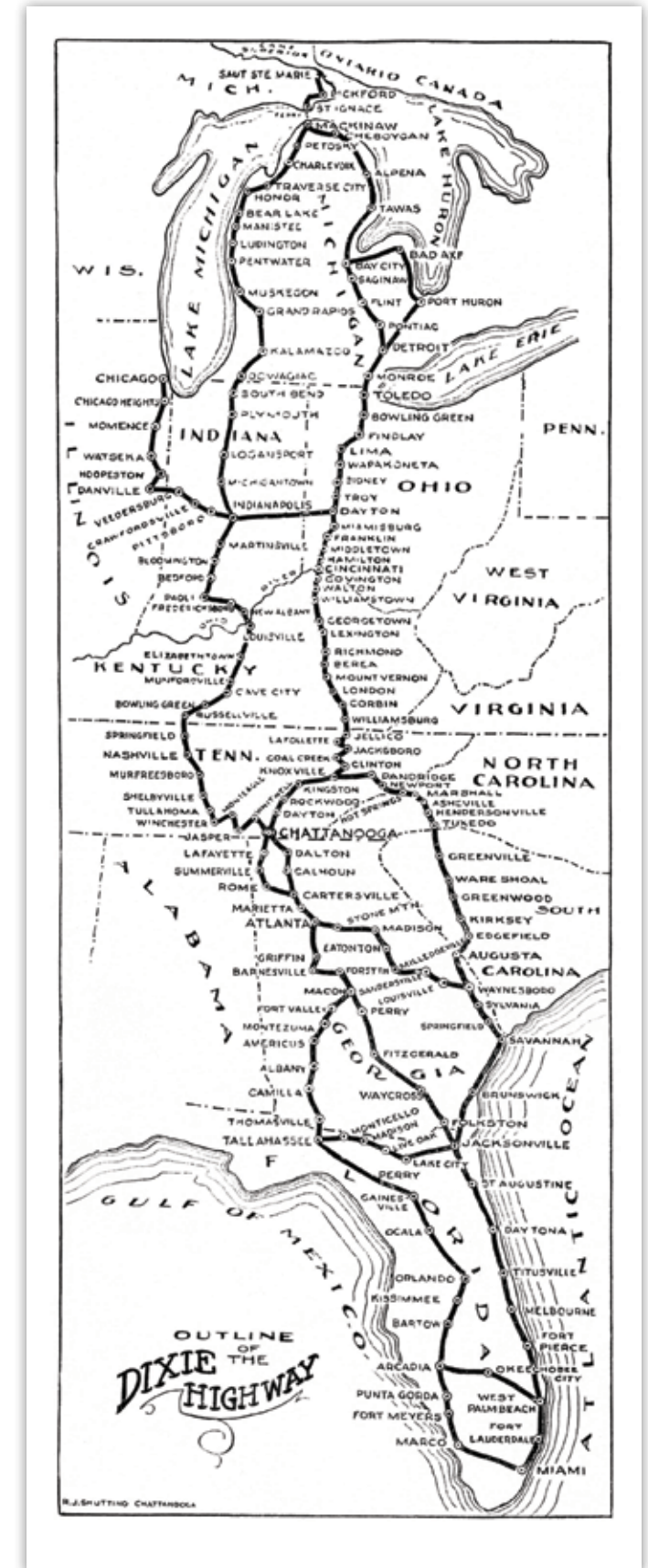
Occasionally in Georgia, you will see an "Old Dixie Highway" street sign. You may wonder what the Dixie Highway is (or more appropriately *was*). Built mostly between 1915 and 1927, the Dixie Highway was the first north-south interstate paved highway in the U.S., stretching from the Canadian border to Miami, Florida.

As late as 1910, few highways existed in America, and inter-city highways were considered an unneeded luxury in most of the South. People rode the train to travel any distance inland. Locally they traveled by wagon, buggy, or city streetcar. Very few paved roads existed except for brick and concrete streets in large cities. So-called "improved roads" outside the cities were typically graded dirt, clay, or gravel. Across the nation, but especially in the South, most roads were filled with ruts that turned into mud when it rained.

In one sense, the Dixie Highway was an outgrowth of the Good Roads Movement, a national effort launched in the 1890s by bicycle clubs but joined by automobile owners who had experienced what it was like to drive on dirt roads—especially after a hard rain. The U.S. Post Office supported better roads for its Rural Free Deliver service routes, and farmers desired reliable roads to get their crops to market.

Although there were a variety of voices calling for better roads, Carl Fisher is considered the Father of the Dixie Highway. Fisher was an entrepreneur, promoter, land speculator, and auto enthusiast. In 1912 he purchased an undeveloped island that would later become Miami Beach, Florida, in hopes of creating a winter vacation mecca for snowbirds from Midwestern states. Henry Ford's Model T offered an affordable means of travel, but Fisher knew that one essential thing was missing – a paved highway that could withstand heavy rain.

In 1914, Fisher proposed a north-south paved highway to connect Chicago with Miami. He asked Indiana governor Samuel Ralston to contact fellow governors to meet and discuss what Fisher had dubbed the Dixie Highway. At the first meeting, held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Dixie Highway Association (DHA) was formed. The DHA embarked on an unlikely goal- to build an interstate highway without federal or state money or management.



This left each county to fund and oversee paving its portion of the highway.

Numerous cities and counties in different states wanted to be on the Dixie Highway—but it was impossible to accommodate every request. Once Michigan and the Carolinas joined the DHA, officials decided to have a Dixie Highway West and a Dixie Highway East. Sault Ste. Marie, located in Upper Michigan on the Canadian border, would be the northern terminus. From there, both highways would run roughly parallel routes southward, converging in Miami.

As interest spread, the association decided to allow connecting highways between the main Dixie Highway routes. The result was a network of roads all claiming the name Dixie Highway.

To the extent possible, the Dixie would follow existing roadbeds. But because most roads did not cross county or state lines, a lot of new road construction was needed. Initially, community leaders and auto enthusiasts contributed money for paving the Dixie in their county. But often that was not enough—so, many counties held bond referendums. As a result, the Dixie varied in width, appearance, composition, and durability from county to county. In some cases, it was clay, gravel, or a dirt road coated with sprayed tar. In a few cases it was built of brick or shell. Usually, the pavement was concrete or a mixture of crushed stone sealed with tar or asphalt.

The Dixie Highway continued to be managed by a loose confederation of counties until 1916 when congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act. It required states wishing to receive the limited funding to create a state highway agency, and in 1916 Georgia complied.

In 1917, construction of the Dixie Highway was stalled by World War I. After the war, the prosperity of the Roaring Twenties meant more Americans had jobs with good salaries. Many families now had the means to own an automobile and take extended vacations.

With the coming of the auto age, the Dixie Highway was heralded as an avenue to allow snowbirds to



escape the winter cold by vacationing in the South—especially Florida.

Because of Georgia's location, both routes of the Dixie Highway extended through it. Connecting routes and a loop through Rome were added to the network. The most important connector was formally designated the "Central Dixie Highway." It departed the Dixie Highway West at Macon, heading southeast to Waycross on to Jacksonville, where it joined the Dixie Highway East.

In 1921, the Georgia General Assembly imposed a one-cent-per-gallon motor fuel tax to raise funds for road construction. That same year, new federal legislation provided states with increasing amounts of funding for two-lane interstate roads. This allowed Georgia's State Highway Department to assume responsibility for road construction and maintenance, including the Dixie Highway. In 1926, highway officials gave all federally funded highways numbers instead of names.

The Dixie Highway was not given a single U.S. highway number. Instead, segments of the Dixie were incorporated into different newly numbered highways.

By 1927, the Dixie Highway Association considered its goal achieved (though portions of the Dixie Highway remained unpaved until 1939) and disbanded.

LEGACY OF THE DIXIE HIGHWAY

The Dixie Highway was Georgia's first paved (or mostly paved) highway outside of a city, as well as its first interstate highway.

Prior to 1915, winter resort hotels in Florida were accessible and affordable only to the well-to-do. The Model T and Dixie Highway changed that, bolstering Florida as both a year-around vacation site and a place to live.

In 1920, a land boom began in Palm Beach, Florida. Word spread across the country that a fortune could be made buying and selling land in Florida, and a land rush followed. Tens of thousands of Americans loaded up their cars and headed south on the Dixie Highway to Florida. Land speculation brought fortune for a time, but the bubble burst in 1926. Many families who had come to Florida to get rich now had difficulty finding gas money to return home.

The Dixie Highway is an early example of the economic impact of highway construction. Under the best of conditions, a trip from Chicago or Detroit to Miami could take two weeks. While hotels



and restaurants along the way benefitted from some travelers, many families could not afford to eat out or stay in a hotel each day of their trip. So they packed a tent and everything needed to camp out along the way—often loaded into a small, open trailer pulled behind their car. Families would set up camp along the road and then be on their way in the morning. Eventually entrepreneurs along the highway created tourist camps. For a dollar or less families could set up their tents and enjoy the luxury of water and a bathroom. Local grocers and restaurant owners complained about what they called "tin can tourist camps" because most campers brought their food with them in tin cans.

Tourist camp owners began adding small cabins for travelers. Initially, these were known as tourist courts—and later motor courts, motor hotels, and finally motels. Thousands of "mom and pop" tourist camps developed along the Dixie Highway. Joining these were gas stations, auto repair shops, small restaurants, grocers, fruit and pecan stands, souvenir shops, and other enterprises.

By the 1930s, small camping trailers were becoming popular. They were followed by small trailer homes. Not only could families vacation in Florida inexpensively, but many older couples from colder climates decided to live there permanently in one of the exploding number of trailer parks for retirees. Almost all of Florida's growing population would travel down the Dixie Highway through Georgia.

Later, portions of the original Dixie Highway were widened and re-paved. More often, the old Dixie was abandoned and replaced with new two- or four-lane U.S. highways constructed along more efficient routes. Amazingly, despite its importance, there is only a single state historical marker—and a few stone markers—in Georgia dedicated to this road that transformed inter-state travel in the early twentieth century.

GHS is partnering with GDOT and the Federal Highway Association on a project coordinated by New South Associates to study and document the Dixie Highway. The Society's library and archives will be the repository of records collected during the project.

Visit www.georgiahistory.com to read an extended version of this article.

Ed Jackson is Senior Public Service Associate Emeritus at the University of Georgia. He can be reached at edjack@uga.edu.

Pictured on previous page: Outline of the Dixie Highway, 1917 from the Dixie Highway Magazine. Courtesy of Ed Jackson.

Pictured left: Muddy Roads on the Dixie Highway. Courtesy of Ed Jackson.

Pictured above: "A Tin Can Tourist Camp" In Dixieland historic postcard. Courtesy of Ed Jackson.

Georgia GEMS

JAMES DUNWOODY JONES

by
Lynette Stoudt



The name Andersonville is synonymous with suffering. Within its walls approximately 13,000 United States soldiers perished as prisoners of war from malnutrition and disease.

Established in Sumter County, Georgia by Confederate authorities in late 1863 and early 1864, Andersonville is the most infamous Civil War POW camp and a tragic part of Georgia and American history.

One hundred and fifty years later, the Georgia Historical Society has added to its collection the personal effects and memoir of a Georgian who witnessed firsthand the incredible events that unfolded at Andersonville. James Dunwoody Jones's letters, photographs, artifacts, and memoir are part of the recently acquired Jones Family Papers (MS 2555) that span from the American Revolution to World War II. The collection documents several decades of the Georgia family with ancestral ties to Scotland.

Jones, whose family is well documented in Robert Manson Myers's *Children of Pride*, was born in 1842 in McIntosh County. He enlisted as a private in Company A, 8th Georgia Infantry, in May, 1861. He served in Virginia and eventually rose to the rank of first lieutenant before being transferred to Georgia to drill conscripts the fall of 1862.

Included in the collection are Major Jones's English made Confederate "snake style" officers sword belt buckle and an ambrotype of Jones taken during the war in his Confederate uniform.

The most remarkable piece is Jones's forty-eight page handwritten account, "The Departure and Return of Peace." In it he describes his Civil War experience from raising a secession banner in the streets of Darien in 1861 to the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox in 1865. Most notably, the memoir details Jones's experience as drillmaster and ordnance officer at the Andersonville prison camp.

Jones was ordered to Andersonville in 1864 where he observed the hardships and ill-treatment of thousands of imprisoned U.S. soldiers. He also witnessed the execution of the prison gang leaders known as the Andersonville Raiders that robbed and injured fellow inmates: "While at Andersonville I witnessed the hanging of six Federal prisoners by the prisoners inside

the stockade, an action for which Captain Wirz should have been held blameless." Wirz initially held the men under guard outside the stockade until the prisoners within threatened to "tear down the walls and come out and get them," according to Jones.

Wirz knew he could not rely on his guard to prevent a prisoner revolt because Jones, whose duty was to inspect the troops, warned him of their inefficiency. Jones noted, "I found that of the 500 muskets carried by men going on sentry duty, not over 100 could have been fired." Jones indicates that Wirz was forced to make an agreement with the prisoners and turn the Raiders over for a trial by judge and jury.

Lawyers were selected from among the imprisoned, and the six were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death by hanging. "I was one of the few who obtained a pass to occupy a sentry box to witness the executions," Jones wrote, "and I was quite near the scaffold. I will never forget that sea of upturned faces..."

After the execution, Jones was ordered to Columbia, South Carolina to command the interior of a stockade of 1,250 U.S. officers. After the war he lived in Atlanta and died there in 1904, leaving behind a remarkable window on the Civil War's most notorious POW camp.

To find out more about this collection and other resources on Andersonville and the Civil War available at the Georgia Historical Society, visit our online catalog at www.georgiahistory.com.

Lynette Stoudt is Director of Library and Archives at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at lstoudt@georgiahistory.com

Pictured left: Civil War memoir, ambrotype photograph, and sword belt buckle of Major James Dunwoody Jones.

Select items in this collection will be made available as part of a collaborative project entitled, "America's Turning Point: Documenting the Civil War Experience in Georgia," in partnership with the Atlanta History Center, the Digital Library of Georgia, and the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the University of Georgia. More than 81,000 documents related to the Civil War will be digitized and made available online. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission awarded the collaborative Documenting Democracy grant in support of this project.



PROFILES

KENNETH H. THOMAS, JR.

John Macpherson Berrien Award Winner
"Georgia Was My Place."

By Sophia Sineath

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., is the 2013 John Macpherson Berrien Award winner for a lifetime of achievement in Georgia history. Perhaps best known throughout the state for his weekly column, "Genealogy," in the *Sunday Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Thomas has traced his earliest ancestral ties to Georgia back to the 1760s. GHS has traced the 2013 Berrien Award winner's dedication to Georgia's history back to his early years growing up in Columbus, Georgia.

Recently, Thomas answered questions for GHS spanning the course of his lifetime as a genealogist and historian. The entire interview could not fit in this short article, but the unedited version is available on the GHS website, www.georgiahistory.com.

Q: You became interested in genealogy as a teenager. What sparked that interest?

That is something I do not know, but I know it happened in late 1962 about the time I turned 16, and I was in full gear by February 1963. My diaries are silent to any divine spark. I always had a love of history from about age 10. My first trip to the Georgia Archives was in July 1963, coming up on 50 years. I had them check their registration book (based on a date in my diary) and there my name was, along with my grandparents and my younger brother, Joe, aged 9.

Q: How did you become Historian in the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources?

That is a very curious story.

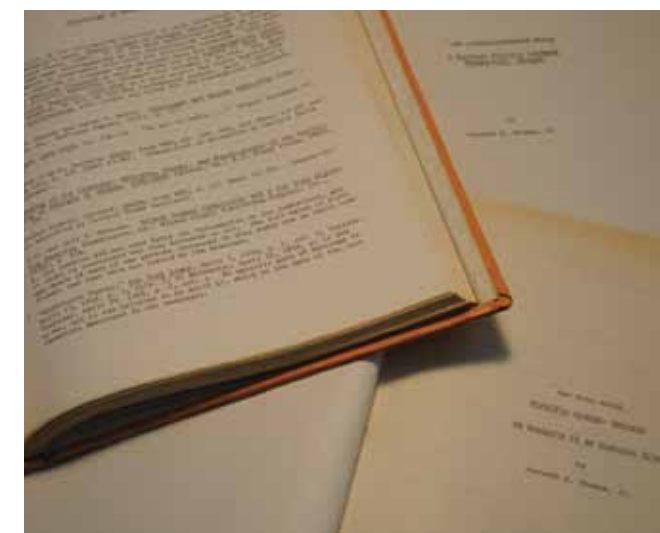
I got out of the U.S. Air Force in December 1972, returned to Atlanta in January 1973 and went to Georgia State University to earn a teaching certificate. After three quarters, I took a break. A friend suggested I go to the State Parks people (part of DNR, but I didn't know that) and talk to them about working in one of the state-owned historic house museums. I met with Billy Townsend, the historian with DNR-State Parks. After he told me about some of the new state-owned sites, many of which were very remote and I knew I didn't cook (this was before microwaves, VCRs, cable), he suggested that I might want to go over to the Historic Preservation Section (as it was called then) and speak to them.

So I walked down the hall to their office, never having heard of them before. By chance the office head, Mary Gregory Jewett (whom I later learned was a legendary figure in Georgia history activities) just happened to be there. She interviewed me- this stranger that just walked in the door. She said, "We just got some money from Governor Carter for acquisition of historic properties, we just bought the Robert Toombs House (Washington, Georgia) and we need research done. Do you know your way around the Georgia Archives?" I said I had grown up going to the Archives. I met a few more of the staff, and the next thing I know they were calling me on December 3 saying, "why aren't you here?" I reported in later that morning and stayed 33 years, till I retired in October 2006.

I was hired as a historical researcher on a day-labor salary; I could have been fired at any moment. Eventually after surviving several cuts, the job of historian to the National Register of Historic Places became open and I filled it, cementing my place on the staff.

But I have no magical advice--I didn't get this degree for the job (I have a B. A. in History from Emory); I didn't go to grad school to get the job. I just got it by sheer luck. I am a great believer in fate. You have to be at the right place at the right time and if you change anything things will have turned out different. What if Mrs. Jewett had not been working that day? It was meant to be: The career of a lifetime just by a chance remark by a friend.

Q: Your column on genealogy in the *AJC* is one of the longest-running genealogy columns in the United States. How did your column come about?

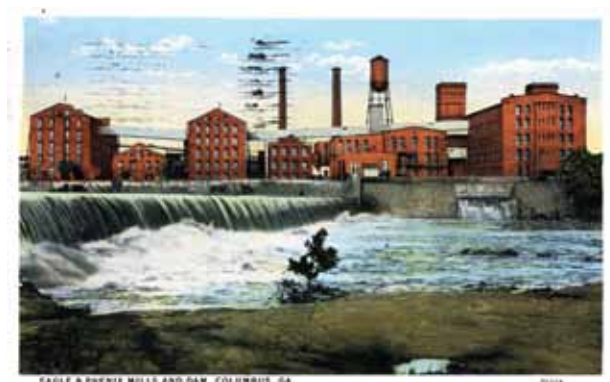
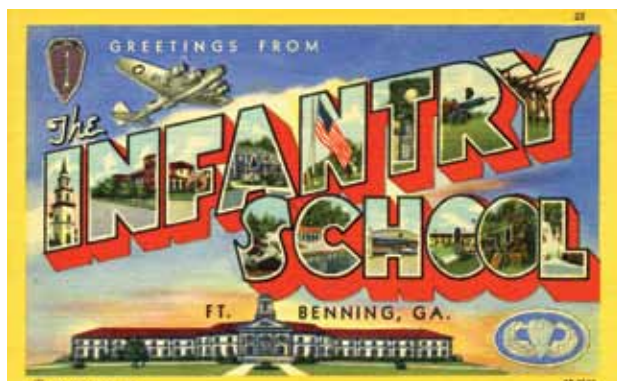


Another long story, another twist of fate.

In 1976 I was working for *Georgia Life* magazine part time doing an off and on series on the genealogy of Georgia governors and their wives, as well as other genealogy articles. Mrs. Ann E. Lewis, the editor, suggested I do one on Jimmy Carter since he was running for president. After he won, the article was published and it brought me national attention. In January 1977 the *Atlanta Journal Magazine* did an article on Carter's roots, based in part on my material. I was able to consult with them and add other stuff. Then I got interviewed by the *National Enquirer* and the *New Yorker*. I was also mentioned on Paul Harvey's radio show. After that, the *Atlanta Journal's* Margaret Shannon called and asked if I would consider writing a column on genealogy. Again FATE played a big hand in that. I thought about it, did some draft columns, and my weekly column started on May 8, 1977, and is still running. That is over half a lifetime ago now. It's just part of my life.

Q: Growing up in Columbus, GA did you become interested in the history of your hometown?

Through genealogy and local history linked to genealogy, I became interested in Columbus's history and have done two books with Arcadia Publishing: *Columbus, Georgia, in Vintage Postcards* (2001) and *Fort Benning, Images of America Series* (2003). I have also been a frequent contributor to the local genealogy/history journal, *Muscogiana*, sponsored by the Muscogee Genealogical Society. It's a great publication.



Q: Do you have any current projects you are excited about?

Well, being a "retired person" is much of a misnomer, hence getting an award for lifetime achievement makes me think some folks may think I have retired from life and research. I have been most excited recently in the genealogy and early history of Sir James Wright, the last royal/colonial governor of Georgia. Who would have thought that his background had so many cover-ups? Several others are involved as well. It is very exciting. When we find the answers it will be a mini-series.

Q: You currently sit on the Friends of Georgia Archives board. Can you give us an update on the work FOGAH has been doing to keep the Georgia Archives open and accessible to the public?

I am also Co-chair of the Coalition to Preserve the Georgia Archives with Kaye Minchew of LaGrange. We self-appointed ourselves in summer 2011 not knowing what we would be getting into. We were hit on September 13, 2012, with the announcement that due to budget issues, the Georgia Archives would have to close to the public.

The Coalition is made up of a number of partners and one of these is FOGAH. They agreed to proceed with hiring a consulting firm to work out the best ways to get money in the budget to keep the Archives open. But it took a lot of grassroots efforts from the public, the professional associations, and the members of the coalition partners, to get this done. There is a lot still to be done in future years. I have 1,000 emails in storage to show this struggle and what it took.

Q: How does it feel to be a Berrien Award Winner?

It is great to be honored for one's life-time achievements, especially while still alive. It even amazes me sometimes to reflect back at all the fun I have had while being paid to do it. All the great things that have come to me have been accidental – I did not seek them out, just like this award. It's really a great feeling to be honored and to be surprised. I rarely get surprised.

In reflecting on the careers of some of the past winners, I feel that GHS has selected people that really have made an impact on Georgia history and on GHS, and I am glad to be a part of that group. When I returned from England in December 1972 at the end of my several years in the U.S. Air Force, with no real career in mind, who would have thought forty years later that all the above would have happened to me. Some things you cannot plan, you just have to be prepared and be the right person at the right time in the right place. Georgia was my place.

Sophia Sineath is the Education Coordinator at the Georgia Historical Society and Editor of Georgia History Today. She can be reached at ssineath@georgiahistory.com.

Pictured above: Historic Columbus postcards from the personal collection of Ken Thomas. Ken is currently president of the Georgia Postcard Club.

Pictured on previous page: GHS's copies of reports written by Thomas during his time at DNR.



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STATE OF HISTORY

A New Chapter for the Georgia Archives

by W. Todd Groce, Ph.D.

If you haven't noticed, something big happened recently in Atlanta. No, we're not talking about the NCAA basketball championship. It's something even bigger, with repercussions that will last for decades to come.

During the 2013 Legislative Session, the Georgia General Assembly approved a bill transferring oversight of the Georgia Archives away from its traditional home, the Secretary of State (where it has been managed since 1932), to the University System of Georgia. The move makes Georgia the only state in the Union whose state archives will be administered by its university system, governed by a non-elected Board of Regents.

This momentous decision was the culmination of a process that went back several years. Dwindling revenue

meant that state agencies were under enormous pressure to cut operating budgets and prioritize their services. With each successive budget, funding for the State Archives got smaller and smaller, until it reached a point where it was barely able to function.

And then the bottom fell out last fall. Secretary of State Brian Kemp announced that due to another round of mandated budget cuts he was forced to lay off most of the remaining staff and restrict public access to the State Archives by appointment only. It was not the outcome he wanted, he said, but he was left with no other choice.

Reaction to Secretary Kemp's decision ranged from stunned disbelief to anger. The "Coalition to Preserve the Georgia Archives" swung into action. Consisting of



a variety of archival and genealogical organizations, the Coalition was co-chaired by Kaye Minchew, director of the Troup County Archives, and Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. former DNR Historic Preservation division historian and the leading genealogist in the state.

The resulting public outcry organized by the Coalition brought the issue to the attention of Gov. Nathan Deal. Deal offered an imminently practical solution. He fixed the short-term problem by redirecting funds in the current fiscal year budget to keep the doors open and prevent any further loss of access. To solve the longer-term problem he proposed transferring the State Archives away from Secretary of State to the University System of Georgia, where it was considered a better fit within state government.

Accordingly, a bill formalizing the transfer passed both the House and Senate and was signed by the Governor. Efforts to restore funding were less successful. The final FY14 operating budget is \$4.6 million—\$800,000 less than the \$5.4 million the Coalition said was necessary to properly administer the Archives.

Nevertheless, the Coalition won its battle to preserve the State Archives. But many questions still remain. Will the State continue to archive its records in its current building in Morrow or will it eventually be moved to another location? How many positions will be restored? What hours will it be open to the public? With limited resources available, what functions will receive priority?

State and national archives serve as a cornerstone

of democracy. As the repository of the records that document and reveal the inner workings of our government, they provide the people with a window on the activities of our leaders. More than just a source for history, state and national archives provide a form of accountability in a democratic system that authoritarian regimes simply do not permit. There is a reason why the people of Iran and North Korea are denied access to their government archives.

So everyone, not just genealogists and historians, has a stake in the future of the State Archives. And as this new chapter for the State Archives unfolds, we need to be vigilant but realistic about what can be achieved. The FY14 budget results demonstrate that transferring the State Archives to the University System may be a better alternative, but it is not a panacea. Indeed, going from being a small part of the Secretary of State to an even smaller part of a much larger University System will present as many new challenges as opportunities.

For now we can rejoice that the Georgia Archives is rescued. The goal of the next year will be to reorganize it under new management. It's a tough assignment and not every decision will be popular. Those now responsible for managing the people's records will need to figure out the most efficient way to operate within the "new normal" of a much smaller state budget and continue to make the documentary record of Georgia's government available to all of us.

W. Todd Groce, Ph.D., is President and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society.

Pictured left: Georgia Archives Building in Morrow. Courtesy of the Georgia Archives.

Pictured above: Governor Deal signing HB 287 into law on May 6, 2013.

MILESTONES

2013 Georgia History Festival



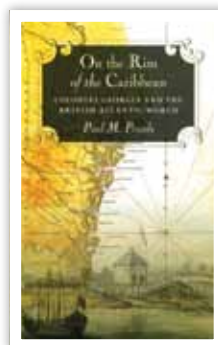
The Georgia Historical Society observed the anniversary of the founding of Georgia with its annual *Georgia History Festival*, held throughout the month of February. Events included the Kickoff at the Capitol event in Atlanta, Keynote lecture on 2013 Featured Historical Figure John C. Frémont, the Colonial Faire & Muster at Wormsloe Historic Site, Super Museum Sunday, the annual Georgia Day Parade, and the induction by Georgia Governor Nathan Deal of the 2013 Georgia Trustees, Truett Cathy and Herman Russell (pictured left) at the Trustees Gala in Savannah.

The Frances and Beverly DuBose Foundation Grant

The Georgia Historical Society has received a \$150,000 grant from The Frances and Beverly DuBose Foundation to enhance history education by creating expanded online access to GHS collections and educational resources for teachers. Foundation funds will be applied toward the development of an online searchable database of GHS archival finding aids. Funds will also underwrite the creation of a Web Resource Guide for educators and researchers. The Frances and Beverly DuBose Foundation grant is part of GHS's \$7.5 million Campaign to Share Georgia History—a capacity-enhancing initiative that will equip the Society with the facilities, staffing structure, and technological infrastructure necessary to continue to fulfill its educational mission in the 21st century.

174th Annual Meeting & Garden Party

The Georgia Historical Society held its 174th Annual Meeting and Garden Party in Savannah on May 2, 2013. The annual meeting, held at Congregation Mickve Israel, included a keynote address delivered by Dr. Paul Pressley on his new book *On the Rim of the Caribbean: Colonial Georgia and the British Atlantic World* (UGA Press). Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. received the John Macpherson Berrien Lifetime Achievement Award, Ellen Bolch the Sarah Nichols Pickney Volunteer of the Year Award, and Tom Barton the History in the Media Award. The Garden Party was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cortese.



New Board Elected

The Georgia Historical Society elected five of Georgia's top business and philanthropic leaders to its Board of Curators at the 2013 Annual Meeting on May 2, 2013.



ELLEN B. BOLCH is President and CEO of THA Group, a company that provides Medicare-certified home health care, private home care, non-profit hospice home care, and telehealth. She currently serves as the chair of the Propriety Association on the board of National Association for Home and Hospice (NAHC) and the Home Care & Hospice Political Action Committee. Mrs. Bolch is chair of the South Carolina Home Health Care & Hospice Association's Board of Directors and a member of the Georgia Association of Home Health Agencies. Mrs. Bolch serves on many local boards, including the Bethesda Union Society, the Chatham Club, and the Savannah Country Day School Board of Visitors.



W. PAUL BOWERS is president and CEO of Georgia Power, the largest subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the nation's largest producers of electricity. Mr. Bowers is chairman of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, chair of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education and vice chair of the Georgia Department of Economic Development. He is also a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's energy policy council and a trustee for The Woodruff Arts Center. Mr. Bowers holds a BS from the University of West Florida, a master's degree in management from Troy University, and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Advanced Management program.



WALTER M. "SONNY" DERISO, JR. is the Founding Chairman and a Director of Atlantic Capital Bank and Atlantic Capital Bancshares, Inc. Previously, Mr. Deriso served as Vice Chairman of Synovus Financial Corp and as CEO and director of Security Bank & Trust Company of Albany. Mr. Deriso graduated from Emory University College with a BA in History and received his J.D. with Distinction from Emory University School of Law. Currently, Mr. Deriso is chairman of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, a Trustee of Emory University, and board member for Post Properties, Inc., Georgia Bankers Association, Foundation for the Methodist Children's home of South Georgia Conference, and Georgia Chamber of Commerce.



LEAH WARD SEARS was the first woman and the youngest person ever to serve on the Georgia Supreme Court when she was appointed by Gov. Zell Miller in 1992. In 2005 she became the first African-American female chief justice of any state supreme court in the nation. Justice Sears earned her B.A. from Cornell, her law degree from Emory, and an LLM from the University of Virginia. She serves on many boards and is the founder of the Battered Women's project in Columbus. After retiring from the Georgia Supreme Court in 2009 after 27 years on the bench, Justice Sears became a partner with the law firm of Schiff Hardin LLP and is a Distinguished Fellow in Family Law at the Institute for American Values.



NEELY YOUNG is co-owner and publisher of Georgia Trend magazine. He is the former CEO of Morris Newspaper Corporation. The Cedartown native and UGA graduate has served as President of the Georgia Press Association, Associated Press of Georgia, the Clayton County Rotary Club, and chaired the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce. He is the former Chairman of the Atlanta Region Salvation Army and serves on several other boards including UGA's Henry W. Grady School of Journalism, Georgia Press, UGA board of Visitors, Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

Campaign to Share Georgia History—MAKING GEORGIA'S HISTORY ACCESSIBLE

By Sophia Sineath

It is not enough to have the nation's oldest and most distinguished collection of materials relating exclusively to Georgia history – you have to find a way to share it. Sharing Georgia's history is at the heart of GHS's mission, and it is the impetus for the \$7.5 million *Campaign to Share Georgia History* capacity building initiative. Funds raised as a part of the *Campaign to Share Georgia History* will equip GHS with the physical facilities, staff, and technology necessary not only to collect and examine Georgia's history, but also to teach Georgia's history to students of all ages across the state and nation.

To date, GHS has raised approximately \$5.7 million toward our \$7.5 million goal, leaving \$1.8 million to go. Of the fundraising goal, \$3.9 million has been set aside for the acquisition and renovation of the Jepson House Education Center. GHS's first facility expansion in 40 years, the Jepson House Education Center will be the place from which all GHS educational programming and services will be planned and delivered around the state. The facility is named in honor of Savannah philanthropists Robert S. and Alice Jepson, the champions of education who helped acquire the building through their fundraising efforts.

The remaining \$3.6 million is dedicated to augmenting GHS's programs and organizational infrastructure—getting the right people and technology required to make the treasures housed in the library and archives accessible and relevant for K12 teachers, researchers, professors, university students, and any Georgian who wants to better understand our shared past.

Recently, as part of the *Campaign to Share Georgia History* GHS received two awards aimed specifically at

expanding online access to GHS resources. The first award, a \$68,488 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)*, will support GHS in a two-year venture to create a searchable online database of 1,600 archival finding aids to be hosted by the Digital Library of Georgia.

Lynette Stoudt, Director of Library and Archives, says of this project's impact, "The creation of this publically available database will better serve both on- and off-site researchers by facilitating comprehensive online searching in collection inventories and better prepare the organization for the next step in sharing collections through digitization of archival materials."

These digital finding aids will include detailed information about the content of individual collections, links to digitized items on the GHS catalog, and links to related educational resources like the *New Georgia Encyclopedia* and *Today in Georgia History*. Linking together archival finding aids and educational resources will not only increase access to GHS materials, but it will also promote a better understanding of each collection's historical context.

Todd Groce, GHS President and CEO, explains the impact of awards like the NHPRC on GHS's ability to effectively share Georgia's history: "An understanding of the past is crucial to our future as a nation. That's why it's imperative that we make history accessible to students and teachers. This grant will allow GHS to deliver unprecedented online access to our archival collection descriptions and lay the necessary foundation for future digitization of archival materials."

The second award, a \$150,000 grant from The Frances and Beverly DuBose Foundation, will also support the finding aid online database project and underwrite the creation of a Web Resource Guide for educators and researchers. It is increasingly difficult for teachers, who have limited time and energy, to confront the overwhelming amount of digital resources available online. In order to make GHS's online resources truly accessible, they need to be easily navigable. The guide will serve as a comprehensive theme-driven index of publications, collections, historical markers, and existing online educational resources created by GHS.

The Web Resource Guide will also serve as an internal tool to help GHS make searching our website more intuitive and interactive. Eventually, educators coming to the website looking for information on a particular subject, time period, or historical figure will be able to access all online materials related to that topic, ranging from historical markers to digitized collection items, from one simple keyword search.

To learn more about these projects, or to make a gift in support of the Campaign to Share Georgia History, please contact GHS or visit our website at www.georgiahistory.com.

Sophia Sineath is the Education Coordinator at the Georgia Historical Society and Editor of Georgia History Today. She can be reached at ssineath@georgiahistory.com.

**The NHPRC is a 15-member body established in 1934 and chaired by the Archivists of the United States. Affiliated with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) it supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States.*



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