Sustaining the Legacy of
RAY C. ANDERSON

Taking Your Place in the Next Century Initiative
Help Conserve a Georgia Gem
Strength for the Ages
by W. Todd Groce, Ph.D.

In recent years, we have all heard and read stories about tremendous financial difficulties that have led venerable non-profit institutions to the brink of collapse. When this happens, we often ask, why didn’t anyone see this coming and do something to prevent it? All too often, the underlying cause is an inadequate endowment.

A good rule of thumb is that the distribution from an institution’s endowment should cover at least half of its annual operating expense. While this is no guarantee of success, it certainly makes it less likely that there will be a collapse due to financial problems. It’s a lesson we all need to learn—and one not lost on the Georgia Historical Society.

As we prepare to enter our third century as Georgia’s premier, independent statewide historical institution, GHS stands at a crossroads. Nearly twenty years ago, we took a voluntary state privatization, giving us control once again over our own destiny and producing the most explosive growth in the history of the institution. Now we need to secure that success and lay the foundation for even greater achievements.

To reach this goal, the Board of Curators has approved the launch of the Next Century Initiative, an ambitious campaign designed to propel the institution forward, create new opportunities for growth, and ensure its future stability and independence.

The Next Century Initiative has two components, capital and endowment. Of the $13 million goal, $1 million will be allocated for renovating the Research Center in Savannah. These funds will allow us to improve archival storage and enhance research services by implementing several deferred maintenance projects and repurposing space formerly utilized as administrative offices now transferred to the Jepson House Education Center.

The cornerstone of the Initiative, however, is a strong endowment. Currently, the GHS endowment stands at $8 million, a good beginning but hardly what we needed to be truly independent and ensure the long-term financial security that will allow us to see our dreams become a reality.

The Initiative will add an additional $12 million, bringing the endowment total to $20 million. These funds will properly support current programs and incubate new ones. We can teach more students, train more teachers, create new knowledge through research, and improve the lives of all Georgians by offering them a deeper understanding of our past.

Many of the amazing programs and services we offer today were created with grants and operate on annual fundraising campaigns. Imagine what could have been—how many more students could be reached, how many more documents could be preserved and made accessible for research, how many more stories could be told through historical markers—with a secure stream of revenue that only an endowment can provide.

To achieve this goal we need your support. Whether it’s a bequest in your will or a donation during your lifetime, by joining us in this noble endeavor you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your gift will teach history and make it accessible to everyone.

Understanding our nation’s history has never been more important than now. The challenges of the future require problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and an appreciation for our democratic ideals, all of which can be acquired by studying history. The rising generation needs to be prepared for the world they will inherit. Through the Next Century Initiative, together we will ensure they are ready.

To our friends and volunteer members: It’s time to act. For more information, please visit www.georgiahistory.org or call 706-522-0066.

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

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Photo by Caroline Joe, from the Ray C. Anderson Papers, MS 2603

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As the Georgia Historical Society kicks off its Next Century Initiative, seeking to ensure the legacy of all Georgians who have shaped our history, it is most appropriate to highlight the Ray C. Anderson Collection, MS 2603. Few other collections contain so compelling a story as this one—a Georgia industrialist becoming an environmental champion. It is the story of a company embracing a higher purpose and becoming a force for good in the world. It is a story worthy of being told and preserved.

The Young Ray
Ray Christie Anderson was born in 1934 in West Point, Georgia, the third son of an assistant postmaster and a former schoolteacher. He was a strong student, driven to be the best in his class, and he also excelled as an athlete, earning letters in basketball, baseball, and football. Whatever Ray did, he did well.

As the youngest child growing up in a family of modest means, Ray’s only hope of attending college was a football scholarship. As an avid Georgia Tech fan, he set his sights on becoming a Yellow Jacket. In 1952, his dream came true when Coach Bobby Dodd offered him a scholarship to play football at Georgia Tech.

Unfortunately, Ray’s athletic career was short lived. An injury his freshman year left him unable to play, but Coach Dodd allowed him to keep his scholarship if he maintained his grades. Ray devoted himself to his studies, graduating with honors with an Industrial Engineering degree in 1956. He was a lifelong supporter of Georgia Tech from that day forward, always remembering the gift of education that Coach Dodd gave him. He was also the most die-hard Yellow Jacket sports fan you would ever meet.

After graduation, Ray returned to his roots in Troup County, Georgia, launching a successful career in textiles. He learned the carpet trade through fourteen-plus years at various positions with Deering-Milliken and Callaway Mills. While comfortable and successful in his young career, Ray was not content. He was a visionary without a vision.

Founding of Interface and Ray’s Epiphany
In the early 1970s, Ray was passed over for a promotion that he thought he deserved. Feeling slighted, he tapped into an entrepreneurial spirit burning inside of him. All he needed was the kindling of a good idea.

On a business trip to Europe, Ray encountered the concept of free-lay carpet tiles—carpet that was cut into squares and laid much like floor tile. The technology captured his imagination, and he immediately saw the enhanced flexibility it offered compared to conventional broadloom carpet. Given that it was the beginning of the evolution of the “modern” office with all
of its attendant wires for computers and communication, he believed it would sell in the United States. So in 1973, he put his family’s savings on the line and founded Carpets International—Georgia, Inc., the precursor to Interface, Inc.

Before long, the business took off. Interface became a publicly traded company in 1983, which fueled an aggressive global expansion. By 1994, Interface had succeeded beyond anyone’s wildest dreams. Now the world’s largest manufacturer of carpet tile, Interface pushed global sales close to $1 billion per year. Now 60 years old, Ray thought about retiring. His story, however, was about to take him down a very different path.

That same year, Ray was challenged with a question that would define the rest of his life: “What is your company doing for the environment?” Seeking a good answer to that question, he read a book by Paul Hawken, The Ecology of Commerce. The book changed business and industry as the sector most responsible for the greatest environmental degradation in the world. It also challenged business and industry as the only sector capable of leading society out of its environmental crisis.

Reading this book was an emotional experience for Ray. He felt convicted as a plunderer of the earth, and he would go on to describe it as his “spear in the chest” epiphany. He now knew that Interface had to change and show the entire industrial world that environmental sustainability was a moral imperative. He soon learned that it was also good for business.

Ray was the first to admit that Interface’s associates and the company’s investors thought he had gone “around the bend.” His direct message and forceful personality made it clear, however, that he was not turning back. One by one, the company’s stakeholders agreed to join in this new quest.

The vision was simple. To become truly sustainable, Interface would have to climb Mount Sustainability, a metaphorical mountain higher than Everest. The peak represented the point at which the company would do no harm to the environment. Beyond that point lay the dream of a regenerative enterprise, at which the company would do no harm to the environment.

Ray’s family has embraced this gift. Though he left no instructions on how his Foundation should be managed, his family knew that his values and vision should be the guiding light. Ray’s was a legacy defined by seeking harmony with nature and leaving a healthy planet for “Tomorrow’s Child,” the representation of all of the generations still to come. Accordingly, the Ray C. Anderson Foundation is committed to philanthropy that harmonizes society, business, and the environment for the present and future generations.

**Preserving Ray’s Legacy and Story**

This Foundation is not alone in the task of advancing Ray’s legacy. That responsibility is shared with Interface and its thousands of employees across the globe. It is also shared with the countless number of people who heard him speak and were moved by his message, and with those who even today learn of his story and are inspired to do their part in making our world a better place.

It was for this reason—continuing Ray’s story and inspiring others—that the Foundation and Interface decided to donate his papers to the Georgia Historical Society in 2015. We are honored to have them as partners and fellow storytellers, and we take pride in knowing that Ray’s collection will be made available to the public and forever preserved.

The collection contains approximately 150 cubic feet of artifacts, artwork, audiovisual materials, awards, correspondence, meeting materials, notes, pamphlets, photographic materials, reports, speeches, and writings. The collection also contains Ray’s book collection, which focuses on the topics of environment, sustainability, and business. GHS staff is currently in the process of arranging and describing the collection and it should be open for research by the fall of 2016. A portion of the collection will be digitized and made available in the GHS Digital Image Catalog.

We invite you to visit the Georgia Historical Society Research Center to explore, investigate, and study the treasures that Ray left behind. Hopefully, Ray’s legacy will inspire you and ignite your own passion for a more sustainable future for all.

Ray Anderson’s story will not be complete until all generations are assured of a healthy, sustainable future. We hope you will join us in creating that story.

From the editor:

The Ray C. Anderson collection was accompanied by a gift to the Next Century Initiative from the Ray C. Anderson Foundation to process and endow the collection—ensuring its care and accessibility for generations to come. If you would like to learn more about endowing a collection and the many other opportunities to give through the Next Century Initiative, see page 17.

Image Credits: GHS archivists Katharine Rapkin and Lindsay Shelton processing a scrapbook in the Ray Anderson Papers, MS 2603. Photo by Elyse Butler. Collection images on pages 3 and 4 are from the Ray C. Anderson Papers, MS 2603.
GHS staff works daily to accession, process, catalog, and make accessible the many rich collections we offer to researchers. The collections are housed in a closed, climate-controlled environment to ensure lasting preservation and our archivists use various techniques to ensure the long-term care of our collections, including proper handling, rehousing collections in archival-quality enclosures, removing harmful fasteners, reformatting, and encapsulating damaged items to prevent damage.

In addition to daily preservation activities at the Research Center, we also have several special projects that involve hiring professional conservators. Conservation is different from preservation in that conservation work counters existing damage to a collection item and often takes place in the confines of a conservation laboratory. Conservators have specialized training in using chemicals and administering highly technical treatments to stabilize and protect collection items. As with most cultural organizations, GHS does not house a conservation laboratory, so conservation work is largely outsourced.

Many of our special projects have been successfully funded through grants over the years, but for some projects, particularly conservation work, few outside funding sources exist. One example of an important special project is the conservation of the Hon. John Elliott Ward portrait. A GHS founder, Ward was born in Sunbury, Liberty County, Georgia, in 1814. His father, William Ward, was a member of the Puritan colony established in Midway and his mother, Annie McIntosh Ward, was the daughter of Major Lachlan McIntosh. Ward was admitted to the bar in 1835 and practiced law in Savannah.

Ward served in several key governmental positions, including Solicitor-General of the Eastern District, United States District Attorney, Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, President of the Georgia Senate, acting Lieutenant Governor of Georgia, Chairman of the Democratic National Convention, Mayor of Savannah, and was the first commander of the Irish Jasper Greens in 1842. He was also appointed as the U.S. Minister to China in 1859 and held the position until 1861 when he resigned after Georgia’s secession from the United States. Ward was a Democrat but was strongly opposed to secession. During the Civil War, he served as an agent for the Confederate Navy acquiring ironclad ships to break up the U.S. blockade. He moved to New York in 1866, where he continued to practice law until relocating back to Liberty County, where he died in 1902.

Last summer, GHS invited a team of professional conservators to survey portraits donated to the Society. In many cases, the circumstances under which the portraits were cared for and stored before coming to the Research Center are unknown. Using special lights and survey tools they documented several problem areas on the Ward Portrait related to the canvas, stretcher, paint layer, and other components of the artwork that require professional attention.

The conservation estimate for this portrait is several thousand dollars, but any contribution toward this project will help. As we embark on the Next Century Initiative campaign with the goals of increasing collection capacity and enhancing storage for portraits and other large format items, we hope you will consider helping us fund the conservation of this important piece of Georgia history and help save it for future generations.

For further information about this and other special project funding opportunities ranging from digitization, creating online access tools, and conservation projects please contact the Research Center at 912-651-2128.

Lynette Stoudt is Research Center Director at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at lstoudt@georgiahistory.com.

Savannah obituary described the 1910 funeral of Richard J. Nunn as “one of the most largely attended ever held in this city.” A renowned physician who insisted before a national audience that public-health policy should know “no caste, no creed...no color,” Nunn served prominently in the Georgia Historical Society—as a Curator and, later, as Second and then First Vice-President. Nunn was an immigrant, having been born in 1831 in Wexford, the most southeastern of Ireland’s historic thirty-two counties. That fact put him in good company, for by 1860 Wexford constituted by far the principal county of origin of Savannah’s Irish-born residents, who in their turn accounted for almost a quarter of the city’s white population.

Wexford family names—such as Corish, Kehoe, Murphy, Rossiter, and Stafford—still abound in Savannah, so one naturally wonders why Wexford became disproportionately represented in the city. To investigate the phenomenon, Georgia Southern University’s Center for Irish Research and Teaching (CIRT) and its Honors Program established a research project—the Wexford-Savannah Axis—on St. Patrick’s Day 2014. From the beginning, the Georgia Historical Society has been a formal research partner in the work, which is helping Savannah—and Georgia—better understand its Irish heritage.

The Georgia Historical Society’s collection of naturalization papers, city directories, tax documents, minute books, and a host of other documents are revealing a story not merely of immigration but also of integration into the multiethnic city that was mid-nineteenth-century Savannah. Although they faced challenges—not least the large-scale yellow fever outbreak of 1854—the Wexford families quickly gained a significant measure of acceptance, a fact that complicates the received Irish-American narrative of “No Irish Need Apply.”

Given that the Irish constituted one of the largest population influxes in Georgia’s antebellum history, the research findings have resonance across the Peach State...
and beyond. In addition, they provide data relevant to those formulating policies about present-day human migration. Memorable is a comment in the December 6, 1850, edition of the Savannah Morning News about “rarely...see[ing] a more respectable body of new comers from any portion of Europe” than “steerage passengers” from Wexford. The piece concludes, “May they realize their brightest anticipations of prosperity and happiness in their new home.”

According to Dr. Steven T. Engel, Director of the Georgia Southern University Honors Program, the Wexford-Savannah Axis student-researchers have come to regard the Georgia Historical Society as an academic home. “Mentored by the Research Center’s Director Lynette Stoudt and her team,” he says, “our students gain expertise in sourcing and analyzing relevant archival materials.”

The young people subsequently travel to Ireland, where they apply their new skills in such venues as the National Archives of Ireland. It was there, in a box of uncataloged papers not touched for more than a century, that undergraduate James Devlin discovered key documents, namely, correspondence from the leading Savannah cotton factor, Andrew Low II, to the head of one of the Wexford shipping companies. Quite possibly, those letters precipitated the unique Wexford-Savannah link.

As the Georgia Southern University researchers continue to work at and with the Georgia Historical Society, exciting outcomes are emerging from the Wexford-Savannah Axis research project. In mid-March 2016, responding to the historic transatlantic relationship now being revealed, a high-level delegation from Wexford visited Savannah to explore opportunities of mutual benefit, from business and trade to cultural exchanges and tourism. On behalf of the people of Wexford, the delegation’s members received the key of the city from the mayor. In addition, they visited the Research Center to express their county’s gratitude to the Georgia Historical Society for its indispensable role in the project.

In prospect is the launch of a mobile-friendly web experience that will allow various audiences—schoolchildren, heritage tourists, and academic researchers—to explore aspects of the Wexford-Savannah Axis in a dynamic, compelling way.

Dr. Howard Keeley is Director of the Center for Irish Research & Teaching at Georgia Southern University. He can be reached at hkeeley@georgiasouthern.edu.

Editor's Note: Want to support innovative partnerships like the Wexford-Savannah Axis? Help GHS secure its commitment to serving the people of Georgia in the 21st-century and beyond by participating in the Next Century Initiative. Find out more on page 17.

IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):
Georgia Southern University students at the GHS Research Center, May 2014.
Georgia Southern University Honors student at the Research Center, May 2015.
Tybee Railway Company Script Number One, 1887.
William-Kehoe Stock Certificate, MS 1148.
December 10, 1850 article in the Savannah Morning News.
Saturday, November 2, 1850 advertisement in Wexford newspaper. Courtesy of the Wexford-County Archives.
Don Waters, a member of the GHS Board of Curators, grew up on Anderson Street in Savannah when it was a thriving community in its own right. "Waters Avenue, nearby, was a baby Broughton Street," he recalls, "with schools, homes, businesses, churches, parks, all right there."

Don has been impressed and inspired by the GHS’s Trustees Gala and the ways in which it has brought together—and honored—the state’s business and political leaders. "The year that Tom Cousins and Andrew Young were honored as Georgia Trustees, I was inspired listening to them talk about their work in Atlanta, particularly Tom Cousins’s Eastlake project," he said. "I thought it could be a great model for what we’re trying to do here, bringing together economic and community leaders in Savannah to bridge the racial and economic divide and create a new vision for our city. When civic and business leaders work together we can do and achieve incredible things."

Don’s mission in his business relationships, his philanthropy, and board service is focused on one thing: bringing people together to create a more educated Georgia. As he says, "we’re not competing with Alabama and Mississippi, we’re competing on a national and global stage with New York, Illinois, California, and Texas. That’s our competition. We need to ensure economic and educational prosperity for all Georgians going forward."

Don and his wife Cindy have two children and four grandchildren, so this is a personal mission for him as well.

Waters is a product of Georgia schools himself, beginning with Romana Riley Grammar School on Anderson Street, then Savannah High School (Class of ‘71), Armstrong College, and finally the University of Georgia Law School.

Don first joined the board of Brasserel USA in 1990 and three years later became Chairman and CEO. He became President in 1998, assuming responsibility of day-to-day operations.

Before taking over at Brasserel USA, Don practiced as a Certified Public Accountant, as a partner with Price Waterhouse & Co., and as an attorney with Hunter Maclean, where he worked with the legendary Malcolm “Mac” Maclean, the bridge-building mayor of Savannah during the city’s turbulent Civil Rights years.

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It’s now all gone, but Don is leading the charge to revive his old neighborhood, taking a page from Tom Cousins’ more famous Eastlake community project in Atlanta: “All I’m doing is stealing other people’s good ideas,” he says with a laugh. What he modestly leaves out, however, is that while anyone can steal an idea, Waters is acting upon it and succeeding.

Don Waters’s day job is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Brasseler USA, Inc., an international manufacturer of dental and medical surgical instrumentation. While running a global business would keep most people busy, Don Waters isn’t most people. He is a leading force, with fellow GHS Board member Reed Dulany, behind the Savannah Classical Academy, a charter school now housed in the former St. Pius X building in Don’s old neighborhood, at 705 E. Anderson Street.

“The school’s mission resonated with me,” he says, “with its focus on reading, writing, speaking, creating, and valuing the importance of empathy, perseverance, diligence. It’s a project I very much support and want to be part of.”

Don also serves on the State Board of Regents and is passionate about education and the role that it plays in changing lives. It’s also why he’s involved now with the Georgia Historical Society. “I believe all leaders must be renaissance leaders with broad interests that inform and positively impact the culture of their organizations and their communities,” he says. “GHS is the depository of our history, in general, and our culture, in particular.”

His involvement with GHS can be traced to his deep-seated belief in the power of education and history to change lives: “I believe it’s important to who we are as a society to understand not just history, but also why and how Georgia is different in a good way from other states and other cultures. The Georgia Historical Society’s motto, Non Sibi Sed Aliis—Not for Self but for Others—is a core precept of what’s in the bones of most Georgians and what sets us apart. This is why education is so important to me. Improved education leads to economic prosperity. No welfare program will ever outpace a good job or a career.”

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Don Waters is generous with his time and his resources. In addition to his service on the GHS Board of Curators and the Board of Regents, and his commitment to the Savannah Classical Academy, Don serves on numerous other boards, including as chair of the Chatham County Hospital Authority, which owns the operations of Memorial University Medical Center.

His commitment to education, philanthropy, business, and building community provides the rubric for Don’s servant-based leadership. “As a lawyer, I believed that if you have to litigate, you’ve failed. I like to break down barriers and bring people together; we need to overcome the silo effect too often seen at so many levels of government. I’m working to build ethical servant-based leadership that embraces the business community, to break down factionalism, with the goal of creating a better life for Georgians through improved education and generating jobs.”

Don’s commitment to the Georgia Historical Society reflects not only his belief in GHS’s educational mission, but is part of his philosophy of success. “Always try to make other people successful,” he says. “If you’ll do that, in every circumstance, with everybody you deal with, if you try to make them successful, then you’ll succeed.”

A lot of people are succeeding because of Don Waters.

Stan Deaton, Ph.D. is The Dr. Elaine R. Andrews Distinguished Historian at the Georgia Historical Society. Visit Stan’s blog, deatondeath.com.

Editor’s Note: Don is demonstrating his belief in history by participating in the GHS Next Century Initiative. His generous gift will support current operations as well as the GHS endowment, thereby advancing research and education and strengthening GHS to fulfill its mission for generations to come. See page 17 to find out how you can follow Don’s example and take your place in the Next Century Initiative.

“Like many of us, his education began at home, with hard-working and loving parents. “My father, a combat veteran who fought in Europe soon after D-Day, was the greatest influence of my life,” Don says. His father later was injured on the job, and his mother began working at the Savannah Public Library. She came home every night with an armload of history and biography for her son to read. It sparked a lifelong and intense love of history.

His parents and his early love of history both shaped his philosophy of management later on: “Look for great role models, like Malcolm Maclean, and try to be a great role model. My parents taught me the values of discipline and hard work and gave us a loving and supportive home, though they were challenged by great health and economic issues. Mac Maclean was one of my great role models, demonstrating the power of doing great things by bringing civic and business leaders together. Malcolm showed me that intellectual curiosity and intelligence applied in a practical way is an unbeatable combination. He trained me to be results-oriented and to demand excellence.”

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TAKING YOUR PLACE IN THE Next Century Initiative

By Caroline Stevens

Throughout this issue, you have learned more about the Next Century Initiative, GHS’s $13 million campaign to secure our commitment to serving the people of Georgia in the 21st century and beyond.

You may be wondering to yourself, “How can I be a part of this campaign and do my part to ensure a future for history education and research?”

To that end, we have listed several questions below that we typically hear from our supporters, along with our responses. Hopefully, these will resonate with you as you consider taking your place in this important campaign.

My family has deep roots in Georgia. I have family papers and materials in my attic that should be properly archived. How can I ensure that these materials are cared for and preserved for generations to come?

I am working with my lawyers and financial advisors on my estate planning. I want to leave a legacy to GHS, but I do not have the liquidity to make a cash gift now. How can I support GHS’s future?

Consider supporting the philanthropic endowment with a planned gift. Supporting the endowment is a visionary and generous act that provides perpetual support in fulfillment of GHS’s educational mission. Planned gifts, such as bequests, charitable trusts, and many others, allow you to support an institution you believe in while also enjoying advantageous tax benefits.

GHS’s Research Center is a treasure in our state. Being a beautiful building, it houses an incredible collection of Georgia’s history. How can I make sure this treasure is protected?

Consider making a bequest to the Research Center. The Research Center is at the cornerstone of our mission to collect, examine, and teach Georgia history. Support for the Research Center will safeguard this national treasure for years to come.

I look forward to reading every Georgia History Quarterly from cover to cover. How can I make sure this important journal continues to publish the finest scholarship on Georgia’s history?

Consider creating an endowment to support the continued publication of the Georgia Historical Quarterly. To directly support a certain facet of GHS’s mission, you have the option of endowing a position, program, or facility at GHS. Such restricted endowment gifts enable those important aspects of the institution to continue in perpetuity.

I believe that history education is crucial to our nation’s future and that a strong endowment is imperative to securing GHS’s future. How can I make an immediate, yet lasting, impact on this institution and its mission?

Consider making a cash gift to the endowment now. For a minimum of $5,000, supporters may honor or memorialize an individual, family, or entity by creating a named fund. Gifts of $50,000 and above are recognized with engraved bronze plaques in the Research Center’s Reading Room, and cast bronze plaques recognizing gifts of $100,000 and larger are displayed prominently on the pilasters in the Reading Room mezzanine level.

Finally, please let us know if you have named GHS as a beneficiary in your estate so we may thank you and properly recognize your generousity now!

However you choose to support the Next Century Initiative, know that you will be creating an enduring legacy that will benefit Georgians for generations to come. If you have any questions about supporting the campaign, or would like to learn more about the options discussed above, please contact Todd Groce, Development Officer, at todd.groce@georgiahistory.org or 404.651.2125.

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Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is the premier independent statewide institution responsible for collecting, examining, and teaching Georgia history.