GEORGIA HISTORY TODAY

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Twenty years ago this summer the Georgia Historical Society regained control over its destiny and fundamentally changed how GHS fulfilled its mission and how history is taught and understood in this state.

In the reading room of Hodgson Hall on June 28, 1997, Secretary of State Lewis Massey and GHS President Laurie Abbott signed an agreement privatizing the Georgia Historical Society’s Research Center. The privatization was a voluntary one, negotiated by Massey and his successor, Cathy Cox, and approved by Governor Zell Miller and the Georgia legislature.

After thirty years of state control, GHS once again had direct operational oversight of its most important asset and the cornerstone of its educational and research mission—the 4 million documents, records, photographs, rare books, artifacts, architectural drawings and maps that make up the oldest collection of Georgia history materials in the nation.

Some worried that privatization would have dire consequences. Maintaining the current arrangement with the state seemed the safest route, as launching out on our own meant a dramatic decrease in government funding. It meant raising enormous sums of money from private sources and being accountable once again for the fate of the institution and its mission.

As it turned out, the naysayers need not have worried. No event in the institution’s 178 years of continuous operation has had such a salutary effect on its direction, growth, and financial well-being.

Over the past twenty years, GHS annual revenue has grown from $200,000 to over $3 million. The GHS campus has doubled in size, as has our membership. The endowment has grown from $500,000 to over $3 million. The private-public partnership forged in 1997 unleashed the potential in GHS, allowing us to become one of the nation’s most robust and influential state historical societies. Today tens of thousands of researchers, students, and teachers receive the assistance they need to effectively teach and interpret our state’s history. Through the power of history, they are building a better future for the people of Georgia, and will for many years to come.

But the work is not yet finished. The final phase of the privatization is building an endowment to permanently replace the state funding and provide a springboard for future growth. I hope you will join us in this endeavor so that twenty years from now in 2037, we can look back and say that June 28, 1997, is truly a date worth remembering.
When I tell people that I am a historian of science and technology, they often look puzzled. Everybody has an idea of what a historian does, and many enjoy reading and listening to stories about the past, particularly when it deals with major events in their nation’s history. The idea that science and technology may have a history is somewhat more difficult to grasp, perhaps because it seems so totally irrelevant to the present. After all, as science advances, old beliefs are found to be inadequate or even false. New technological devices are clearly better than their predecessors. Why bother with describing the history of the rockets that took men to the moon now that we have successfully developed them? Why study the views of the ancients who thought that the earth was the center of the universe when only a few cranks are still convinced that the sun rotates daily around our planet?

One important reason is that history teaches us not to take present scientific and technological achievements for granted (as these questions do). It teaches us about the many twists and turns, the false starts, and the broken dreams that lay on the way to building a safe and reliable spacecraft (to continue with my example).

The challenges engineers faced when they began to develop propulsion systems for missiles in the 1930s were technical of course, but they were also social, industrial, and political. Historically, rockets are derived from guided missiles. The first guided missiles used successfully in war were built in Nazi Germany—not in the United States—by Wernher Von Braun and his team. This is not because the United States lacked the expertise. On the contrary, American physicist Robert Goddard was far ahead of his German competitors in making major technological contributions to rocketry in the 1920s and 1930s.

Goddard died in obscurity, though, while Von Braun became a key figure in the Apollo Program that put men on the moon in 1969. Von Braun persuaded American forces to bring 125 of his best engineers to the United States at the end of World War II, and it was he and his team that built the mighty Saturn.
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is normal in science at the research frontier spills over into the political stakes of the results are so high, the controversy that modeling long-term changes in climate and the social and scientific literature. When the issue is as complicated as process is usually obscured to laypeople because the debate community to build a consensus about where the truth lies. This it takes a lot of time, effort, and money for the research scientific truths about the world are born contested and that debate over climate change teaches us anything, it is that The same is true when talking about science. If the current the emergence and popularity of the desktop. decline: one reason was its failure to adapt rapidly enough to lead to a company like Apple. Multiple factors led to IBM’s not others. Why, for instance, a global giant like IBM lost its some technological choices that lead to breakthroughs and to probe more deeply into how and why a society makes a leap into uncertainty. The history of technology forces us success is contingent, that things might have turned out otherwise, and that technological innovation often involves a leap into uncertainty. The history of technology forces us to probe more deeply into how and why a society makes some technological choices that lead to breakthroughs and not others. Why, for instance, a global giant like IBM lost its lead to a company like Apple. Multiple factors led to IBM’s one reason was its failure to adapt rapidly enough to the emergence and popularity of the desktop.

The history of technology teaches us that even spectacular success is contingent, that things might have turned out otherwise, and that technological innovation often involves a leap into uncertainty. The history of technology forces us to probe more deeply into how and why a society makes some technological choices that lead to breakthroughs and not others. Why, for instance, a global giant like IBM lost its lead to a company like Apple. Multiple factors led to IBM’s one reason was its failure to adapt rapidly enough to the emergence and popularity of the desktop.

The same is true when talking about science. If the current debate over climate change teaches us anything, it is that scientific truths about the world are born contested and that it takes a lot of time, effort, and money for the research community to build a consensus about where the truth lies. This process is usually obscured to laypeople because the debate is pursued in arcane, technical language in the published scientific literature. When the issue is as complicated as modeling long-term changes in climate and the social and political stakes of the results are so high, the controversy that is normal in science at the research frontier spills over into the public domain and is politicized.

Consensus based on the “facts” is hard to achieve, because the “facts” themselves are contested. Today we still talk of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west though we know that our senses are deceptive and that the earth is, in fact, rotating on its own axis once every 24 hours. It took a revolution in thinking and in our conception of man’s place in the universe to deny what seems to be obvious—that the sun moves around the earth.

The history of science teaches us to be critical of first appearances, not to take what seems to be evident for granted, and to engage with the long process of contestation that, in this case, gradually supplanted a world view constructed by the Greeks with one defended, so vigorously by Copernicus, Galileo, and their heirs in the Enlightenment. A healthy skepticism of taken-for-granted “truths” is as essential today as it was 500 years ago. History alerts us to the disempowered social forces that work to protect the status quo, and to the challenges faced by those who want to replace one paradigm with another. All change involves loss. There are those who benefit from the new, but there are also those who lose [think of the] the threat that a technologically based innovation like Uber poses to the traditional taxi companies. Scientific “truths” do not stare us in the face: they have emerged through the cut-and-thrust of disputes among experts.

Nature is recalcitrant, and it requires a major investment to establish facts about the world that are robust and can withstand the test of time—just the kind of investment that is studied by historians of science. Similarly, it requires patience and determination and extensive resources to bring a new technology to market—just the struggles that historians of technology describe and analyze. The history of science and of technology charts the process of truthmaking and of device development through the twists and turns, the hopes and the disappointments, the successes and the failures that are the marks of plunging into the unknown and mastering it.

The School of History and Sociology at the Georgia Institute of Technology is just one of several sections in the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts that engage with the history, sociology, culture, and policy of science and technology. The faculty has a rich and diverse approach to the place of science and technology in society, as can be seen by scrolling through the courses on offer in the online handbook (www.iac.gatech.edu/academics/schools).

It is understandable that students, often heavily burdened by loans, will ask why they should study courses that raise the kinds of questions I have discussed here. The answer to me is clear. Studying the history of science and technology may not get you a job as readily as the study of, say, computer science or aeronautical engineering. However, it will contribute to your development as a well-rounded, thoughtful citizen of a democratic society. You may not be able to name the scientists that are those who benefit from the new, but you will accumulate as you climb the professional ladder and as you fashion your identity as a responsible, thoughtful citizen of a democratic society.

John Krige, Ph.D., is the Kranzberg Professor in the School of History and Sociology at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

Wernher von Braun in front of the Saturn B launch pad, January 22, 1968. Courtesy of NASA.

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Frontpiece of Galileo’s famous Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, 1632.

Dr. Robert Goddard, circa 1932. Courtesy of NASA.

Georgia Tech Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. Courtesy of Georgia Tech.
With the generous support of Raymond and Karen Masciarelli, the Georgia Historical Society recently completed an important conservation project to save two significant works in our collection. Conservation work is highly detailed and requires special training in chemistry and an understanding of painting techniques. Conservators use treatments that stabilize items but are reversible so that no permanent changes are made to the historical works. Barbara Stella, of Stella Art Conservation, carried out the professional conservation work for this important project.

“A View of Savannah as it Stood the 29 March 1734” Gouache and watercolor painting on paper, artist unknown.

This unique watercolor is almost identical to the original well-known engraving attributed to Peter Gordon, but the artist of the painting is unknown and it is not dated. Records indicate that George W. Wylly donated the painting after purchasing it with several other items from the estate of an unnamed Savannahian. Wylly believed it was one of the sketches made by Peter Gordon that was brought back to London and engraved by P. Fournier circa 1734, but there is no documentation to substantiate this claim. The conservator discovered a watermark suggesting the papermaker was James Whatman who produced paper as early as 1740.

At some point, the watercolor painting was adhered to an acidic cardboard backing that caused severe deterioration over time. The household environment where the item was kept before donation also likely contributed to its condition. Both factors prompted the need for a professional conservator to stabilize and save this important painting. Conservation treatment of the painting included carefully removing the acidic backing, treating the surface of the paper and removing abrasive dust and dirt, applying a consolidant to stabilize the image and prevent further loss, repairing tears and punctures, infilling paper losses, inpainting to restore the image where missing, and finally humidifying and pressing the work to flatten and remove warping.
The Bartow portrait received much of the same conservation treatment as the watercolor. However, conservation techniques differ when dealing with oil on canvas versus watercolor on paper. For example, a tissue facing was applied to protect the fragile paint layer before releasing the canvas from the stretcher. At some point, the portrait hung over a fireplace so there was a layer of soot to remove. In addition, oil paintings are usually varnished with a protective coat. The conservator assessed the chemical makeup of the old varnish layer and applied an appropriate solvent solution to remove it. After the canvas was re-stretched, a conservation quality varnish was applied.

Special conservation projects help GHS fulfill its mission of sharing Georgia’s history for generations to come. If you are interested in supporting the conservation of an object in the GHS collection, please contact Lynette Stoudt at lstoudt@georgiahistory.com. Lynette Stoudt is Research Center Director at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at lstoudt@georgiahistory.com.

By Sophia Sineath

Since its founding in 1839, GHS has existed because generous individuals see a need and do something about it. In the 1830s, the Society’s founders saw a need to collect and share the story of Georgia’s role in American history—especially as the generation who lived through the American Revolution was quickly passing away.

Today, GHS still relies upon philanthropists like Ray Masciarelli, who understands the importance of providing continuing support for the care and maintenance of the Society’s unparalleled collection of Georgia history.

Ray’s involvement with the Georgia Historical Society started with a trip to the Research Center in search of information about his historic home at Gammell Row on Savannah’s Pulaski Square. As a self-proclaimed history buff, Ray enjoyed discovering the who, what, when, where, and why of his property. From this experience, Ray made his first contribution by generously donating the funds to purchase a new color-photocopier to better serve researchers.

Ray and Karen have gone further and ensured that their dedication to history and education will continue in perpetuity by establishing two endowment funds at GHS. In 2015, they established The Raymond M. Masciarelli II, Esquire and Family Fund as a lasting endowment with revenue to be used at the discretion of the Board of Curators. In 2016, after becoming more acquainted with the treasures in the archives, they created a restricted endowment fund whose income will be used solely for the conservation and preservation of the GHS collection.

Ray hopes that others will join him in providing continuing support for collection management and conservation projects at the Georgia Historical Society by funding individual projects or giving to the Next Century Initiative.

Sophia Sineath is Education Coordinator at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at ssineath@georgiahistory.com.

His own journey began in 1958. Raised in the Pine Barrens region of southern New Jersey, Ray graduated from Rutgers University and Temple University School of Law. He was admitted to the Florida bar in 1984 and is a Board Certified Specialist in the area of construction. His wife Karen is a Registered Dental Hygienist and has anchored the hygienist staff at several prestigious dental practices in the Palm Beach County area for over 20 years. The Masciarellis and their two sons, Raymond and Anthony, now live in historic homes they’ve restored in the Prospect Park section of West Palm Beach and in Savannah.

At the Georgia Historical Society’s Research Center, Ray got a behind-the-scenes tour of the secure, climate-controlled Abrahams Annex where the archival collections, rare books, maps, artifacts, and portraits are housed. He was drawn to the collection of portraits and large paintings, some of which are in need of conservation. Several objects in the GHS collection require special care from conservators trained in administering highly technical treatments to stabilize and protect collection items, and it can be difficult to secure adequate funding for these special projects. Ray generously dedicated funding for the conservation of two unique paintings in the GHS collection (see page 7 for a full story on the project).

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Sophia Sineath is Education Coordinator at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at ssineath@georgiahistory.com.
New Life for an Old Program: Maintaining Georgia’s Historical Markers

By Christy Crisp

If you have been associated with the Georgia Historical Society for any length of time, you probably know that GHS has been administering the Georgia Historical Marker Program for nearly twenty years—erecting new markers on a wide variety of topics across all regions of Georgia. These new markers have added over 250 new stories to the record of Georgia’s past. The new markers are a continuation of a much older marker program administered by different agencies within state government for approximately fifty years prior to GHS taking on the program in 1997. While GHS was charged with erecting new markers, the responsibility for caring for the thousands of existing markers remained with the State.

However, in 2015, GHS was tasked with coordinating the maintenance of the state’s existing historical markers. Many of those older markers were installed in preparation for the commemoration of the Civil War Centennial and are nearing 70 years in age. Some are in locations that have undergone enormous changes, while some are no longer safely accessible to those wishing to read them.

These aging resources are often in need of maintenance, including refurbishment of the markers and replacement of posts. GHS is continually working to assess, repair, and refurbish our state’s historical markers so they can continue to inform the public for many years to come.

If you have discovered a missing or damaged Georgia historical marker, please fill out our online form available at georgiahistory.com.

Maintaining Georgia’s historical markers also requires a lot of behind-the-scenes work compiling and updating files and records associated with nearly 70 years of the state marker program. Starting in July 2015, GHS worked with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to consolidate and transfer the historical marker records into a comprehensive, updated database.

Interested members of the public can see the results of this hard work in the substantial updates to a new searchable public database with the latest marker information on georgiahistory.com.

Did you know that GHS is introducing Georgia’s historical markers to new audiences through a new social media campaign, #MarkerMonday? These weekly posts, which feature historical markers within the statewide program, include links to other sources about the subject, including GHS collection materials, Today in Georgia History videos, GHS online exhibits, New Georgia Encyclopedia articles, and more.

Christy Crisp is Director of Programs at the Georgia Historical Society. She can be reached at ccrisp@georgiahistory.com.

IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):
Camp Sumter Confederate Prison Site, Sumter County, before maintenance. Photo courtesy of Tom Stelling.
Camp Sumter Confederate Prison Site, Sumter County, after maintenance. Photo courtesy of Tom Stelling.
Old Sunbury Road, Liberty County, before maintenance. Photo Courtesy of Tom Stelling.
Old Sunbury Road, Liberty County, after maintenance. Photo Courtesy of Tom Stelling.
Marker Maintenance Program: Statewide Impact, July 2015–April 2017

- 2,184 existing Georgia historical markers
- 381 field surveys completed and logged noting the physical condition of historical markers across the state
- 97 reports received from the public noting marker maintenance issues
- 57 counties served by the Marker Maintenance Program
- 14 missing or removed markers reinstalled at or near their original location
- 37 historical markers repaired or cleaned onsite
- 24 markers received new posts to ensure longevity as lasting historical resources
- 3 additional markers scheduled to be reinstalled before June 30, 2017

As curator of history at The Columbus Museum, an institution traditionally associated with art exhibitions, I’ve met several people who expressed surprise that “the art museum” features a history component. In fact, The Columbus Museum (TCM) has a dual mission of telling the story of American art and regional history of the Chattahoochee River Valley, an area that encompasses parts of west Georgia and east Alabama.

This multidisciplinary focus gives TCM an opportunity to present a wide range of exhibitions and programs while continuing to build a diverse collection of high quality. Drawing connections between the two parts of our mission offers the chance to create new experiences and meanings for our audience, as well as challenging staff in our own professional development.

TCM is also unique in its relationship with local schools. Due to a local family deeding the home and estate of its patriarch for use as “a center for culture” to the city more than 60 years ago, The Columbus Museum is part of the Muscogee County School District. The district supplies 40% of TCM’s operating budget and owns the building and grounds, while the collection is owned by the museum’s nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. We are governed both by a nonprofit board of trustees, which does many traditional board activities in terms of big picture thinking and fundraising, and also by the school board and superintendent, who oversee vital building needs and operating funds.

Our drive to be relevant to our community, a key concern for any museum or history organization, takes on greater urgency in light of this deep connection to public schools and local taxpayers. We also enjoy strong relationships with Columbus State University (CSU) and Fort Benning, two local institutions that are key drivers of cultural and economic development in the Chattahoochee Valley.

Several exhibitions and programs in recent months exemplify TCM’s quest for relevance and mission integration. For the exhibition From Flying Aces to Army Boots: World War I and the Chattahoochee Valley, I took a deep dive into the local legacy of the First World War with extensive historical research but also worked with an artist who created a site-specific installation of abstract art inspired by the WWI poem “In Flanders Fields” and the experiences of soldiers returning from war, past and present. A CSU art history class guest-curated an exhibition of Gordon Parks photographs of Jim Crow-era Mobile, Alabama, and visited the sites he documented, sharing their own viewpoints and experiences in label text and a well-attended panel discussion.

To commemorate the centennial of the birth of celebrated author and Columbus native Carson McCullers, I worked with two interns to comb through newly released archival material, co-curating an exhibition that focused on her personal and professional relationships. Then, TCM’s events manager and I joined forces with CSU colleagues to create a popular “gallery crawl” that included stops at McCullers exhibitions at the university’s archives and art gallery before concluding at the museum.

To staff, the overwhelmingly positive response to these exhibitions and public programs reflects a deep interest in, even hunger for, offerings that make connections between history and art, offer discussion of historical and contemporary issues, and create collaborations between cultural institutions. We look forward to building on our successes and reaching even more members of our community.

Rebecca Bush is Curator of History and Exhibitions Manager at The Columbus Museum. She can be reached at rbush@columbusmuseum.com.

Image description: Installation images from From Flying Aces to Army Boots: World War I and the Chattahoochee Valley, on view through August 27, 2017.
2017 Georgia Trustees A.D. “Pete” Correll and F. Duane Ackerman Inducted

In commemoration of the 284th anniversary of the founding of Georgia, Governor Nathan Deal and the Georgia Historical Society inducted A.D. “Pete” Correll, former Chairman of Georgia-Pacific and Chairman of Grady Health Foundation, and F. Duane Ackerman, retired Chairman and CEO, BellSouth, as the newest Georgia Trustees. The Induction took place Saturday, February 18, 2017, at the annual Trustees Gala.

Georgia Historical Society Surpasses $1 Million in Contributions For K-12 Educational Programming

With your help, over $1,000,000 has been raised to collect, examine, and teach Georgia history through educational outreach programs, publications, and research services.

“We are grateful to our 2017 Georgia History Festival Chairman H. Jerome Russell and the entire committee who worked so tirelessly to reach this goal,” said Dr. W. Todd Groce, President and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society.

National Endowment for the Humanities Awards $154,921 Grant to the Georgia Historical Society

GHS has received a grant totaling $154,921 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to host a two-week summer institute titled “Recognizing an Imperfect Past: History, Memory, and the American Public.” The Institute will engage scholars from across the nation in an exploration of how we as a country recognize, remember, and memorize controversial people and events in the American past as viewed with a modern-day lens.

Of over 60 applications submitted nationally to NEH for this grant, only about one third were funded. GHS was one of only four successful applicants in the South and one of only three non-universities in the nation. This is the eighth NEH program grant awarded to GHS since 2008, solidifying GHS’s stature as a nationally-recognized independent educational and research institution.

Collection of Environmental Visionary Ray C. Anderson Open For Research

The collection of the late Ray C. Anderson, the visionary industrialist, environmentalist, and founder of Interface, Inc., is available for research at the GHS Research Center in Savannah and online through the GHS online finding aids. The collection was donated to GHS by the Ray C. Anderson Foundation and Interface, Inc. in late 2015.

“Ray Anderson was a pioneer in the sustainability movement, and his compelling journey from industrialist to environmentalist will have a lasting impact on future generations,” said Dr. W. Todd Groce, President and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society. “We are pleased to preserve this collection at the Georgia Historical Society and make it accessible to researchers, students, teachers, and historians who want to explore the life and legacy of this extraordinary Georgian whose impact has been felt around the world.”

Georgia Historical Society Awarded Seventh Consecutive 4-Star Rating by Charity Navigator

GHS was awarded its seventh consecutive 4-star rating by Charity Navigator for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

“Only 3% of the charities we evaluate have received at least 7 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Georgia Historical Society outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Georgia Historical Society apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness,” said Michael Thatcher, President and CEO of Charity Navigator.

GHS Erects New Historical Markers Across the State

It has been a very busy season for the GHS Historical Marker Program, with 11 markers going into the ground since last June. Visit georgiahistory.com for more ways to use Georgia’s historical markers and experience history where it happened.

Business History initiative
- 1996 Summer Olympics: Games of the XXVI Olympiad, Atlanta
- Chick-fil-A, Atlanta
- Southern Company, Atlanta

Georgia Civil Rights Trail
- Atlanta Temple Bombing, Atlanta
- The Savannah Protest Movement, Savannah

Georgia Historical Marker Program
- ACCG and the Creation of the State’s

2017 Georgia Trustees Gala. Photo by Russ Bryant

Highway System, Atlanta

• Maco County Training School: A Rosenwald School, Montezuma
• Rev. Silas Xavier Floyd, Augusta
• Trinity Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Augusta
• World War II Rescue Boat Station, Thunderbolt

Unveiling the Atlanta Temple Bombing historical marker. Pictured from left to right: Rabbi Berg, Rabbi Sugarman, Tony and Jackie Montag, W. Todd Groce, and Janice Rothschild Blumberg.

• ACCG and the Creation of the State’s

Unveiling the “Eat Mor Chikin” cow mascot in front of the newly erected Chick-fil-A historical marker. Photo courtesy of Chick-fil-A.
Sometimes, our highest heights happen long before takeoff. Proud to be a Signature Sponsor of the Georgia History Festival.
Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is the premier independent statewide institution responsible for collecting, examining, and teaching Georgia history.