May 2008

Happenings

Teaching American History Workshops

Nation Among Nations: World Wars and After
Lisa Lindquist Doré, University of Alabama
March 7, 2008

Alexander Hamilton
Carol Berkin, Baruch College
March 17, 2008

Buffalo Soldiers
Michael Searles, Augusta State University
May 14, 2008

Leaps For Mankind: Cold War, Civil Rights, and Technology
Jeff Gill, Truman State University
May 19, 2008

Thurgood Marshall
Charles Robinson, University of Arkansas
May 21, 2008

Historical Marker Dedication

Mossy Creek Campground & Rock Springs Campground

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It is a well-known axiom that an educated citizenry is essential to the survival of a republic. Every political philosopher from Plato to Jefferson has stressed the need for the citizens of a free government to possess knowledge of literature, philosophy, and history. Only when people are educated is liberty secure. That’s why education is an essential function of state government.

Since taking a voluntary privatization of its library and archives over ten years ago, GHS has shifted more than 75 percent of the expense for this vital service from the state to the private sector. In other words, if the state were paying today what it actually costs to operate the GHS library and archives—as it once did ten years ago—it would be spending near $500,000 per year rather than the $98,000 it annually appropriates for this purpose.

This is not the only area where GHS is saving taxpayer money. When the state privatized the historical marker program and turned its operation over to GHS, it cut its annual expenditure—approximately $160,000—in half. Likewise, when GHS resumed editorial management of its Georgia Historical Quarterly, the state shifted an additional $100,000 in expenses to the private sector.

Through our private-public partnership, then, GHS saves the state annually nearly $750,000. The government funds we can’t go it alone—nor should we. Neither the private sector nor the state should be expected to unilaterally undertake such a vital mission. It takes the resources, expertise, and commitment of both if we are to realize our common goal of creating an educated citizenry.

The reasons of the Georgia Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and share Georgia and American history.
As 2008 marks the 75th anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s inauguration as president and his launching of the New Deal, it is appropriate to look at FDR’s ties to Georgia and how his adopted state has remembered him. After his initial visit to Warm Springs, Georgia, in October 1924, FDR always considered Georgia his second home. He visited Warm Springs on forty different occasions and it was there that he died in 1945.

With the most notable exception of Georgia’s new governor, Eugene Talmadge, most Georgians felt a special relationship with FDR that predated his election and New Deal. Roosevelt’s first visit to Georgia was in 1913 as assistant secretary to Governor Ralph S. Doxey, but it was the visit to Warm Springs with his father in October 1924 that began his lifelong connection to the resort.

On that visit, Roosevelt was stricken with polio while vacationing in Maine. Roosevelt later said that the Warm Springs Foundation changed his life. He returned each year to Warm Springs to swim and exercise in the warm water, and in 1927 he created the Warm Springs Foundation to develop the mineral waters. FDR would become a frequent visitor, especially equipped cars to drive around the countryside in Meriwether and Harris counties. A particularly favored spot was Doxey’s Knob, which provided a panoramic view of Pine Mountain Valley. This site now features the most recent FDR monument in Georgia.

The resort into a treatment facility for those who suffered from the crippling disease of polio.

Roosevelt enjoyed meeting many of the young patients being treated at the Foundation. He also delighted in using one of his specialized car that he purchased, which was equipped with wheelchair ramps and other accessibility features. He often sat in the front seat of this car and used the space in the back for his wheelchair. This car was specially designed to accommodate his needs and was an important symbol of his unwavering determination to overcome his disability.

In addition to swimming and exercising in the warm water, Roosevelt was known for meeting many of the young patients being treated at the Foundation. He also delighted in using one of his specially equipped cars to drive around the countryside in Meriwether and Harris counties. A particularly favored spot was Doxey’s Knob, which provided a panoramic view of Pine Mountain Valley. This site now features the most recent FDR monument in Georgia.

Memorials, plaques, and markers scattered throughout Georgia honor FDR, while Social Security and other programs of public assistance make up perhaps the most extensive legacy of the New Deal. Meanwhile, across Georgia, hundreds of courthouses, post offices, city halls, schools, parks, and other public facilities built directly as a result of Roosevelt’s New Deal continue in use to this day. The work of the Warm Springs Foundation continues as well. Ultimately, no part of Georgia was left untouched by FDR’s presidency.

Edwin L. Jackson is the Senior Public Service Associate at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia in Athens. He can be reached at jackson@cvio.uga.edu.

**FDR Statue**

The new bronze FDR statue atop Pine Mountain, sculpted by Martin Dawe of Atlanta, is unique—it is the only statue anywhere that openly depicts him wearing leg braces. A top Doxey’s Knob, secret service agents lifted FDR from his car and then removed the front seat cushion and placed it on the ground for him to sit on. From here, Roosevelt had a wonderful view of the valley below and enjoyed many hours with friends or by himself.

**Other Statues and Busts**

This plaster or concrete bust of FDR (left) is at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation, near the center of the facility. In the courtyard of Roosevelt Hall at Warm Springs, Edmond R. Ameeus created a brick bas-relief showing a sitting Roosevelt with a young boy afflicted with polio.

**FDR Historical Markers**

Eleven historical markers related to FDR have been erected in Meriwether and Harris counties, with one additional marker in Lamar County. The most numerous and widespread memorials to FDR in Georgia are the many brass plaques in courthouses, post offices, and other buildings attesting they were built as part of the New Deal.

**Roosevelt Square and Memorial**

Roosevelt has a special place in the history of Gainesville, Georgia. FDR personally inspected the damage after the April 6, 1936, deadly tornado destroyed much of downtown Gainesville, and he promised the full resources of the federal government to help the city recover. In 1937, the Hall County Commission and Gainesville City Council passed a joint resolution providing for this 3-foot-diameter bronze plaque memorial and designated the outdoor area between the new courthouse and city hall as Roosevelt Square.
How important is the Georgia Historical Society’s historical marker program to the state of Georgia?

GHSS President and CEO Dr. W. Todd Groce answers that question with another: “How do you measure the value of an educated Georgia citizenry or the importance of an informed, satisfying experience for tourists who visit our state?”

More than 2,000 markers have been erected since the program was launched in 1951 by the now-defunct Georgia Historical Commission and then run by the Department of Natural Resources. In 1998, the state privatized the program and turned it over to the Georgia Historical Society, which operates it now under a state contract with the Department of Economic Development. Since then, the Society has approved 150 of the free-standing, instantly recognizable markers.

Today’s silver and black, cast aluminum markers bear the GHSS seal and are not monuments, commemorative devices, memorials, or celebratory plaques. They are unassailably factual presentations about significant people, events, buildings, and locations in Georgia history.

The marker program is not without occasional controversy. “From the beginning, the marker program has focused on ‘hard,’ not ‘soft’ history,” Dr. Groce says. “The first marker we ever approved was about the Moore’s Ford Lynching in Walton County, and one of the most recent was about the Leo Frank Lynching in Cobb County. We’ve not been afraid to look at our past unflinchingly, or to tell all of Georgia’s story, even when some people would rather forget about the parts of our past that make us uncomfortable. If we don’t, we aren’t being true to our mission, or honest about who we are as Georgians.”

“Applications submitted for review by the independent, seven-member selection committee must be sponsored by qualifying organizations, such as local historical societies, city or county governments, and churches in the communities in which proposed markers are to be erected,” explains Christy Crisp, manager of the Georgia Historical Marker Program at GHSS.

Noting that Georgians take their history seriously, sometimes personally, Christy says that the committee is charged with selecting markers that rise above local importance to the level of statewide or national significance. Detailed documentation supporting historical relevance and significance must accompany each application, and the committee also strives to achieve both subject and geographical diversity in its selections.

“The program is an acknowledged success precisely because people care so much,” she says, “and because the committee is very focused on selecting markers that present only the most important, historically relevant stories.”

Each marker costs about $3,000, split between the Georgia Historical Society and the sponsoring organization, and the program has become increasingly popular and competitive in recent years—at a time when state funding has generally declined, is perennially at risk and, on occasion, frozen.

Early in its involvement the Georgia Historical Society was able to erect as many as twenty markers annually, a number that since 2004 has declined to just twelve per year due to reductions in state funding. Only about 30 percent of applications are approved in any given year. Applications with insufficient or inappropriate supporting documentation are returned to sponsors and may be modified and resubmitted for review during another of the committee’s two annual judging cycles.

How does one value the Georgia Historical Marker Program? How does one value education? Or libraries? Or the heritage of a people?

“One of the Society’s most unique and mission-appropriate programs, the markers reach a broad and diverse audience in ways that none of its many other programs can. Through the marker program the Society preserves Georgia’s history, educates Georgia’s citizens and visitors, and ensures a future for Georgia’s rich past.”

For more information about the Georgia Historical Society’s historical marker program, call 912.651.2125 or visit www.georgiahistory.com.

GHS Markers: By the Numbers

150 Total Markers Approved:

- 51% on Twentieth-Century history
- 45% on Native American history
- 14% about Women
- 7% on African-American history

by Jim Battin
Georgia has a long history of producing and shaping leaders who have left their mark on the nation and the world. Two such individuals—one a native and the other a frequent visitor to Georgia—enjoyed a strong association and emerged as leaders on the international stage during the first half of the twentieth century. Their correspondence is preserved in the Georgia Historical Society’s collections.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, though not a native Georgian, developed a strong and well-known connection to Warm Springs, Georgia, where he helped establish the Warm Springs Foundation in 1927 for the study and treatment of polio. Locals saw Roosevelt driving the countryside in his touring car, mingling with poor farmers, observing their plight and sometimes offering them much-needed cash from his own pocket. There can be little doubt that Roosevelt’s experiences in rural Georgia made the suffering caused by the Depression very real for the aristocratic New Yorker and provided a driving force behind the principles of his New Deal. Roosevelt died at Warm Springs in 1945.

Roosevelt’s friend and associate, Pleasant A. Stovall, though not widely known beyond Georgia, was nonetheless a key figure in Woodrow Wilson’s administration and in a Europe devastated by World War I. Stovall, born in Augusta in 1857, was a journalist and an ardent Democrat. He moved to Savannah in 1891, established the Savannah Press, and served as editor of the newspaper, which became the Savannah Morning News, until his death in 1935. Stovall was also deeply involved in politics, serving as chairman of the Georgia Democratic Convention in 1892 and of the Georgia delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1920. He was also a delegate to the national convention in 1924. Stovall was an early and enthusiastic supporter of his childhood friend and schoolmate Woodrow Wilson’s presidential candidacy in 1912 (Wilson also spent his childhood in Augusta). As President, Wilson appointed Stovall minister to Switzerland, a post he held through the tumultuous years of the Great War. It was there that Stovall earned his greatest renown. His tireless efforts on behalf of war refugees won him medals from the Swiss and Belgian governments. He resigned and returned to Georgia in 1920, having stayed on through the negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles.

The Roosevelt-Stovall relationship is revealed in a number of letters held by the Georgia Historical Society as part of the Pleasant Alexander Stovall Papers (MS 1021). These ten letters, written by the President to Stovall and, later, his widow, between March 1927 and November 1938, provide insight into Roosevelt’s political career and strategy, Stovall’s desire to serve on behalf of Roosevelt and the Democratic party, and the personal relationship between FDR and the Stovalls. Several of these letters are written on Roosevelt’s Warm Springs letterhead and discuss the development of the resort and facilities there. Others were written while Roosevelt was governor of New York and focus on politics.

In a letter dated June 3, 1932, FDR thanks Stovall for offering to serve on his personal staff at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago opening just 24 days later. As a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, Roosevelt remarked that he was “practically certain that I should not attend the Convention in Chicago.” He did attend, of course, received the nomination, and in his acceptance speech pledged a “new deal for the American people,” no doubt picturing in his mind’s eye his desperately poor neighbors near the small resort village of Warm Springs, Georgia.

Robert Weber is now Director of Library Services at the Lancaster County Historical Society in Pennsylvania.

Georgia Gems

By Robert K. Weber
A sk Bradley Hale to tell you about himself and he will likely pass quickly over his long and extraordinarily impressive list of personal and professional achievements.

He might mention that he was a high school Latin student and president of his senior class, that he finished undergraduate and law degrees at the University of Alabama in just five years, and that he is a Phi Beta Kappa undergraduate and law degrees at the University of Alabama, thoroughfare to make him stop.

He might relate how before they were married, his father alleged that his mother conspired to learn where his father’s money was kept. He might also mention that he has followed his father’s path as a farmer and landowner who once was a vice-president of the Alabama Farm Bureau and, later, the first director of the state’s timber and paper producers’ trade organization.

Notably, it was the success of the Georgia Trust that led him to suggest a similar approach—an Advisory Board—to GHS President and CEO Dr. W. Todd Groce. “I was on the Board of Curators of the Society prior to Todd’s arrival,” he says. “Back then the Society was clearly in need of new leadership. I once heard historic preservation described as a ‘genetic defect,’ which just about says it for me, I think. My son Sheffield has followed my path as a Curator of the Georgia Historical Society and as Chairman of both the Georgia Trust and the Atlanta History Center.”

Hale, who is an influential Georgian who worked to expand the Trust statewide, an effort Mr. Hale calls a great success even as he transparently describes the work involved as ‘mostly going around looking at old houses and drinking whiskey.’

Not surprisingly, timing—and a story or two—also figure in his substantial contributions to Georgia history and preservation.

“I've always been interested in history,” he says, “and I once heard him use the term ‘fortuitous coincidence’ to describe it. ‘I’m sure you’re familiar with the term, but I think it’s a wonderful word.’ It’s one he has used many times.”

As he says, “Fortuitous coincidence? Happy irony? It doesn’t matter. As usual, Bradley Hale was at the right place at the right time.”

Nobody has made a bigger contribution to the growth and success of the Georgia Historical Society over the last few years than Bradley has,” says Todd. Bradley Hale was honored in February with the Georgia Historical Society’s 2008 John MacPherson Berrien Award for Lifelong Achievement.

Bradley Hale
“Successes and Stories”
By Jim Battin

By Jim Battin
“Successes and Stories”

The name of the venue, the Desert Inn, located near the University of Nevada in Las Vegas, owned by the Hughes Estate, was a fitting backdrop to the memorable gathering. A number of happy ironies, as Mr. Hale calls it, played a role in the story. The venue was at the very beginning of a decades-long period of phenomenal growth.

He could recall the time, representing an Alabama Howard Hughes heiress, that he visited the Desert Inn on Las Vegas, owned by the Hughes Estate. He and a fellow Alabama attorney “were seated in the bar and no one waited on us,” he says. “It was August and each of us had on a seersucker suit. I went over and spoke to a waitress and told her that we would like some bar service. She replied, ‘Oh, I thought you two were with the band!’

And he will probably note that his long legal career began when Griffin Bell hired him as the nineteenth Kin & Spalding lawyer. The firm served blue-chip clients like Coca Cola and the Woodruff family, and that Atlanta was then at the very beginning of a decades-long period of phenomenal growth.

He says, “I was there when it was very small. It was called the kin & spalding firm.”

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He says, “I was there when it was very small. It was called the kin & spalding firm.”

It might be helpful to know that his father, E.E. Hale, was an influential Georgian who worked to expand the Trust statewide, an effort Mr. Hale calls a great success even as he transparently describes the work involved as ‘mostly going around looking at old houses and drinking whiskey.’

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Befor e FDR launched the new deal in America he offered a new deal for people with disabilities in Warm Springs.

Polo survivors from across the country came to the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation to receive top quality rehabilit ation but also to experience a environment created specifically for them, an environment in which barriers were minimized and everyone was encouraged to reach their goals. “The Spirit of Warm Springs,” the positive attitude, inclusion, and fun fostered at the Foundation became famous as the nation rallied to prevent polo and care for everyone permanently paralyzed by the disease.

When the Salk and Sabin vaccines brought an end to the polio era in the U.S., the Foundation began offering rehabilitation services to people with a variety of disabilities. The State of Georgia Department of Labor Rehabilitation Service Division now operates the Georgia Warm Springs Hospital as Georgia Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation. The Warm Springs Rehabilitation complex includes an inpatient rehabilitation hospital, a long-term acute care hospital, a residential vocational rehabilitation center, and a camp for people with disabilities.

The Warm Springs Archives, an affiliate chapter of the Georgia Historical Society, possesses a collection of papers, photographs, and films that document the history of the organization.

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One of the best items in the collection is “The Polio Chronicle,” a newsletter created by the patients to share news of contributions of Georgians throughout the state.

The collection also contains a set of home movies of Warm Springs created by Elizabeth Pierson, a wealthy patient from Detroit. Pierson became a close friend of FDR and played a key role in the development of the Foundation by inviting him to visit Warm Springs frequently.

When the Foundation opened in 1921, it was funded by contributions from across the country. Many of these contributions were small, but they added up to a significant sum. The Foundation was able to attract major donors such as the Ford Foundation, which contributed a large sum in the 1960s, enabling the Foundation to grow significantly.

The Warm Springs Archives are a valuable resource for researchers and historians interested in the history of polio and rehabilitation efforts in the United States. The collection also provides insight into the lives of people with disabilities and the challenges they faced during a time when rehabilitation was not widely available.

The Roosevelt Warm Springs Archive is open to the public by appointment. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact Mike Shackle at 706-657-3540 or mike.shackle@ohio.edu.
**Milestones**

275th Birthday Bash and Awards Gala. On February 16, over 500 attendees from across the state gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah to mark the 275th anniversary of the founding of Georgia, and a great time was had by all. Presidential historian Michael Beschloss (above, left) delivered the keynote address. Anchor Davis (above, center) received the Sarah Nichols Pinckney Volunteer of the Year Award; and Bradley Hale (above, right) received the John Macpherson Berrien Lifetime Achievement Award. For a complete list of this year’s award winners, visit www.georgiahistory.com.

GHS’s Georgia Days. GHS’s signature educational program was another great success. This year’s honoree, James Edward Oglethorpe, was portrayed by professional reenactor Scott Hodges (as profiled in our last issue), and thousands of school children participated in the annual Georgia Day Parade (pictured here above, left and center) and other educational events. This year’s Black History Month Essay & Public Speaking Contest winner was Deep Patel, pictured here (above, right) with Contest sponsor Roger Moss, emcee Kim Gusby from WSAV-TV, and GHS President & CEO Dr. Todd Groce. With your help over $350,000 was raised to preserve and teach Georgia history.

GHS Receives Grant. The Georgia Historical Society has been awarded a $45,000 grant from The Frances and Beverly DuBose Foundation to support the conservation, preservation, arrangement, description, and cataloging of the Ossabaw Island and Torrey-West Family Papers Collection. This collection includes significant archival resources that offer glimpses into the stories of people, places, and events that, together, help to make up the history of Ossabaw Island. From the earliest royal grant of the colonial era, through the slaves and masters of the plantation system, and on to the students and scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, many diverse cultures and individuals are represented in this exceptional collection.

In Memoriam. GHS notes with sadness the death of Roy Lambert of Madison, Georgia, on February 22, 2008. Mr. Lambert was a member of GHS’s Advisory Board. He was a staunch supporter of GHS, and his leadership will be missed.
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