

Perspectives

How Firm a Foundation

by W. Todd Groce, Ph.D.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL Society has met the match for our National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant. Made specifically to help us build our endowment, this \$750,000 grant—the largest ever made to a Georgia institution—required GHS to raise \$2.25 million in matching funds. So enthusiastic was the support we received that we not only reached this goal in less than the three years allowed, but the campaign was over-subscribed by \$80,000. The total impact to our endowment was \$3.25 million, bringing the fund to over \$7 million in cash and pledges.

This remarkable achievement was made possible by the dedication and generosity of so many contributors all over the state and beyond, reflecting in a tangible and visible way our status as a statewide organization with solid statewide support. Six- and seven-figure gifts came not only from Savannah, but also from places such as Atlanta, Thomson, Thomasville, Sandersville, Valdosta, and Milledgeville.

These donors all share a commitment to an idea: a strong, independent Georgia Historical Society capable of sustaining its programming and services for anyone interested in Georgia's past. They all believe in the power of history to create a better world and in the ability of the Georgia Historical Society to be a leader in that process.

But completing the NEH challenge grant doesn't mean we have reached the finish line. The \$7 million we have raised is still \$3 million short of the \$10 million goal. And reaching that goal is only the first step in a major capital campaign we must undertake if we are to move GHS to the forefront of nationally recognized institutions committed to the preservation and study of the past.

As a permanent source of support, an endowment fund gives you the ability to sustain this institution and its mission by allowing you to give in perpetuity. And there are so many ways to give—through your will, by the transfer of stock or real estate, by making GHS the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or an IRA, or by making a gift today. How you do it is not important: what matters is that you act.

The NEH grant challenged us, and we met it. Now the challenge is to keep the momentum going. Please help us to create a firm foundation upon which our historical documents, our publications, and our educational programs will not only endure, but flourish. Help us to make a difference in the lives of those yet to come by giving them the priceless gift of history. For them, it may be the most important contribution you ever make. *G*

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