

Georgia Historical Marker Program Comprehensive Cleaning Guide

The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is pleased to present the Georgia Historical Marker Program's Comprehensive Cleaning Guide! This guide is intended to give an overview of the cleaning process in five easy steps. With over 2000 historical markers across the state, GHS relies on volunteers, like yourself, to assist with the maintenance and care of these historical resources. For additional information on how to volunteer with the Georgia Historical Marker Program, please contact the GHS Program Assistant.

About the Georgia Historical Marker Program

Since 1998 the Georgia Historical Society has administered the Georgia Historical Marker Program. Since that time, nearly 250 new historical markers (black with silver lettering and the Society's seal on top) on a wide variety of topics have been installed around the state. The program operates through partnerships with local community, government, civic, and religious groups throughout Georgia and with the support of the Georgia General Assembly through limited funding for new marker projects. Since July 2015, and in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, (of the agency in charge of these state-owned historical resources) GHS has taken the lead on the maintenance and repair of approximately 2,000 historical markers erected by the State of Georgia prior to 1998. These older markers date back as early as the 1950s and are typically green and gold with the seal of the State of Georgia on the top of the marker plaque.

Contact Information

GHS Outreach Assistant
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Before You Begin

Prior to any work conducted on the Georgia Historical Marker, GHS asks that you follow these simple steps:

- Using the field survey form located at the end of this cleaning guide, assess the historical marker you wish to clean.
- Important: Is the marker in good enough condition to be cleaned? Would cleaning actually cause further problems or accelerate damage in any way? (I.e. Is the paint flaking? If so, will using a scrub brush or cotton cloth further damage the marker?)
- Determine the marker's location. Is the marker located on public or private property? If the marker is situated on private property, please contact the property owner prior to cleaning the historical marker.
- Take a before picture of the historical marker. GHS wants to see your hard work!
- Gather your supplies! A list of recommended cleaning supplies can be found below.

Water (GHS recommends using a refillable gallon jug)

Water Sprayer

1-Gallon Bucket

Nonabrasive cleaner (GHS recommends Simple Green or D/2)

Scrub Brush (small and large)

Cotton cloth (ex. Chamois or bar cloth)

Rubber Gloves

Protective Eye Covering





Once you gather your supplies, you are ready to move forward with cleaning a historical marker!

Cleaning a Historical Marker

Step One

Mix a small amount of non-abrasive cleaner with water in the one-gallon bucket.



Step Two

Spray the historical marker with water prior to applying the cleaning solution.



Step Three

Apply the mixture of water and cleaning solution directly to historical marker with a large scrub brush. GHS does not recommend the use of a metal bristle scrub brush as this may inadvertently remove paint from the surface of the historical marker. If the paint on the historical marker seems to be in particularly poor condition (i.e. extreme flaking), GHS recommends using a cotton cloth instead.



Don't forget the small details! Use a small scrub brush or toothbrush to clean seal and letters.



Shine up the post, too! GHS recommends using the large scrub brush to clean both metal and concrete posts.



Step Four

Thoroughly rinse off the cleaning mixture. If necessary, repeat the cleaning process.



Step Five

Take after photos to help illustrate your hard work! Make sure to send the photographs to the GHS Programs Assistant.

Before...



After!



Georgia Historical Society
Marker Maintenance Program Field Survey Form

Date: _____

Marker Name: _____

Marker Number: _____

Location:

Street Address: _____

City and County: _____

GPS Coordinates: _____

Nearby Landmarks: Ex: Beside a Zaxby's, at intersection of Ga Hwy 17 and Main Street, etc.

Status: Standing ☐ Not Standing ☐

Plaque Condition: Securely Attached to Post ☐ Unsecure/Needs Tightening ☐

Marker Legibility: Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐

Paint Condition (check all that apply): Excellent ☐ Faded ☐ Slight Flaking ☐

Moderate Flaking ☐ Severe Flaking ☐

Biological Growth on Marker: Severe ☐ Moderate ☐ Very Little ☐ None ☐

Post Type: Metal ☐ Concrete with Metal Sheath ☐ Concrete ☐

Post Condition (check all that apply): Excellent ☐ Stable in Ground ☐ Exposed Rebar ☐

Unstable in Ground/Needs Straightening ☐ Metal Sheath Detaching from Post ☐

Additional Notes: *Ex: List any damage to the marker or post here*

Requested Image list:

- Marker setting (i.e. the marker in situ, including distance to road and/or marker subject if applicable)
- Plaque and post (make sure to include the very top and the full collar including where the plaque joins post)
- Marker text including numbers on the plaque (year and county)
- Close-up photographs of any damage or concerns that need to be addressed