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New Historical Markers Tell Story of Tragic Events in American History

Savannah, GA – February 28, 2008. The Georgia Historical Society will erect two new historical markers next week, memorializing the state's largest sale of enslaved families and the highly controversial trial and subsequent lynching of Jewish American, Leo Frank.

The Georgia Historical Society and the City of Savannah will dedicate a first of the two markers on **Monday, March 3, 2008 at 10:30 A.M** to mark one of the largest sales of enslaved persons in U. S. history. Entitled **Largest Slave Sale in Georgia History: The Weeping Time**, the marker recognizes the significance of this event in drawing the attention of the northern press to the plight of the enslaved in the South and the lasting impact of separation on enslaved families. The ceremony will take place near the location of the two-day sale at the marker site on Augusta Avenue at Dunn Street in Savannah. The dedication ceremony will mark the 149th anniversary of event. The marker text reads as follows:

One of the largest sales of enslaved persons in U.S. history took place on March 2-3, 1859, at the Ten Broeck Race Course ¼ mile southwest of here. To satisfy his creditors, Pierce M. Butler sold 436 men, women, and children from his Butler Island and Hampton plantations near Darien, Georgia. The breakup of families and the loss of home became part of African-American heritage remembered as "the weeping time." The event was reported extensively in the northern press and reaction to the sale deepened the nation's growing sectional divide in the years immediately preceding the Civil War.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the City of Savannah

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The Georgia Historical Society will dedicate the second historical marker in Marietta on **Friday, March 7, 2008 at 2:00 P.M.** The marker, entitled **Leo Frank Lynching**, marks the site of Frank's 1915 lynching and recognizes the historical significance of the Frank case in the development of both the modern Ku Klux Klan and the Anti-Defamation League. The ceremony will take place in Marietta at **1200 Roswell Road**— the location of the historical marker near the site of the Frank lynching. Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes is scheduled to speak at the dedication. The marker text reads as follows:

*Near this location on August 17, 1915, Leo M. Frank, the Jewish superintendent of the National Pencil Company in Atlanta, was lynched for the murder of thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan, a factory employee. A highly controversial trial fueled by societal tensions and anti-Semitism*

*resulted in a guilty verdict in 1913. After Governor John M. Slaton commuted his sentence from death to life in prison, Frank was kidnapped from the state prison in Milledgeville and taken to Phagan's hometown of Marietta where he was hanged before a local crowd. Without addressing guilt or innocence, and in recognition of the state's failure to either protect Frank or bring his killers to justice, he was granted a posthumous pardon in 1986.*

*Erected by the Georgia Historical Society, the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, and Temple Kol Emeth*

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These markers are part of a state-wide program administered by the Georgia Historical Society. "GHS is pleased to be able to tell the story of these two events, the most tragic not only in Georgia but in American history," said Dr. W. Todd Groce, GHS President and CEO. "These markers will help citizens and tourists alike to better understand our state and nation's past. Historians have a responsibility to tell the full story, including the parts that make us uncomfortable."

The markers, which recognize people, places and events, tell the story of Georgia's past in a format that is accessible to residents and visitors alike and are an effective tool for economic development, encouraging local tourism and general state-wide interest. GHS has administered Georgia's historical marker program since 1998, erecting over 140 markers statewide.

The events are free and open to the public.

For more information on the Georgia Historical Marker Program, please visit www.georgiahistory.com or call us at 912-651-2125.

The Georgia Historical Society, headquartered in Savannah, is the oldest cultural institution in the state and one of the oldest historical organizations in the nation. It is the first and only statewide historical society in Georgia. For nearly 170 years, GHS has collected, preserved, and shared Georgia history through a variety of educational outreach programs, publications, and research services. For more information visit: www.georgiahistory.com.

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