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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Georgia Historical Society Awarded Grant for Survey of State Historical Markers in Preparation for Civil War Anniversary

**Savannah—October 14, 2008.** Georgia Historical Society (GHS) has received a grant to conduct a statewide survey of historical markers in advance of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) has awarded GHS \$132,307 to begin the process of conducting a comprehensive survey of existing historical markers that focus on Civil War subjects. With further funding, GHS will be able to continue the project, developing up to fifty new markers and creating themed driving trails. This initiative will promote and facilitate tourism in the state during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War.

GHS has administered the Georgia Historical Marker Program for the state since 1998 and has overseen the introduction of over 150 markers statewide. The grant from GDEcD funds the first phase of this multi-year project, which began in August 2008. With funds from the grant, the Society created the position of Historical Marker Survey Coordinator to begin the review of markers throughout the state. The Survey Coordinator documents the current marker position using GPS while recording its condition.

GHS hired William Hanley as Survey Coordinator in August 2008. Hanley has already surveyed more than 400 markers, beginning his travels along the path of Sherman's March to the Sea. He will head next to Atlanta to review the many markers recognizing events of the Atlanta Campaign and Battle of Atlanta, in addition to other markers not related to the Civil War.

While surveying the state's markers, Hanley is keeping a blog, an online journal that brings readers along as he travels through the state. In the blog, he provides commentary on the communities he visits, and gives an account of life on the road. In addition to a weekly travel blog, Hanley will create video blogs documenting his experiences. Readers can access Hanley's blog at <http://georgiamarkers.wordpress.com>, and he welcomes comments and questions.

With continued funding of this initiative, GHS will be able to identify potential subjects for up to fifty new markers exploring all aspects of life during the Civil War, from the home-front to the battlefield. Among these subjects are women's role and activities during the war, the lives of free and enslaved African Americans, Southern industry, and the role of Unionists in Georgia politics. This project will bring needed attention to topics not currently represented in state historical markers.

Another proposed element of this project is the creation of interactive driving trails that will appeal to heritage tourists, an important segment of visitors to Georgia. These driving trails will enable visitors and Georgians alike to incorporate the exploration of Civil War history into their planned excursions. These routes, which will include GPS coordinates and interactive maps, will be available online through the GHS website.

For more information on GHS's Historical Marker Program and to view the continually updated marker list, see [www.georgiahistory.com](http://www.georgiahistory.com).

The Georgia Historical Society, headquartered in Savannah, is a preeminent educational and research institution and the first and only statewide historical society in Georgia. It is the oldest cultural organization in the state and one of the oldest historical societies in the nation. For nearly 175 years, GHS has collected, preserved, and shared Georgia and American history through a variety of educational outreach programs, publications, and research services.