



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ASHANTILLY RECOGNIZED IN NEW HISTORICAL MARKER

**Savannah, GA, October 9, 2009.** The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) along with The Lower Altamaha Historical Society will unveil a new historical marker to recognize Ashantilly plantation. The dedication will be held on the grounds of Ashantilly, Highway 99, north of Darien, Georgia on **October 25, 2009, at 3:00 p.m.**

From one of colonial Georgia's most prominent families, Thomas Spalding was an influential planter who helped develop the plantation economy of the low country as an advocate for modern agricultural ideas including crop rotation and diversifying the crop varieties beyond the standard rice, indigo, and cotton. The Ashantilly property was inherited from his mother, Margery McIntosh Spalding. Although possessing a large estate on Sapelo Island, Spalding built the Ashantilly house as an inland domicile for his family. Accounts of the structure suggest it was classically designed; the building consisted of a central, two story structure and flanking wings. Like Spalding's homes on Sapelo, Ashantilly was constructed of tabby, a concrete like material derived from oyster shells, found in abundance in tidewater Georgia. The Spalding family sold the property in 1870 to William A. Wilcox, founder of the Ashantilly Press. The marker text reads as follows:

#### Ashantilly

Built ca. 1820, Ashantilly was the mainland residence of prominent antebellum planter Thomas Spalding (1774-1851), owner of the nearby Sapelo Island plantation. The house, likely built by Spalding's slaves, was constructed of tabby, an equal mix of oyster shell, sand, water and lime. Ashantilly was named for Spalding's ancestral home in County Perth, Scotland. He died at Ashantilly and is interred in the family burial ground adjacent to the property. William G. Haynes, Jr. (1908-2001), proprietor of the Ashantilly Press, was the last private owner of Ashantilly. In 1993 the Haynes family donated the property to the Ashantilly Center, Inc.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and The Lower Altamaha Historical Society

*Historical markers, which recognize people, places and events, are effective tools for economic development, connecting tourists and students of all ages to the places where history happened and encouraging local tourism and general state-wide interest. GHS has administered Georgia's historical marker program since 1998, erecting over 150 markers statewide.*

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*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 175 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](http://www.georgiahistory.com).*