

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Meagher, Director of Communications
912.651.2125, ext. 153 or pmeagher@georgiahistory.com

Savannah Liberty Ship Receives New Historical Marker

SAVANNAH, Ga., May 15, 2013 – The Georgia Historical Society, in partnership with the **Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority**, will dedicate a historical marker for the Liberty Ship *S.S. James Oglethorpe* and the Battle of the Atlantic on **Wednesday, May 22, 2013**, at **5:30 p.m.** The dedication will take place at the **Savannah International Trade and Convention Center on Hutchinson Island in Savannah.**

A massive merchant marine ship-building effort during WWII's Battle of the Atlantic resulted in the construction of over 2,000 Liberty Ships across the United States. In Savannah, GA, the Southeastern Shipyard constructed its first of many Liberty Ships, the *S.S. James Oglethorpe*, in 1942. She embarked on her maiden voyage, carrying supplies bound for Liverpool, England as part of the convoy Halifax 229. On March 16, 1943, the *Oglethorpe* was torpedoed by a German U-boat, and was lost the following day along with 44 men of the 74-man crew. Though the *Oglethorpe's* mobilization was short, the continued Liberty Ship program marked Georgia's most important contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic. In all, 173 ships were constructed in Savannah and Brunswick alone, and nearly 62,000 workers statewide contributed to the program.

"This marker commemorates Georgia's important role in the Allied war effort in World War II, the most pivotal event in the 20th century," said Dr. W. Todd Groce, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Historical Society. "The Liberty Ships built here in Savannah were an important part of that story, and this marker will help teach a wider audience about this crucial moment in American history,"

The marker dedication ceremony will feature newly uncovered photos by the *New York Daily News* of the *Oglethorpe* and her crew, as well as rare film footage of a Liberty Ship launch in Savannah. Also on display at the Trade Center will be a beautifully constructed model of the *SS James Oglethorpe*, on loan from the Coastal Heritage Society.

A local exhibit has also been developed to honor the *S.S. James Oglethorpe* and Savannah's Liberty Ship building efforts and will be on display at Savannah's City Hall through December 2013. The exhibit features materials from the City of Savannah, the Georgia Historical Society, Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum, and the private collections of community members associated with the

Oglethorpe and the Southeastern Shipyard, respectively. The exhibit is open on City Council meeting days and during public tours on the first Tuesday of every month. To register for a tour, or to learn more about the City Hall exhibit, contact Luciana Spracher at 912.651.6411 or Lspracher@savannahga.gov.

The Georgia Historical Society has administered Georgia's historical marker program since 1998, erecting nearly 200 historical markers across Georgia on a wide variety of subjects. Now, online mapping tools allow you to design statewide driving routes based on historical markers, while mobile apps give information about markers nearby. Visit www.georgiahistory.com for more ways to use Georgia's historical markers and experience history where it happened.

Where: Savannah International Trade and Convention Center
1 International Drive, Savannah, GA 31421
Rotunda facing the River Walk
When: Wednesday, May 22, 2013, 5:30 p.m.

###

ABOUT GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is the premier independent statewide institution responsible for collecting, examining and teaching Georgia history. GHS houses the oldest and most distinguished collection of materials related exclusively to Georgia history in the nation. To learn more, go to www.georgiahistory.com