

# Reflections



*A Program of the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources*



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

Volume III, No. 4

September 2003

## COLORED MEMORIAL SCHOOL AND RISLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Brunswick, founded in 1771 by the Council of the Royal Province of Georgia, was laid out in General James Oglethorpe's Savannah plan of grids and squares. The town's early settlement had just begun when the coast was deserted during the Revolutionary War. By 1789, Brunswick became a port of entry, and in 1797, the county seat of Glynn was moved from Frederica on nearby St. Simons Island to Brunswick. In 1819, Brunswick established its first educational institution: Glynn Academy. The campus of Glynn Academy continued to expand, and the 1927 restored Memorial Hall associated with Glynn Academy is in the Old Town Brunswick Historic District today.

During Brunswick's antebellum years, there were no schools for the enslaved population. After the Civil War ended, during Reconstruction, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau) was established in 1865 as a subsidiary of the War Department. The Freedmen's Bureau had no funds, and had to work with the existing staff of the War Department. One of the Bureau's social services was to establish schools to educate the freedmen. The Freedmen's Bureau would acquire land and build schools, but the assistance of northern missionary societies was required to provide teachers. The missionary societies' schoolmarm were typically educated, young white women from the north who would teach in these freedmen's schools. These schoolmarm worked in deplorable conditions, and were often ridiculed by other whites. In spite of these obstacles, the northern

missionary societies and the Freedmen's Bureau educated thousands of freedmen during Reconstruction.

In 1869, Captain Douglas Gilbert Risley was sent to serve as the district commander in the Freedmen's Bureau office in Brunswick. Risley was a Union soldier during the Civil War. He served from 1861-1863, and was promoted Captain of the 9<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops. After the war ended, Captain Risley was a Lieutenant in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry in 1866.

In 1870, Captain Risley secured funds for the purchase of land in Brunswick, and built a one-story wood structure called Freedmen's School at the corner of H and Albany Streets. The school was later renamed Risley School in his honor. The school contained both the Risley Grammar and Risley Preparatory divisions in the same building. In the late 1870s, the school provided education for 420 African American pupils. By that time, the Freedmen's Bureau had closed, and the school was leased to the American Missionary Association (AMA). The AMA operated

the Risley School until 1882, when men who represented the African American community near the Risley campus petitioned for a transfer of the institution to the City of Brunswick.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City of Brunswick transferred operation of the Risley School to the newly established Glynn County Board of Education. In 1903, Glynn County divided one large classroom into three rooms, repaired the roof, and repainted the school, but enrollment soon doubled. During World War I, the city



*Colored Memorial School and Risley High School are two of the contributing resources on the Risley campus that were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 7, 2002.*

*Photo by James R. Lockhart*

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## COLORED MEMORIAL SCHOOL AND RISLEY HIGH SCHOOL

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became a shipbuilding port, and African American families migrated from rural areas to Brunswick for better jobs. Risley School could not accommodate the growth in the school population, and by 1920, the school's eight rooms were used for 17 classes held in double sessions. Once again, the Glynn County Board of Education sought aid from northern philanthropists to assist African American education in Brunswick.

In 1922, Glynn County provided \$37,500 in public funds and the Julius Rosenwald Fund contributed \$1,500 to build a new Risley School. The Julius Rosenwald Fund required partnerships between public funds, whites and African Americans that surpassed the fund's contributions to build community schools. African Americans had already paid taxes included in the public fund portion, but the community would often donate land, raise additional funds, and maintain the schools.

*“After completing the seventh grade at Risley School, Brunswick, there was no further opportunity for me to continue my schooling at home at public expense, despite the fact that my father owned property and was, therefore, a tax payer. For me and other Negro students of that time, the seventh grade was the end of the line.”*

*Cornelius V. Troup*

The Risley School partnership with the fund was atypical since public tax dollars provided 96 percent of the building costs. In 1922, Rosenwald schools built in Georgia were wooden elementary schools. These buildings were constructed with plans that accommodated pupils and two or four teachers and were located in rural communities. The Risley School needed a larger building to accommodate the growing student population, and the *Georgia Department of Education Annual Report* cited the Risley School in its Rosenwald buildings planned for the next school year. The building plan would be much larger than the other schools and was referenced as a “special plan” that would accommodate 12 teachers.



*Colored Memorial School is a two-story, redbrick building. Constructed in 1923, the building has Neoclassical style details characterized by defining features including the original name panel “Memorial School 1922” over the front entrance.*  
*Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque*

In 1923, a new, two-story brick school was built next to the Risley School with 12 classrooms, one for each teacher. Seven additional rooms and a large auditorium were added to expand the school's facilities. Later the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades were added to create Brunswick's first high school for African Americans. This building was named Colored Memorial School to honor African Americans who served in the armed forces during World War I.

By 1930, enrollment was too high for both buildings, and the old Risley School was demolished. The Glynn County Board of Education secured funds from the Public Works Administration totaling \$122,726 in 1935. The building fund was increased to \$300,000 with other grants and local bond funds, and a new building was constructed at the site of the old Risley School. In 1936, the Risley campus was expanded to include Colored Memorial School and Risley High School. The new building was similar to the Colored Memorial School, as it was a two-story structure, with 11 classrooms, a science laboratory, library, stock room, principal's office, and rest rooms for teachers and students. When Risley High School was completed, the Colored Memorial School was used as a grammar school for grades one through eight.



*Risley High School (now Risley Elementary School) was built by the Public Works Administration under the New Deal in 1936. It is a redbrick, two-story building with stripped Classical details.*  
*Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque*

In 1944, a one-story, brick building with a flat roof was added to the campus. Originally named the I Street Elementary School, this building contains several classrooms and a cafeteria. It is presently called the Jackson Building on the Risley campus. Risley operated as a high school until 1955, when a new Risley High School was built further north on Albany Street. The former high school on the campus was adapted for use as a grammar school, and is presently used as an alternative learning center. The Colored Memorial School is the current home of a kindergarten program for Glynn County children.

One of the Colored Memorial School graduates was Cornelius V. Troup. After completing his elementary education at the Colored Memorial School, Troup attended St. Athanasius, a private school for African Americans. It was located near the all-

## COLORED MEMORIAL SCHOOL AND RISLEY HIGH SCHOOL



*The I Street Elementary School (now the Jackson Building) was built in 1944. This one-story brick building is the third historic building on the Risley campus that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 7, 2002. Photo by James R. Lockhart*

white Glynn Academy, and was operated by the Protestant Episcopal Church. Though this school no longer exists, the St. Athanasius Church is still located at the intersection of Monk and Albany Streets in Brunswick. Troup was the salutatorian of his class, and completed his undergraduate degree at Morris Brown College in Atlanta. After graduation in 1925, the college hired Troup as an instructor, but he returned to Brunswick in 1928 as the principal of Risley High School, a post he held until 1939.

In 1937, while principal at Risley, Troup became the first person to complete the requirements for a graduate degree at Atlanta University solely by attending summer school. In 1939, Troup became the registrar and director of the summer school at Fort Valley State College, where he became president in 1945. Troup received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1947. Cornelius V. Troup was the author of *Distinguished Negro Georgians* in 1962.



*This historic house was once the residence of the headmaster for Selden Institute. Today, Glynn County owns the building, and operates Selden Park at the site of the former school. Selden Institute and St. Athanasius were private high schools for African Americans in Brunswick. Selden Institute was operated by the Presbyterian Church. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque*

Walter C. McNeely came to Risley High School in 1949, where he taught science while coaching football, girls track and basketball teams. He was a Risley coach from 1949-1967. McNeely also served as an official, and was a referee or umpire in three sports: baseball, basketball, and football. A native Georgian, McNeely grew up in Millen, where he attended the Jenkins County Training School, a Rosenwald school. He graduated from Fort Valley State College. McNeely completed additional studies at Tuskegee Institute, Grambling College (Louisiana), Atlanta University, and the Oakridge Institute of Nuclear Studies (Tennessee). He earned his master's degree from New York University.



*Walter C. McNeely  
Chairman  
Board of Directors  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources*

In 1966, McNeely was the assistant principal at Risley High School, and by 1968, he was promoted to principal. In 1975, he became an associate superintendent for the Glynn County Board of Education. He continues his educational expertise in the Georgia Department of Education Professional Development Program, training current administrators who aspire to become superintendents. McNeely served on the board of directors of the Glynn Teachers Federal Credit Union for 15 years.

McNeely was a member of the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority from 1986-1999. He is chairman of the board of trustees for the First African Baptist Church, established 140 years ago. Reverend L.E. Williams, pastor of First African Baptist Church, is working with McNeely and the other trustees to preserve this historic African American church in Brunswick. In April 2003, Walter McNeely was elected chairman of the 18 member board of directors for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

## PRESERVATIONISTS RECEIVE GOVERNOR'S AWARDS IN THE HUMANITIES

Humanities are often promoted through the dedicated work of individuals who are the unsung heroes working behind the scenes in our libraries, historical societies, and museums to ensure successful cultural events, education of our youth, and preservation of Georgia's historic landmarks and culture. Since 1986, the Georgia Humanities Council (GHC) recognizes the achievement of these advocates for the humanities. Each year the awards committee of GHC reviews nominations submitted by the public and recommends finalists who are selected by the governor to receive humanities awards. On May 12, 2003 Governor Sonny Perdue presented Awards in the Humanities to eight individuals and three organizations at a luncheon held at the Old Georgia Railroad Freight Depot in Atlanta. Two preservationists associated with the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) were recipients of the awards.



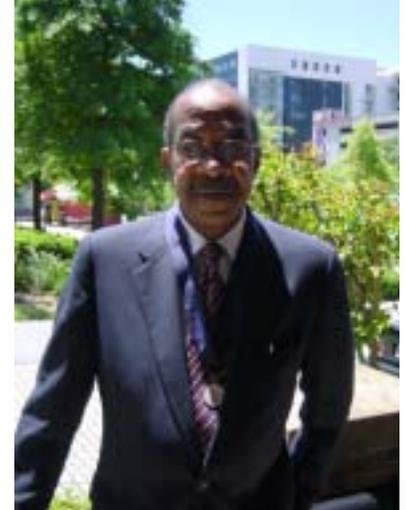
*Jamil Zainaldin, executive director of the Georgia Humanities Council and Ray Luce, director of the Historic Preservation Division, celebrate humanities at the annual awards luncheon.*

Register of Historic Places in 1995, Beall has aided the congregation. Each year Beall mentors students in Stewart and Quitman Counties in history and the humanities. He coaches the students to prepare presentations for the annual Georgia and National History Day competition sponsored by GHC.

Ken Thomas, Jr. began his career at HPD in 1973. As a senior historian, Thomas documented over 1,500 nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. One of his special projects was coordination of extensive research on the various landowners and families associated with Sapelo Island. He organizes the architectural and topical files for HPD, and administers the library. Currently, Thomas is providing technical assistance with the production of a publication that will document Georgia's governors and their burial sites.

Thomas writes a weekly genealogy column for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. He is the author of several books, including a soon to be released pictorial history of Fort Benning. Thomas is a native of Columbus, and one of his favorite projects was collecting postcards featured in *Columbus, Georgia in Vintage Postcards*. The Georgia Women of Achievement seek his expertise in the annual selection process, and he reviews historic marker applications for the Georgia Historical Society. Thomas is a member of the board of directors of the DeKalb Historical Society.

GHC is soliciting nominations for the 2004 awards. To nominate an individual or organization, write a letter that describes their work in building community, character, and citizenship through humanities education and submit it to 50 Hurt Plaza, Suite 595, Atlanta, GA 30303. **The letter must be postmarked by November 21, 2003.** To learn more about the GHC, visit their website at [www.georgiahumanities.org](http://www.georgiahumanities.org) or call 404/523-6220.



*Charles Donald Beall*



*Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.*



*Governor Sonny Perdue (front row, far right) with the 2003 recipients of the Governor's Awards in the Humanities.*

*Photo courtesy of the Georgia Humanities Council*

Charles Donald Beall of Columbus, a member of the Steering Committee of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network, was honored for historic preservation services in the lower Chattahoochee region. Beall, who is a native of Lumpkin, returned to Georgia after retiring from a career in education and mental health in Detroit. He assists Historic Westville with interpretive programs and volunteers to preserve Green Grove Baptist Church and School, a historic African American complex in rural Stewart County. Since the properties were listed in the National

## SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL DAY

Sapelo Island is one in a series of barrier isles that extend along the Georgia coast. The island is ten miles long and three miles wide, and is about the size of Manhattan Island in New York. Five miles of tidal water and salt marsh separate Sapelo Island from Darien, the nearest town on the mainland. In the midst of this isolated island lies an African American community that has survived since slavery, maintaining a culture called Gullah (Geechee in Georgia.)

Each fall, the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) celebrates their preservation of Geechee culture. **The Sapelo Island Cultural Day festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 18, 2003.** Sapelo Island residents maintain West African traditions in language, food, folklore, arts and crafts. Entertainment will include gospel music, Old South songs, and African dances.



*The Farmers' Alliance Hall on Sapelo Island was built by the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union in 1929. The building was used historically as a brokering agency for farmers and was a meeting place for fraternal organizations. The Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) received a \$8,100 Georgia Heritage grant to develop a rehabilitation plan for the Farmers' Alliance Hall. The building is the main site for Cultural Day entertainment.*

The Georgia Sea Island Singers will perform African influenced slave songs. Since 1948, Bessie Jones, a Georgia native, led the group to appearances at Carnegie Hall and the Newport Festival. After she died in 1984, Frankie and Doug Quimby continued her legacy, and preserve sea island music today.

Cornelia Bailey, island historian and Saltwater Geechee, is the author of *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man*. Since 1992, she has collaborated with Ray Crook, an archaeologist from the State University of West Georgia, to capture oral traditions from the Hog Hammock community. They have produced a book, *Sapelo Voices*, to document these traditions from older island residents. All proceeds from the sale of this book will be used for the restoration of Farmers' Alliance Hall, a historic resource in the Hog Hammock community.

Louise Cohen will share Gullah folktales. The marketplace will feature crafts, and artists will demonstrate sweetgrass basketweaving and net making. Visitors can sample smoked mullet and other Geechee food specialties.



*The Georgia Sea Island Singers performed at the Georgia Sea Island Festival on St. Simons Island, a cultural event sponsored by the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service*

The cost is \$20 for non-members and \$15 for SICARS members. Children older than six must have a ticket. Tours will be provided throughout the day for \$10 per tour. Admission includes round-trip ferry transportation and bus transportation to the festival site. To purchase tickets, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your check or money order to: SICARS, PO Box 6, Sapelo Island, GA 31327 or call the SICARS office with credit card information: 912/485-2197. Directions will be mailed with your tickets.

Since no bridges connect Sapelo Island to the mainland, visitors must catch the ferry to access the island. The ferry departs from the dock at Meridian, and will transport visitors beginning at 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Early arrivals can participate in an old fashioned church service to begin the day's activities. Bus transportation will be provided from Marsh Landing to the festival site in the Hog Hammock Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The return ferry will depart from 11:45 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Join SICARS at this annual celebration of Geechee heritage in Georgia.



*Patricia Johnson demonstrates the art of sweetgrass basketweaving.*

## GEORGIA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Mary K. Roarabaugh, Executive Director  
Georgia Women of Achievement

Ellen Smith Craft, the child of an African American woman and her white owner, was born into slavery in Clinton, Georgia. Sold, she was taken by a new owner to Macon where she met and married another slave, William Craft. Together, they devised a plan to escape. With Ellen posing as William's master, they traveled by train to Philadelphia. They moved on to Boston, which was considered safer, but under the Fugitive Slave Act, their Georgia owners pursued them until they fled to England. In 1869, they returned to the south. Despite many hardships, they started a cooperative farm for freedmen and established a school in Bryan County for their children. Ellen is remembered for her belief in the dignity and worth of all human beings and her determination to shape a better future for succeeding generations.



*Ellen Craft's light complexion aided her disguise as a white planter. She traveled to freedom with her husband posing as her enslaved attendant. This illustration of Ellen Craft appeared in Wilbur H. Siebert's 1898 publication: **The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom**. William and Ellen Craft were the authors of **Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom**.*

women, native to or clearly identified with the State of Georgia. The organization was established in 1990 through the interest of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter and the organizational and financial support of several Wesleyan College alumnae. GWA is the state's only historical hall of fame for women.

GWA shares the stories of its honorees with Georgia's school children, teachers and the general public through its website, traveling exhibit, teacher resource guides and annual induction ceremony. In order for a woman to be inducted into GWA, she must be deceased ten years, be native to or clearly identified with Georgia, have made exceptional contributions to her field of endeavor, and must inspire future generations to use their own talents. **The deadline for nominations is October 1, 2003.** The 13<sup>th</sup> ceremony in the spring of 2004 will be an inspiring, educational program that presents the biographies of the honorees in a special video and features a dynamic guest speaker.

All 45 honorees are on the GWA website: [www.gawomen.org](http://www.gawomen.org) and in a traveling exhibit. The exhibit travels to museums, historical societies and colleges in Georgia. Teacher resource guides are distributed to over 600 teachers statewide. Visit GWA's website and join the effort to recognize Georgia's inspirational women by nominating someone. Of the 45 current honorees, nine are African American. Learn more about these women and consider nominating more African American women to help GWA feature the stories of more women of color. For more information, check the GWA website or call 404/653-0800.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN HONOREES GEORGIA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Selena Sloan Butler	1872 - 1964
Helena Brown Cobb	1869 - 1922
Ellen Smith Craft	1826 - 1891
Sallie Ellis Davis	1877 - 1950
Lugenia Burns Hope	1871 - 1947
Lucy Craft Laney	1854 - 1933
Carrie Steele Logan	1829 - 1900
Ruth Hartley Mosley	1886 - 1975
Gertrude Pridgett "Ma" Rainey	1886 - 1939

### RAMBLE IN HISTORIC MONTICELLO WITH THE GEORGIA TRUST

The Georgia Trust is hosting the **Fall Ramble in Monticello on October 18-19**. Mayor Susan Holmes welcomes all to a weekend of touring historic Monticello in Jasper County. Under her leadership and a cadre of citizens who are preservationists, Monticello has a viable preservation commission and Better Hometown program. Mayor Holmes is president of the Georgia Municipal Association, a Georgia Trust trustee, and a member of the Historic Preservation Division's Georgia National Register Review Board.

Ramblers will check in at the Monticello City Hall and Government Complex in the revitalized town square. The square and surrounding streets were laid out in 1808 in a grid pattern that is known as the Washington plan, anchored by the Jasper County Courthouse. The Monticello Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 8, 1997. The district has 478 contributing resources, including churches, Monticello High School, and residences. Seven main road corridors lead to Monticello's historic homes, with predominant wood framed structures constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A large number of one-and-two story Vernacular houses occupy the district. Bungalows and cottages are the predominant house types.

Monticello emerged as a center of commerce and industry between 1885 and 1930. A rail line was established in 1887, and the town constructed manufacturing and warehouse buildings along the rail line. Evidence of this commercial development is still present today in Monticello. To accommodate the mill and agricultural workers, the town established a planned African American neighborhood on the south side close to one of the mills. The neighborhood was named Washington Park in honor of educator

Booker T. Washington. In 1908, African Americans purchased lots through the Farmers National Bank, and built small one-and-two room houses that still survive today. The African American middle class also settled in the same community, building larger homes in the 1930s and 40s.

Today, the main road leading from the town square to the Washington Park neighborhood is Funderburg Drive, named in honor of Dr. Frederick Douglass Funderburg, an African American physician. Both the home and office of Dr. Funderburg are located in this community. When the flu epidemic hit Georgia in 1938, Dr. Funderburg was the only physician in Jasper and Putnam counties. Dr. Funderburg served hundreds of residents during the epidemic, and 45 percent of his patients were white. His thriving, biracial practice continued until he retired in 1987 after more than 50 years of service. Jacqueline Smith, a member of the Monticello City Council and a Funderburg descendant, remembers her ancestor. "Every week, he would pick up neighborhood children and take us to Sunday school, where he was a great speaker."



*This residence was once the home of Dr. Frederick Douglass Funderburg, an African American physician who operated a biracial medical practice for over 50 years in Monticello. Dr. Funderburg purchased two small lots in the Washington Park neighborhood, and joined two houses for his family residence. The home is a contributing resource in the Monticello Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 8, 1997.*

*Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque*

The Fall Ramble is a great opportunity to see Dr. Funderburg's office and residence, and other contributing resources in the Monticello Historic District. Join Mayor Holmes and other preservationists in Monticello for the weekend. For more information, contact Natalie Perrin, member events coordinator, at The Georgia Trust: 404/881-9980.

## GAAHPN STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

At the July meeting, the Steering Committee of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) elected officers who will lead the organization from 2003-2005. The chairman is Isaac Johnson of Augusta. Johnson is one of the founding members of GAAHPN. He is the treasurer of Springfield Baptist Church, where his family has worshiped for five generations. Johnson chairs the history committee at Springfield Baptist Church,

where he is both a deacon and trustee. He is secretary of the Springfield Village Park Foundation, Inc.

Since 1973, Johnson has worked in health care services. He is the former assistant administrator of the largest nursing facility in Augusta. Isaac Johnson is a recipient of a 2001 Achievement Award from the Historic Preservation Division. He is a Georgia Trust trustee and treasurer of the Southeast Regional African American Preservation Alliance.



**Isaac Johnson**  
Chairman

Beth Shorthouse, vice chair, works for Lord, Aeck & Sargent Architecture in Atlanta where she handles business development and marketing for the Historic Preservation Studio. She has a master's degree in economic development and urban planning from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Prior to joining Lord, Aeck & Sargent in May 2003, Shorthouse was a former staff member at The Georgia Trust.

Jeanne Mills, secretary/treasurer, is a native of Atlanta and lives in Adair Park. She participated with a team of preservationists who supported the nomination of the Adair Park Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places on June 2, 2000. Mills chairs the historic preservation committee of the Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit V.

## GEORGIA AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

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## ABOUT GAAHPN



The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and ethnic diversity of Georgia's African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia's history. The GAAHPN Steering Committee meets regularly to plan and implement ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 1,500 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, *Reflections*, produced by the Network. Visit the Historic Preservation Division website at [www.gashpo.org](http://www.gashpo.org). Preservation information and previous issues of *Reflections* are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

## Reflections

Published quarterly by the  
Historic Preservation Division  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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This publication has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, through the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or consultants constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire more information, write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



A Program of the  
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