gam
Georgia Association of Museums

Spring'23

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2023

Georgia Association of Museums

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FRONT COVER: ANDALUSIA, MILLEDGEVILLE, GA • PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MILLEDGEVILLE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

President's Remarks

Kudos to you, Cartersville! Our 2023 GAM conference was one for the record books, reaching new heights in the number of attendees, quality of sessions and events, and dollars raised for the MUSE grant program.

Thank you to the host institutions — the Bartow History Museum, Tellus Science Museum, Booth Western Art Museum, Savoy Automobile Museum, Etowah Indian Mounds, Noble Hill-Wheeler Memorial Center, and Summer Hill Museum — for your enthusiasm and hospitality. While we love all our host cities equally — like children, you shouldn't pick your favorite — Cartersville has raised the bar!

The conference theme, "Museums: The (Fill in the Blank) Frontier," perfectly encapsulated the history of northwest Georgia, the focus of the host institutions, and the current state of the museum industry. Thank you to the Program Committee for curating such a diverse line-up of sessions. We are grateful to all the speakers who shared their experiences and expertise.

This year's conference provided opportunities to network with the corporate partners and organizations supporting Georgia museums. A special thanks to our incredible sponsors: ThinkProxi, Georgia Humanities Council, Gather, Hollinger Metal Edge, MBA Design & Display Products, dmdg2, Northeast Document Conservation Center, Riggs Ward Design, ARtGlass, and Arts InCommunity. Learn more about these partners on the News & Resources section of GAM's website.

What's next for GAM? Hot on the heels of our conference, your GAM board is engaging in a spring membership drive to expand the GAM network. Our goal is inclusion – we want more institutions represented, more perspectives shared, more lessons learned, and more successes celebrated.

Join us in this initiative! Connect with your peers and partners at other institutions and share your GAM experiences. Our museum community is strongest when all institutions have a voice.

Marcy Breffle
GAM President

Museums Making Moves

Andalusia: the Home of Flannery O'Connor, is a historic house museum that is a unit of the Department of Historic Museums at Georgia College & State University. Andalusia served as the home of American author Flannery O'Connor from 1951-1964. In August 2017, the site was gifted to O'Connor's alma mater, Georgia College. Today, Andalusia serves as a museum whose mission is to care for, collect, interpret, and exhibit items that illustrate the history of the site during the time which Flannery O'Connor lived on the property. In 2022, Andalusia was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

On March 24, 2023 the museum opened its new Interpretive Center. This $3.5million dollar facility houses exhibition space, collection storage, retail space, staff offices, research areas, and event space for the museum. The site will also provide ADA accessible footpaths and parking for visitors to further explore the site and access the historic resources of the property. Matthew Davis, Director of Historic Museums commented that "we are proud of this new facility and look forward to welcoming visitors to explore the space and learn more about the rich history of Andalusia."

Andalusia is open for tours Tuesday-Saturday from 10-4 and Sunday from 2-4. For more information, please visit www.gcsu.edu/andalusia, our social media pages, or call 478-445-8722.

Individual Member Feature

Mary Wilson Joseph

I discovered my love for history and museums in 8th grade when studying Georgia history, my 8th-grade class took a trip around Georgia. I was in love and infatuated with not only the history but the architecture and the historic landscapes. Right then I knew I wanted to do something in history, but not be a teacher.

During my senior year in high school when looking and applying for colleges, I discovered Savannah College of Arts and Design (SCAD). Looking at one of their majors. Historic Preservation. I knew it was something I wanted to do, and my dream was to do African American preservation. I wanted this because going on that 8th-grade trip there was no representation of my background, which I knew existed and I wanted to know more about and how to preserve it. While living and going to school in Savannah, I started working at the Davenport House Museum's gift shop and ended up interning there too. I would give tours and create a walking tour around the Columbia Square area. After SCAD, I went to work at the Atlanta History Center, where I learned so much.

One of the fulfilling things about working at the Atlanta History Center (AHC) was to incorporate dialogue in sharing history. The AHC developed an immersive production about the Atlanta 1906 massacre, called "Four Days of Fury." The resulting production cleverly integrated facts and dialogue to convey the importance of events and their continued relevance, and instilled a haunting sense of empathy within the audience. After each production my colleague and I explained the rules of dialogue with the audience and these museum guests talked about their thoughts, experiences, and emotions, and listened as others shared reactions and life experiences. Every aspect of the dialogue, from training to witnessing people's reactions was definitely impactful.

Another meaningful moment for me was seeing children take the AHC school tours. When AHC created immersive guided tours it changed the way students thought about history, and the students began to place themselves in other people's shoes. These tours kept the Museum Educator staff very busy because teachers loved for their students to learn about empathy and understanding different perspectives. These tours were so successful that at one point the AHC was booked solid with them from the start of the school year until right before Winter Break.

"My dream was to do African American preservation"

MARY WILSON JOSEPH IS THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PROGRAMS COORDINATOR FOR THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Last, and one of the most important things I took away from AHC, was to be flexible. As many museum professionals know, you have to be ready and willing to jump into any task in the museum. I treasured trying something new even if I knew it was out of my comfort zone because it made me a better person. While doing this I learned the joy of meeting people and hearing their stories, no matter if it was on the phone, checking in a guest to the museum, or just talking to a colleague. I discovered the joy of wanting to know who is around me and how I could get to know them, even if for a short conversation.

My passion since the 8th grade, SCAD, the love of meeting and getting to know people, and my 20 years working in museums have helped me transition into a new career. These few months as the African American Programs Coordinator for the Historic Preservation Division at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have been wonderful as I have traveled the state of Georgia to help people/Georgia preserve African American History. Being in this position, I am always introduced to history that has been covered up, and now I am here to help educate others and myself on how valuable this history is to Georgia and the nation.

Institutional Member Feature

T.R.R. Cobb House

We are so excited to invite everyone to Athens in January 2024! The T.R.R. Cobb House will host the pre-conference meet up on Tuesday, January 16, so we hope many of you will make the trip early. The local host committee is currently planning some great Tuesday activities for everyone.

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum, owned and operated by the Watson-Brown Foundation, has a history unlike most other historic house museums. The T.R.R. Cobb House was originally located at 194 Prince Avenue in Athens, Georgia, and began as a four over four plantation plain structure. Tom and Marion Cobb received the house as a wedding present in 1844 and over time added on the dining room, the octagonal wings, and the front porch (with columns, making it a Greek revival home). There were also several outbuildings, including eight slave houses, on the property. Tom died in the Battle of Fredericksburg while serving as a Brigadier General in 1862, and Marion sold the house in 1872, ending the direct Cobb connection with the house.

Over time, the house (still known by everyone as the "T.R.R. Cobb House," as evidenced in newspaper articles, ads, and phone book covers) was used as a dentist's office, two fraternity houses, a boarding house, along with various uses by St. Joseph's Catholic Church. When the church required building a new structure for a school, they offered to sell the house for a dollar to anyone who could afford to move it. The house ended up traveling about sixty miles down the road to Stone Mountain, with the expectation that it would be used as an education center or a bed and breakfast. However, new management took over soon after the move and all plans for the house were canceled.

In 2005, the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation asked the Watson-Brown Foundation to help save the structure. The house returned to Athens, although now on the opposite side of Prince Avenue (and now located on Hill Street, a little over a block away from the original location). The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum opened to the public in 2007, and has been in a constant state of change since that time as research and collections acquisitions allow. While we are incredibly lucky to have the backing of the foundation and the resources that come with that, day to day operations are handled by a staff of just two people! Sam Thomas is our curator, and Ashleigh Oatts is our education coordinator.

While research has always been a focus so that we can ensure that we are telling stories as truthfully as we can, we were able to expand our research much more significantly during our long pandemic/ window restoration closure. With figures as complicated as the Cobb family, it is especially important to make sure that our stories are backed up with primary sources, and the Cobb family was perhaps too good at producing such sources. The Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia has more than 300,000 pieces of Cobb letters, receipts, and more in one collection alone (specifically Howell Cobb's collection), let alone the many other Cobb collections that exist in their vault. Incredibly, the Cobb families also wrote about their enslaved people in many of their letters to each other. The authors of

PAGES FROM THE 1859 PLANTATION LOGBOOK DEPICTING WATERWAYS, ACRES, AND SOME STRUCTURES IN SUMTER COUNTY

Seen/ Unseen: Hidden Lives in a Community of Enslaved Georgians have done a great job looking through the Cobb collections to uncover a communication network between those that the various connected Cobb families enslaved at various properties across Georgia, and their research has been incredibly helpful as we try to uncover even more details about those enslaved at this house. We are also including the stories of those enslaved by other Cobb family members after discovering that the families occasionally borrowed enslaved people from each other for short periods of time. By including their stories, we are trying to ensure that no one is forgotten.

A recent addition to our collection, an 1859 plantation logbook detailing seven of the John B. Lamar/ Howell Cobb plantation holdings as well as listing all of the enslaved people at each plantation, has added more than 700 names for our staff of two (plus an occasional intern) to research. We believe that they are listed in family groupings, which is also helping our research.

We are currently hard at work on an exhibit about the enslaved people as well as another about African American education in Athens. "Family Bonds" will focus on several of the enslaved peoples' stories and their family trees (as researched by Elyse Hill, a genealogist who specializes in African American research). Over time, as research allows, we may change out the stories on display, while even more stories will be featured in digital format since our physical space is limited. The African American education exhibit will highlight contributions made to the post-Emancipation educational system here in Athens, including those made by people formerly enslaved by the Cobbs.

There are also many virtual options that are in the planning stages, including a virtual rendering of 1850s Prince Avenue, a digitized version of the 1859 plantation logbook (with transcriptions), genealogical information for the Cobb families as well as many of the enslaved families, and more digital projects to come. Our social media accounts will highlight these as they become available!

For any sites that may be struggling with telling difficult histories, we encourage you to keep going back to the primary sources, and have copies of some of those sources available for visitors to look at closely. For us, each new primary source has unlocked many more research trails to follow, and we can never complain of being bored at work. One such recent source discovery from Ms. Hill may have uncovered the name of an enslaved person borrowed from Marion Lumpkin Cobb's parents, previously listed in our research as "Lumpkin Enslaved Person" (and now may be Sarah Lumpkin.) It is incredibly rewarding to fill in the important missing details.

When you visit the house, you will see Southern decorative arts on display on the main floor, including several items recently added to the MESDA online database. Most of the items on display belonged to Cobb family members or other Athens families (often still being related). All pieces on display have important stories behind them, so if you are curious about any item, don't hesitate to ask us! Upstairs, visitors can find exhibits (which should open before the Georgia Association of Museums conference).

We can't wait to see you in January 2024!

Where can you find more information about anything GAM? At gamuseums.org or email gamuseums@gmail.com.

New GAM Board Member

Jerald Crook hails from Bay Minette, the county seat of Baldwin County, Alabama. He attended Auburn University where he graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and a minor in Sustainability. He went on to obtain a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He began his professional career working in public and academic libraries before joining the Alabama Bicentennial Commission staff as community relations specialist. There he served as liaison between the commission, local and state organizations, and bicentennial committees. Jerald currently serves as grants manager for the Georgia Humanities Council. Additionally, Jerald founded and currently operates Alabama non-profit Higher Ground Society whose mission it is to build community and understanding through engagement in the arts and humanities. In 2022 he was named one of South Arts' Emerging Leaders of Color.

2023 Awards

Patron
Winner: Alan F. Rothschild Jr.
Nominated by: Georgia Museum of Art

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Student Project
Winner: Ryan Ashford
Nominated by: Museum of Technology, Middle Georgia State University

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Education
Winner: Fernbank Science Center and the DCSD Early Learning Center, for the program: Powering Up Young Minds: ScienTOTs @ Fernbank Science Center

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Multimedia
Winner: Davenport House Museum, for the project: Virtual Youth Guide

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Museum Exhibition
Winner (Category #2, $1,000 - $25,000): The Gallery of ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture, for the exhibition: Carver & Polk: Crossover of Agriculture and Photography in the early 20th Century

Winner (Category #3, $25,001 - $99,999): Georgia Museum of Art, for the exhibition: Reckonings and Reconstructions: Southern Photography from the Do Good Fund

Winner (Category #4, >$100,000): The Columbus Museum, for the exhibition: Alma W. Thomas: Everything is Beautiful

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Institution
Winner: William Root House
Nominated by: Cobb Landmarks

Special Project
Winner (Category #2, < $1,000 - $25,000): History Cherokee and Scrapbook Video Productions, for the project: The Way it Was: Stories of Cherokee County's Desegregation

Winner (Category #3, $25,001-$99,999): Georgia Tech College of Computing, for the project: Accessible Exhibits at the Intersection of Art, Science, and Technology

Winner (Category #, >$100,000): Cherokee County History Center, for the project: History Cherokee

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Museum Volunteer
Winner: Beth Williams
Nominated by: Booth Western Art Museum

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Museum Professional
Winner: Christa McCay
Nominated by: Marietta History Center

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Emerging Museum Professional
Winner: Jordan Duncan
Nominated by: Bartow History Museum

Winner: Karisa Zdanky
Nominated by: Tellus Science Museum

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Lifetime Achievement
Winner: Dr. Ann McCleary
Nominated by: Arden Williams

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BARTOW HISTORY MUSEUM

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BARTOW
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TELLUS
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AUCTION
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SESSIONS
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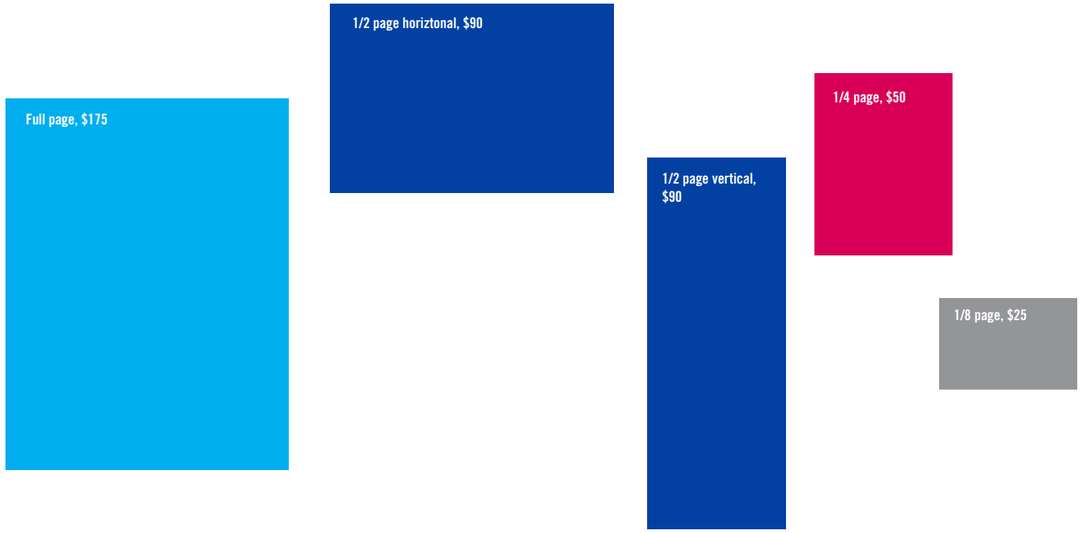
AWARDS

AD SHAPES ARE SHOWN AT 25% ACTUAL SIZE

Adverstise in the GAM newsletter

The GAM newsletter is published quarterly and sent to all institutional and individual members. It is also available on the GAM website. A 20+ year archive of the newsletter will be available to members only on GAM's website. To advertise, please contact Michele Rodgers at gamuseums@gmail.com.



New GAM Board Member

Natalie Smith is a native Georgian and has been the Registrar at the Augusta Museum of History for the last four years. Prior to joining the Augusta Museum, she worked for the National Park Service in museum collections at multiple sites including the Springfield Armory National Historic Site and Jimmy Carter National Historic Park. Natalie received her bachelor's in History from the University of Georgia and a master's in Museum Studies from George Washington University. She has worked in the museum field for almost a decade, in collections and interpretation. During her career, Natalie has developed exhibitions, provided the highest standard of collections care, and recently attended SEMC's Jekyll Island Management Institute. History and museums are Natalie's life-long passions, and she looks forward to working with the GAM Board to promote and serve Georgia's institutions.

New & Renewing Members

Institutional

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Aviation History & Technology Center
Bulloch County Historical Society
Chipley Historical Center
Euharlee Welcome Center & Museum
Georgia Council for the Social Studies
Georgia Museum of Agriculture
Georgia Museum of Art
Georgia Southern University Museum
Museum of Technology
Polk County Historical Society
Savoy Automobile Museum
Thiokol Memorial
TRR Cobb House

Conference Partner

dmdg2
ARtGlass

Individual/Student

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Jerald Crook
Matt Davis
Lisa Flaherty
Thomas Grovenstein
Kirk Henderson
Lydia Lingerfelt
Susan Mays
Christa McCay
Michelle Might
Tracy Phelps
Corinne Roth
Ephraim Rotter
Natalie Smith
Margaret Sommer
Leslie Yarborough

Not a member? Click here to join.

ETOWAH ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, CARTERSVILLE, GEORGIA

ALEXIS AT THE BOOTH WESTERN ART MUSEUM, CARTERSVILLE, GEORGIA

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