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HISTORIC SPRINGFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH RECOGNIZED IN NEW HISTORICAL MARKER

Savannah, GA, August 11, 2010-- The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) along with the Springfield Baptist Church, will unveil a new historical marker to recognize the Historic Springfield Baptist Church. The dedication will be held at the church at 314 Canaan Circle in Greensboro, Georgia on **August 15, 2010, at 11:00 a.m.**

First organized by enslaved African American in 1864, Springfield Baptist Church has served the Greensboro area without interruption. At the time most blacks worshiped in racially mixed churches, though blacks were relegated to the balconies. During reconstruction many white churches expelled black worshipers and in 1867 the First Baptist Church presented its former members with \$200 and the suggestion to start their own church. Indicative of cultural patterns during the reconstruction era, the history of the Springfield Baptist church illustrates birth and proliferation of African American Churches in the south. The marker text reads as follows:

Historic Springfield Baptist Church

Springfield Baptist Church was established on January 27, 1864 prior to the abolition of slavery, and is among the first African-American churches founded in Middle Georgia. Enslaved workers purchased land from Mrs. Nancy Bickers and began monthly meetings. Levi Thornton, a slave, served as the church's first pastor. Prior to the Civil War most local congregations were racially integrated, though blacks and whites sat separately. However in 1867 African Americans were dismissed from local congregations. At their dismissal, the white congregations presented Springfield with \$200 to help build the current building. In 1978, this property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the Springfield Baptist Church

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 is an educational and research institution founded in 1839 to tell the story of Georgia and its role in American history. Headquartered in Savannah with offices in Atlanta, the Georgia Historical Society has nearly 6,000 members statewide and nearly 200 affiliates in 80 counties. It publishes the Georgia Historical Quarterly, maintains a library and archives that houses the oldest collection of Georgia history materials in the nation, manages the Historical Marker Program for the State of Georgia, and educates thousands of school children about Georgia history through the annual Georgia History Festival. For more information visit: www.georgiahistory.com.