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The scope of work for this internship revolved around three major components concerning the Georgia Historic Theatres Project (GHTP): transferring all database entries collected in 2014 into GNAHRGIS, updating the GHPT final document, including database updates and text revisions, and lastly identifying key preservation partners and platforms that would enable the most effective utilization of the GHTP document and raise awareness and interest about the project itself. These three tasks were completed between August 6th and July 12th during the Summer of 2016. This report summarizes the research and tasks completed during this internship.

GNAHRGIS
The GNAHRGIS component proved to be a time consuming but key element of this project. After a batch import from the 2014 database was created, I was able to input specific information about each theater into the GNAHRGIS database for use by the public. Historic photographs were also added for several of the resources with credit to the Vanishing Georgia online Archives and the DCA Archives in Athens. While all the information I had access to was entered into GNAHRGIS, there were several resources that were missing key information I was either unable to find or did not have time to find during the 10 weeks of work. A spreadsheet included in this document identifies missing pieces of information like recent images, dates of construction, and coordinates. Additionally, certain resources associated with a National Register Tracking Survey were not able to be associated correctly with the Theaters 2016 Survey. This created duplicate points in the system which will need to be fixed in the future. All GNAHRGIS ID’s for both points were recorded in GNAHRGIS and on the batch import spreadsheet. These are all issues that will need to be addressed by future staff or interns working on the project.

DATABASE UPKEEP
The database was updated with found dates of construction, historic photographs, and GNAHRGIS ID’s created for each resource during this project. The introductory text created in this project was also edited based on corrections made by HPD staff.
PRESS PLAN

Research conducted throughout the summer revolved primarily around looking at other statewide surveys and how different approaches to the classic theater survey have helped with preservation and revitalization of not only the theaters themselves, but of the downtowns they occupy. Several states were identified as being relevant case studies and are examined in future sections of this report. The states looked at for this study were Washington, Oregon, Iowa, New Mexico, and West Virginia. Several individual theaters were also researched as case studies including the Avolon Theater in Milwaukee, and the Schaefer Center in Taccoa, GA. Notes about how successes from around the country can be applied in Georgia are also included in this report. Several organizations were also identified as potential partners for raising awareness and interest about the Georgia Historic Theatres Project. Along with local Main Street Partners the Georgia Trust, The National Trust, the League of Historic American Theatres, and the Theatre Historical Society of America are all organizations of interest and could be potential key players in the promotion and progression of this project. Specifics about the roles of each organization will be discussed in detail in this report. Lastly, several platforms of social media were identified as being possible outlets for theater updates. Apps such as Instagram, websites like Facebook, and blogging sites like WordPress would all be routes to explore when launching the project. All of these platforms offer different ways to transmit information about the GHTP. Even more, they serve as starting points for creating an online presence and creating awareness until a stand-alone website is feasible. Examples of how these mediums will be discussed in this report, in addition to examples of what posts and sites could look like once launched. Lastly, maps were generated by using the database created in 2014 in order to identify operational theaters in order to establish a historic theaters network. By creating a network of historic theaters in operation communication between the business owners and cities will improve and subsequently share their successes and failures in hopes of promoting theater restoration and downtown revitalization.
CASE STUDIES: OREGON

TYPE: Statewide Initiative

PARTNERS: University of Oregon, Oregon Main Street, Travel Oregon, Pacific Power, Restore Oregon.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: The Oregon Historic Theatres project was the result of a statewide initiative brought about by several key partners including the University of Oregon, Oregon Main Street, Travel Oregon, and Pacific Power. The goal of this project as outlined in the final report was to “Describe the history of theaters in Oregon and summarize their cultural, economic, and social importance today; Provide a profile of existing historic theaters; Assess the structural and financial needs of historic theaters; and Encourage the formation of a statewide historic theater initiative in Oregon.”¹ The work conducted resulted in a comprehensive needs assessment of operating and non-operating theaters for the state of Oregon. As a result, Restore Oregon (Oregon’s leading preservation non-profit) is currently conducting theater restoration workshops covering everything from challenges faced by theater owners, to the details of restoration.² The project was completed in 2015.

² For more information regarding these workshops see the Restore Oregon website: http://restoreoregon.org/historic-theaters-workshops/

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: The partnerships created in Oregon are very similar to those already established in Georgia. By strengthening these relationships and enlisting perhaps more help from interested students (in preservation programs across the state), more can be accomplished. A needs assessment report for operating theaters seemed to be extremely helpful in establishing theater restoration workshops through Restore Oregon. This could be something that could be adopted in our state and establish a historic theater network while offering help from experts in the field.
CASE STUDIES: WASHINGTON

TYPE: State Historic Preservation Office Initiative

PARTNERS: Washington state Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: This 2008 project centered primarily on the creation of a physical needs assessment document for the state of Washington’s historic theaters. The report includes categorizations of theaters, needs assessments statewide, recommendations, funding opportunities, and more. The final report is extremely comprehensive in covering issues and options that may face historic theater owners.¹

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: The needs assessment completed in Washington contains a vast amount of information that could be valuable to theater owners and main street officials across the state. Although the process of creating a document like this could take several years and a number of resources, a comprehensive needs assessment document would be an invaluable resource for Georgia theaters. Distributing such a resource statewide could ensure that the information gathered in the past decades would not go to waste. Additionally, it would highlight major areas of concern for theaters across the state and identify statewide priorities that could be discussed in workshops or at conferences.

TYPE: Staewide Initiative

PARTNERS: State Historical Society of Iowa (state’s historic preservation office), Preservation Iowa (statewide preservation nonprofit), Iowa Tourism Office

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: This 2012 initiative identified seven historic theaters in Iowa located in downtown Main Streets to be involved in a three-year program involving a multitude of theater restoration workshops covering topics including: Building the Board, Fundraising for Capital Improvements, Market Analysis/ Business Plans, Theater Management, Technology to Attract a Younger Audience, Recruiting and Managing Volunteers. Although this project selected only seven theaters to be involved in these workshops, the successful principles of these workshops could be applied throughout the state and in other states as well.¹

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: The Iowa approach was applied to theaters on a much smaller scale due to the fact that only seven theaters were selected to participate in a three-year program. Although this is perhaps somewhat exclusive, if funds are not available to aid many theaters at once selecting only a few in yearly intervals could be a manageable approach. Additionally, this approach allowed Iowa to test the successes of initial workshops to see which practices would work best for other theaters.

TYPE: Statewide Initiative

PARTNERS: Main Street Communities, Economic Development Program

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: In 2013 when many historic theaters faced the threat of closure caused by the forced digital conversion the film industry pressed upon theaters nationwide, New Mexico's Economic Development Program took initiative to financially support historic theaters with the necessary digital upgrades necessary to stay open with the shift in the industry. This also included a physical needs assessment and seeks to support the long-term sustainable operation of New Mexico's historic theaters. In 2013 $200,000 was awarded throughout the state for upgrades to historic theaters from Main Street communities.¹

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: What stood out about the New Mexico case study was the involvement from economic development programs. This branch of government is an important stakeholder in downtown revitalization and subsequently in the restoration of historic theaters in Georgia Main Streets. By creating relationships with potentially interested partners, new sources of funding can be identified for historic theaters across the state.

CASE STUDIES: WEST VIRGINIA

TYPE: State Historic Preservation Office Initiative

PARTNERS: State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Alliance of West Virginia

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: This project initiated by the state historic preservation office was funded through a Preserve America grant. This project resulted in the creation of a brochure including theaters, divided by region, throughout the state of West Virginia that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The “West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail” goes through 22 separate theaters listed on the National Register of Historic Places providing images and historic details for each.¹

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: West Virginia’s brochure style theater trail accomplished organizing detailed theater information into a succinct package. Although this brochure is exclusive the West Virginia theaters listed on the National Register, something like this could be done for the cities of Georgia, primarily in cities where there is a high concentration of historic theaters (not just those on the national register). This could promote tourism in downtowns and raise revenue for currently operating historic theaters. Something like this could easily be generated from the information compiled in the historic theaters database.

CASE STUDIES BY THEATER:
AVALON THEATER, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

TYPE: Non-profit

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: The Neighborhood Theater Group, a local non-profit, owns and operates the historic Avalon Theatre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After closing in 2000 the Avalon was neglected for the next five years until founder of The Neighborhood Theater Group, Lee Barczack, decided to fund the extensive restoration project of the theater. As the project moved forward Barczack gained recognition and support from both the community and the local government for the efforts of his non-profit. The Avalon reopened in 2014.  

APPLICATION IN GEORGIA: The Avalon Theater is perhaps unique to have such a generous benefactor concerned with its revitalization. After all, not all small-town theaters can be so fortunate. The main takeaway from this case study is there reliance upon the community to sustain the business. Community support and involvement kept the theater alive and successful after restoration, and that is an element that must be kept in mind when restoring and operating a historic theater.

TYPE: City-Owned

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: The Schaefer Center (historically The Ritz Theater) in Toccoa, Georgia is perhaps one of the best examples of Main Street theater revitalization in the state. After being gifted to the city of Toccoa after stretches of vacancies and physical alterations, the theater has received a number of grants for its restoration. Since 2011, the theater has received four separate grants totalling $102,000. The restoration of this historic theater has tremendously increased the pull into Main Street Toccoa. By connecting those responsible for the successes at the Schaefer Center with other main street theaters in Georgia, successful practices and advice can be spread throughout the state.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/schaefercenter/?fref=ts
POTENTIAL PARTNERS

LEAGUE OF HISTORIC AMERICAN THEATRES

THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GEORGIA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

LOCAL MAIN STREET PARTNERS + PRESERVATION GROUPS

LOCAL DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

OFFICES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
National Trust Conference: This could be a platform for presenting the project to a large audience working in preservation.

Theatre Focused Ramble or Expedition: This could be hosted in a city such as Atlanta (larger concentration of theatres, convenience) or possibly in a smaller town with a lot of historic theatres like Athens, Columbus, Augusta, etc. This event could be advertised to preservationists and main street employees alike – this could spark interest within smaller Georgia communities to utilize their historic theatres both as a tool for economic development and as a way to enhance their main street programs with their own historic theatres.

League of Historic American Theatres National and Regional Conferences: The National Conference would be a larger stage for presenting about expertise in the field of historic theatre preservation, while the Regional conference would be a more focused platform to discuss the project. The last regional conference was held in Tampa. There could be potential for a regional conference to be hosted in Atlanta to discuss region specific issues and cultivate more interest in Georgia theatres – this could be a great way to bring main street directors into the mix by learning about success stories with theatres in Georgia and how to utilize their towns historic theatres in successful ways for the community.

Theatre Historical Society of America Conclave Theatre Tour: This tour is hosted in a different region or city each year centered around an architectural tour of a city or a region and its theatres. A bid for Atlanta might be a way to promote interest in southeastern theatres and raise awareness about the work that has already been done in addition to promoting further research in the area.
The Rambler: look into having a piece done about the GHT project in the Trust’s quarterly publication.

inLEAGUE: League of Historic American Theatres’ monthly online publication with two printed copies per year. Even a short essay about the project could be a small success for raising awareness. An intern or an employee could also reach out to the organization and have a piece written about the project instead of writing it themselves.

Marquee: Theatre Historical Society of America’s quarterly publication. A short essay or longer piece could be submitted to the publication about Georgia’s historic theatres and the project itself.

Annual: Theatre Historical Society of America’s annual publication (Similar to the marquee as far as audience goes). Potential for submitting a written piece or having one written about the project.
The Georgia Historic Theatres Project is a database of historic properties in the state that serve or have served as entertainment venues. Properties fifty years of age or older are included, as well as those that will gain historic status within the next ten years. In short, properties constructed in 1974 or earlier are included.

The database provides a launch pad for state, local, and private organizations. It is not intended to serve as a substitute for historic research, but rather a tool to identify properties that may be of interest for further study. The database should also not be considered an exhaustive list of all historic theatres that have existed in Georgia. With few exceptions, all demolished theatres are excluded from this study.

The Georgia Historic Theatre Project is the culmination of the work of many organizations and individuals. There have been multiple lists of theatres in the state on file at Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Department over the years. This department is Georgia’s state historic preservation office, or SHPO. This department’s primary goal is to promote the preservation and use of historic resources throughout the state. These files, in addition to topical collections, National Register nomination forms, and building surveys played an important part in the development of this new database. The Fox Theatre Institute also compiled lists of theatres for a variety of purposes including a recent inventory. The Department of Community Affairs, led by Steve Storey, developed an inventory in 2004. The data collected by these two organizations was vital to this project. Other resources for this new database included property data from county tax assessors, GNAHGRGIS (Georgia’s Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Geographic Information Systems online database), online theatre database Cinema Treasures, and self-reported theatre information.

The theatres are classified into six categories based on current use and condition, and a table was created for each. The categories are defined as followed: **In-Use Historic Theatres**: historic buildings built as theatres and currently used as such; **In-Use Historic Buildings**: historic buildings not built as theatres originally, but are used as such currently; **In-Use Historic Drive-Ins**: historic drive-ins that were built as such and still currently serve this purpose (continuous operation not accounted for); **Historic Theatres Under Renovation**: historic theatres that were undergoing renovation as of 2014; **Former Historic Theatres**: historic buildings originally built as theatres that are now used in another capacity (or are vacant/unused); **Facade Only**: theatres that are missing integral parts of their original structure and presently consist only of their façade; and **Unknown**: special cases that do not fall under any of the previously defined categories which require unique attention and may be at risk. Each table may be used for a multitude of purposes. For example, **In-Use Historic Theatres** may be utilized as state, regional, or local training facilities. These theatres, along with **In-Use Historic Buildings** may also be useful references for property owners and organizations interested in a similar restoration or rehabilitation project. **Theatres Listed as Theatres Under Renovation** may benefit from outreach and guidance. Former Historic Theatres may provide rehabilitation inspiration to property owners for whom a theatre restoration is not feasible. The **Unknown properties** may include.

Some sample thematic groupings are included in this report as well. Many more specific use tables may be generated from this database. Included here is a table noting properties that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contained within a National Register District. The National Register is the country’s official inventory of historic properties deemed important at local, state, and national levels. Another table lists properties that may be of interest to African-American historians.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards terminology is used throughout this report and database. These standards are integral principles of preservation practice that are to be utilized by both preservation professionals and non-professionals alike. These principles lay the foundation for any preservation project to ensure the execution of best practices and the protection of historic resources. These standards define treatments that can be applied to historic properties like preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The term “renovation” is used here as a general term for repair or improvement work which may encompass aspects of restoration, rehabilitation, etc.

By promoting awareness about this project, all involved parties hope to increase interest in theater revitalization and create a more powerful demand for resources, both physical and financial, for projects across the state.¹

¹The majority of this text is taken from the intro written by Jarad Holdbrook in 2014. His introduction provides a brief yet informative amount of information on the project. If a piece is to be published in any of the aforementioned publications, this text could be adapted even further. Photographs would also be included.
This is a great starting point for introducing the Theatres Project into the world of social media. This app reaches all demographics and age groups. Not only that, but it appeals to people both in and outside of the preservation world. An Instagram account can document theatre renovation projects from start to finish so people can see the process of restoration. It can also include simple photographs of historic theatres around Georgia with short historical narratives (including things like building date, style, and interesting facts about the theatre). An Instagram account was created as part of this internship to begin the process of raising awareness. The account information can be easily transferred or shared between interns and staff among different organizations so multiple people are able to post and contribute. Additionally, it can easily be hooked up to a Facebook account or a blog.

Sample Post from the newly created GHTP Instagram
This could be connected to the Instagram account and post the same images and info but reach a different audience if there are Facebook users who may not use Instagram. This could also be used to make announcements and post updates about historic theatre projects happening in different Main Street Communities across the state. Facebook is also more interactive with the online community – you can make a call for submissions of photos and information about theatres in communities that have not been reached out to, and people are allowed to give and receive more expansive commentary on posts. Additionally, this could be a great way to promote events happening at different main street historic theaters and create a real awareness and community surrounding the business of small historic theaters. This could be a potential next step in promoting the Georgia Historic Theatres Project.

The official Facebook page for the Theatre Historical Society of America: This page promotes events across the country, shares articles and updates about theatre projects and renovations, posts photos, videos, and allows for donations.
SOCIAL MEDIA: BLOG

A blog could be a great starting point for the eventual goal of a stand-alone website. This could include updates about theatre renovation projects, features about theatres at risk, and posts about where main street directors can look for resources to renovate their community’s historic theatres or how to program their theatre successfully. It can also provide links to GNAHRGIS, other theater research sites, and links to pdf’s of the research and reports that have been created out of this project thus far. This is something simple to set up and maintain through free websites if a stand alone website isn’t immediately feasible. This would be a good platform to begin putting short reports and essays together in one place about the project outside of the database and GNAHRGIS. Additionally, a blog is also much easier for people to access and explore, and not as complicated or expensive as a website to create. The most reputable hosts for blogs/free websites like this are WordPress, Squarespace, or Weebly. Further research can be conducted of choose the best hosting site.
This map displays all operating theaters listed in the database as of 2014. These include the categories of In-Use Historic Theaters (83 resources), In-Use historic buildings (50 resources), and In-Use Historic Drive-Ins (4 resources). The purpose of this map is to create a visual aid in identifying operating historic theaters in an attempt to create a network to share and learn from fellow business owners, municipalities, and communities throughout the state. This network could tremendously improve communication between communities with similar issues and aid in restoring historic theaters at a smaller scale. Workshops, annual meetings, or even day to day communication could be a result of this network.

Map by author
Access at https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VmTuG8OB1-6dKVxIw0prDRV2Ww&usp=sharing
This map displays a more precise set of data: the locations of In-Use Historic Theatres. These are operating theaters that have been classified as such in the prior work done on this project. These are buildings that are known to be historic theaters, and still serve as such today. Different maps can be generated from the data collected over the past years in order to identify potential theater network systems in order to build a community around the preservation and revitalization of historic theaters.

Map by author
Access at: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VmTuzGOBl-6dKV_xlw0prDRV2Ww&usp=sharing
Thank you to everyone who set aside time to space to help work on this project. Special thanks to everyone who contributed to the research prior, and thank you so much for allowing me to continue their work.