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## Book Review - Memories of the Mansion: The Story of Georgia's Governor's Mansion

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## Off the SHELF

**Memories of the Mansion: The Story of Georgia's Governor's Mansion** by Sandra D. Deal, Jennifer W. Dickey and Catherine M. Lewis, (University of Georgia Press, 2015: ISBN 978-0-8203-4859-9, \$39.95)

In 1733 James Oglethorpe, founder of the colony that became Georgia, made do with basic shelter on the banks of the Savannah River. Today Governor Nathan Deal commutes to the Capitol from an imposing, elegant mansion on West Paces Ferry in Buckhead.

The authors of this volume took on the task of writing the history of how the state's chief executives and their families lived since the state's birth. The trio included Mrs. Sandra D. Deal, Georgia's current first lady; Dr. Jennifer W. Dickey, associate professor of history at Kennesaw State University; and Dr. Catherine M. Lewis, KSU assistant vice president of Museums, Archives and Rare Books and history professor.

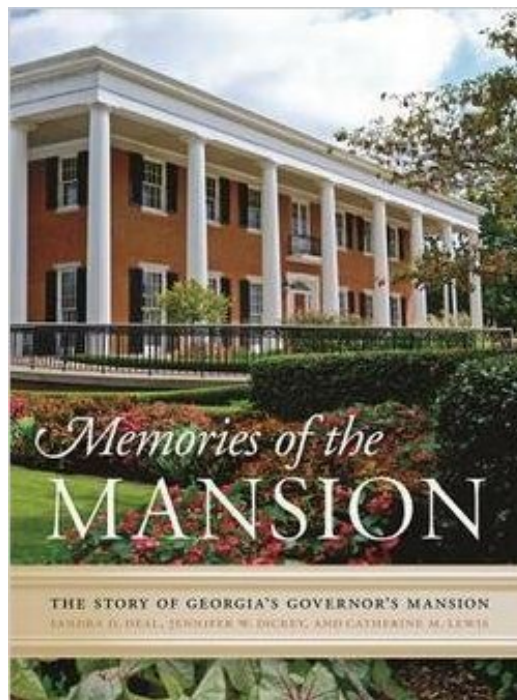
They set goals that would make a graduate student's head spin:

Recount the history of all governors' mansions with emphasis on the one that opened in 1968 and has been home to eight governors since.

Document the mansion's collections, listing the resources that tell about them.

Share stories told by the eight first families who have lived in the mansion.

Chapter one, "From the Tent to the Granite Mansion" takes the reader from Oglethorpe's time and the peripatetic moves of the state capital to Atlanta in 1868 to the years when governors made do in residences that were inadequate to the task of housing a family and carrying out the obligations to entertain dignitaries. The impetus to build an appropriate mansion is recalled in the forward by Betty Foy Sanders, wife of the late Governor Carl Sanders. She moved into the leaky, shopworn Granite House in Ansley Park but set in motion planning for the building we now see. "I wanted the new mansion on West Paces Ferry Road to make a statement and become a visible part of the history of our state," Sanders writes.



Lester and Virginia Maddox spent a year in the Granite

House before becoming the first occupants. Governor Maddox is not always recalled favorably because of his steadfast racism. But the authors credit the Maddoxes for setting the tone for the new, grander mansion. "Georgia's state house is the finest in the nation," he declared. "It doesn't belong to the Democrats or Republicans or the Maddoxes. It belongs to the people of Georgia."

Governor Maddox, who took pride in his rise from modest beginnings to successful businessman, was not always comfortable in

the stately mansion. He trimmed a tennis court and swimming pool from the project and made sure there was security for him and future governors. He also held frequent open houses for the people of the state and its visitors.

This is a coffee table book, attractive to set out with your favorite cheese and adult beverage.

But it tells an important tale of Georgia history and brings to life the unique imprint eight first families have had on the governor's mansion, and the mansion on their lives.

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