



# Isaiah Davenport House Volunteer Newsletter

March 2011

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236-809



## Frederick Selleck

Jones's Upper Wharf

Two thousand lbs prime North Carolina BACON, which will be sold low.

-also-

A General Assortment of Groceries,  
At wholesale – for approved paper.

April 19, 1820, Columbia Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette.

[ID built a house for FS which still stands on West York Street.]

## Washington Garden,

At the head of The Bay.

The proprietor of this establishment has the pleasure of informing the citizens of Savannah that it is now open and will be continued through the season. ICE CREAM and other refreshments will be kept constantly on hand, and every attention will be paid to visitors.

Wanted as above,

Two active BOYS, as waiters.

April 19, 1820, Columbia Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette.

## An Ordinance

To Alter and amend an ordinance passed the 30<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1822...

1<sup>st</sup>. Sec. Be it ordained by the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, and its hereby ordained by the authority of the same, that from and after the passing of this ordinance each and every person or persons keeping a Billiard Table or Billiard Tables in this city shall, for each and every Billiard Table so kept, be fined in the sum of ten dollars per month, and that the marshal do report to this board at their first meeting in each every month – any person or persons offering against this ordinance, and summon such offender or offenders to appear at the first meeting aforesaid.

April 5, 1819, Savannah Daily Republican.

## DAVENPORT HOUSE CALENDAR

[HOLD ON TIGHT, IT'S MARCH AND THE BUSY SEASON IS HERE!]

Tuesday, March 1 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

Wednesday, March 2 from 9:30

until noon – DH Docent Training Program

Thursday, March 3 at 5 p.m. –

*Tea at Mrs. Davenport's*

Friday, March 4 from 9:30 to 11:45

– Special Experience: Preservation Tour for Civil War Trust

- 5 p.m. – *Tea at*

*Mrs. Davenport's*

Saturday, March 5 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

Tuesday, March 8 at noon –

Davenport House Committee

- 4:30 p.m. – *Our Old House*

program

- 8 p.m. – screening of *Green-*

*fingers* at Savannah Theater

(see related Savannah Garden

Expo information)

Thursday, March 10 at 5 p.m. –

*Tea at Mrs. Davenport's*

- 6:30 p.m. in Kennedy

Pharmacy – HSF Lecture

Friday, March 11 at 5 p.m. – *Tea*

*at Mrs. Davenport's*

Saturday, March 12 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

Sunday, March 13 from 4 until 10

p.m. – DH garden/KP rental

Tuesday, March 15 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

- 6:30 to 7:30 – JIs –Topic:

"1824" readers' theater

Wednesday, March 16 at 5 p.m. –

*Tea at Mrs. Davenport's*

Thursday, March 17 – DH closed

for St. Patrick's Day

- All Day— K. Pharmacy rental

Friday, March 18 at 5 p.m. – *Tea*

*at Mrs. Davenport's*

Saturday, March 19 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

- 4 to 7 p.m. – Garden rental

Tuesday, March 22 at 4:30 p.m. –

*Our Old House* program

- 4 to 9 p.m. – Kennedy Phar-

macy use

Wednesday, March 23 at 5 p.m. –

*Tea at Mrs. Davenport's*

Thursday, March 24 from 9:30

until noon – Kennedy Use/

Tour of Homes

- Rest Room use all day –

Savannah Tour of Homes and

Gardens

- 5 p.m. – *Tea at*

## Mrs. Davenport's

Friday, March 25 at 3:30 p.m. –

Madeira tour

- 5:30 to 9 – *Trolley Back in*

*Time* (3 Madeira tours for Sa-

vannah Tour of Homes and

Gardens)

Saturday, March 26 from 4 to 7

p.m. – Garden Rental

- 5 to 6:30 – Madeira program

(Indiana Historical Society)

Monday, March 28 from noon

until 3:30 p.m. – KP use/

partnership with Savannah Mu-

sic Festival

Tuesday, March 29 from noon

until 3:30 p.m. - KP use/

partnership with Savannah Mu-

sic Festival

Thursday, March 31 - KP use/

partnership with Savannah Mu-

sic Festival

- 5 p.m. – *Tea at Mrs. Dav-*

*enport's*

- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira tour

## SHOP NEWS:

- The shop has received several new

items recently: Two children's

books – Savannah Coloring Book

(\$5.99) and Georgia Jeopardy

(\$7.95), a handsome traveling letter

box (\$99) and a trolley bell (\$29)

- Our thoughts are with Ben Head

who recovering from a health crisis.

- Thank you Beth, Lauren, Arla, Gail

and Edith for working extra while

Ben is away.

## DOCENT NEWS:

AS WE PLAN FOR THE BUSY

SEASON, THINK ABOUT THE BE-

LOW (as well as reviewing the volun-

teer work calendar to see where you

a re vitally needed);

Saying "umm": One two occa-

sions this past month we heard how

annoying it is to hear a tour guide or

lecturer saying "uhmm" continu-

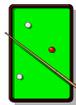
ously – one of these comments was

specifically about a DH docent. In

docent training, we address speech

issues and ask that docents under-

stand their own peculiar communi-



cations idiosyncrasies (for example you may be a - low talker, fast talker, mumblor, colloquialisms/cliché user, a slang user, and/or you may have an accent). A good way to address your issues is to record yourself and play it back to hear how you sound (It is usually a horror to hear. It is for me). So, we ask you to evaluate your speech pattern, listen to yourself and then consider the listener on how you choose to proceed. A rule of thumb, if your parents told you to speak up, stand up straight, hold your shoulders back, smile, you probably still need to do it no matter how long it has been since they told you.

- **WE KEEP HEARING THE SAME (WRONG) THINGS . . .** Remember what not to say:

\* ***People were short back then.***

This is not necessarily so—we know nothing of the Davenports' stature.

\* ***Mr. Davenport built ships. Mr. Davenport was a ship builder.***

In the documents we know about Mr. Davenport called himself a “carpenter.” There is nothing to indicate he was a shipwright or apprenticed to be a shipwright.

\* ***Mr. Davenport apprenticed with his father.***

As far as we know Mr. Davenport's father died when he was very young.

\* ***Mrs. Davenport came from a wealthy South Carolina family.***

We don't know that. Where Mrs. D's mother was living in 1808 (Greene Ward) conveys comfort but not wealth.

\* [While demonstrating the back door] ***The house has not settled in 190 years .***

How do we know ? The back door is a replacement door and the house had a major restoration in 1956. Better to say: *The DH is a well-built house* – and leave it at that.

\* ***Rooms (including closets) were taxed.*** People did not have closets the way we are used to. They did not have hangers. They did not have the volume of clothing we have.

- It is important that you replenish your knowledge by reviewing your manual, sticking with what is covered in training (***common myths*** are cov-

ered there) and reading the newsletter (*Docent News, Collections News* and the content articles). We want everyone to be “on the same page” and up-to-date with the latest research.

- **Do not move the stanchions:**

They are in their location for a reason. Any sort of rolling leaves marks on the floor.

- **Welcome New Docents:** The DH had a large training class in February. Please welcome these new faces when you have the opportunity: **Kelly Cohen, Frances C. Colón, Gail Connolly** (who is a shop volunteer), **Roseann Hooper, Gail Jordan, Sue Kinnaird, Georgia Klautzer, John E. Leonti, Katherine Owens** and **Brooke Wilford!**

**VOLUNTEERS ARE OUR BIGGEST PROMOTERS!**  
**TEA AT MRS. DAVENPORT'S** in March: **Thursdays and Fridays (and two Wednesday) in March 2011** (3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18,



**23, 24, 31) at 5 p.m. -**

**Let your guests know!** Along with becoming familiar with tea serving equipment and seeing rooms in the house where tea was served, participants meet costumed characters portraying people of the 1820s. At the conclusion of the program, guests sit down and take tea with the costumed performers. Having recently found several period sources to draw conversation from, performers have new and particularly lively banter this spring. The museum used biographies of Mrs. Basil Hall, a British visitor to America, Margaret Smith Bayard, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century hostess in Washington, DC, and Robert MacKay of Savannah – all of which shed light on the time. Shading the conversation with historical references, participants will meet an esteemed visitor from Washington, DC and may hear a poem about succotash, consider the latest dances and have their tea leaves read. “Our programs [in March and in May] about tea are intended to make our visitors' experience with history fun. We expect them to leave happy and amused

with their encounter with the past,” concludes Credle. The performers in this year's programs include **Jamie Credle** as Mrs. Julia Johnson, **Lauren Purcell** as Hephzibah, **Jan Vach** as Mrs. Margaret Bayard Smith, **Cassidy Hatcher** as Mary, **Jeff Freeman** as Mr. Jeffries and **Shannon Wichers** as Charlotte. Thank you to **Raleigh Marcell** for researching the dialogue and directing the program.

- **Bakers for the March tea program:** **Thursday, March 3:** Gingerbread- **Charlotte Rehmert, Sally Lunn—Claudette Engvall;** **Friday, March 4** – Sally Lunn and Gingerbread – **Helen Linksey;** **Thursday, March 10** – Sally Lunn and Gingerbread - **Judy Howell;** **Friday, March 11;** Sally Lunn and Gingerbread – **Helen Linksey;** **Wednesday, March 16:** Sally Lunn and Gingerbread - **Judy Howell;** **Friday, March 18** – Sally Lunn – **Gayle Mongrandi** and Gingerbread - **Karen Matteo;** **Wednesday, March 23** – Sally Lunn and Gingerbread - **Helen Linksey;** **Thursday, March 24** – Sally Lunn and Gingerbread - **Arla DaCamara;** **Thursday, March 31** – Sally Lunn – **Carol Jennings** and Gingerbread – **Karen Matteo**

**OUR OLD HOUSE: DIRECTOR'S PRESERVATION TOUR OF THE DAVENPORT HOUSE:** **Tuesdays and Saturdays in March** – March 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 22 and 29 at 4:30 p.m. – **Let your guests know about this!**

If you would like to know more about how the Davenport House is maintained, what has happened to the house preservation-wise over the past 190 years and/or why it was awarded the **Preserve America Presidential Award** (2005), you will want to take this tour. The DH Director will address what strategies were taken in the 1956 restoration as well as the one in 2000-2003. Guests will begin by examining the exterior of the house and then will wind their way all the way up to the attic. Refreshments will be served during the



orientation component of the programs.

### JUNIOR INTERPRETERS:

The Tuesday, March 15 JI meeting will concentrate on the readers' theater production of "1824," which was the living history program put on by the museum in 2007. It will fit nicely for a request **Hugh Golson** made for JIs to be the entertainment (gulp) at a convention for retired teachers in May. JIs will present a portion of the original production. The show pulls together newspaper accounts of the year 1824.



### MADEIRA/TROLLEY BACK IN TIME AND MOTORCOACHES:

- Since 2006, the museum has been a featured site in the **Savannah Homes and Gardens'** premium tour *Trolley Back in Time*. This year's presentation will take place on Friday, March 25 when the museum will host 105 people over a three hour period between 5:30 and 9 p.m. (three trolleys of 35 adults arrive at assigned times.) which is no small undertaking. We need trained Madeira interpreters and several assistants/servers to make it a smooth

operation. Let Jamie know if you can help!



- **Motor Coach Madeira Series:** These tour begin on Friday, March 25 as well

– though because of the **Trolley Back in Time** – we will meet this group at 3:30 p.m., the remaining 16 dates will be on Thursday and Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We are putting together a crew to work these tours.

### NOTES FROM DANIEL CAREY'S CONVERSATION WITH DOCENT TRAINEES:

**Daniel Carey**, president and CEO, spoke to docent trainees on February 9 in order that they may best explain the role HSF has played and continues to play in the revitalization of the port city. He emphasized relevancy today as well as the memory of the past good works. He

would like for what docents say with regard to the preservation movement to be made as contemporary as possible noting the current activities the Foundation is involved in. There are 350 properties which have been saved by HSF's direct intervention. The usual process through its **Revolving Loan Fund** is to find an endangered property which fits a prescribed criteria, purchase it, if necessary stabilize it, put a protective covenant on it and sell it to a sympathetic new owner. HSF retains the right of first refusal upon resale of Revolving Loan properties. About 90% of these properties are residential and they are not all located in the Landmark Historic District. There are 12 other historic districts in Savannah/Chatham County.

He spoke of the democratization of the preservation movement. A property does not have to be the biggest or the best to be worthy of saving. He noted that there about 15 active revolving funds in the United States and that it is a rarely used tool in saving significant buildings. Another important point he made was that "**The answer to blight is not removal.**" If too many historic buildings are removed a district could jeopardize its historic status. He offers that we should let visitors know the entire city is worth exploring as there is a great variety of architecture to see here.

Our 30,000 visitors a year present us with a rare opportunity to influence them. By showing them the DH and what a terrific example of preservation and restoration it is, you can inspire them and send them home with a message to preserve what they have.

### COLLECTIONS NEWS:

During February, the sisal rug in Cornelia's Room was taken away trimmed and returned. Now we are able to close the door to the room when necessary for privacy in interpreting the room.

**From Historic Charleston Foundation's website about the Aiken**

**Rhett House (the same is true of the DH):** *In the spring, slaves removed the heavy woven carpets and tacked decorative grass mats to the floor in anticipation of Charleston's hot summer months. Tack marks in the original heart-pine floors are still visible, and many of the mats, imported from Asia in strips and then sewn together, retain their vibrant colors.*

### Savannah Garden Expo:

The Expo is poised for an explosion of activity! Committee members are working to get the preliminary work in order for a fine event. The event will be held at the Morris Center with the preview party on Thursday, April 14 and the two-day garden show being held on Friday, April 15 and Saturday, April 16. To encourage attendance, the preview party tickets will be half the price of previous years at \$50. The Saturday lecture speaker will be noted writer, **Paula Dietz**, whose NY Times article inspired the movie *Greenfingers*, which will be screened on March 8 at the Savannah Theater in anticipation of the Expo. The new event venue at an historic gardening location will make for impressive setting. Vendors will be situated on the bluff overlooking the Savannah River. Old favorites will be there – exhibition gardens, the window box competition and returning will be the container garden competition. See the HSF website – [www.historysavannahfoundation.org](http://www.historysavannahfoundation.org) for the latest details.

**About the movie Greenfingers:** "The beauty and delicacy of a flower seem a sharp contrast to the rough exterior of a prison inmate. Yet these two images are exactly what writer/director Joel Hershman brings together in "*Greenfingers*," a story of redemption that not only tickles the funny bone, but touches the soul. Paula Dietz's 1998 New York Times article "Free To Grow Bluebells In England," focusing on the real-life gardening exploits of British prisoners, serves as the inspiration for this



fictional tale about finding beauty in the most unlikely of places.” The 2000 movie stars Clive Owen, Helen Mirren and David Kelly. Admission to the movie is \$10 at the door on March 8 at the Savannah Theater. Tickets may also be purchased through HSF’s website.

#### **WORTH MENTIONING:**

##### **- Portrait Featured in Price’s Savannah Novel:**

In February the owner of “Mark Browning’s Portrait” called to let us know it would be sold at the Telfair’s art auction on February 26. Mark Browning was the main character in **Eugenia Price’s Savannah** historical novel. For years, beginning in the late 1990s, droves of tourists came to the DH “looking” for the fictional characters Price depicted. When we re-interpreted the house, we took down “Browning’s” portrait, which is really of an unknown but handsome gent, and returned it to the donor. We hope the portrait found a new home.



**- Gift to the Library:** Frieda Moore recently donated a copy of A Treasury of Great American Houses by Henry Lionel Williams and Ottalie K. Williams, published in 1970, to the DH reference library. The DH and the Hay House are the only two houses from Georgia featured in the coffee table publication. The chapter on the DH shows the early museum interpretation of our period rooms – terrific documentation.

**- National Trust:** You surely know that we are **Partners Place** with National Trust members. They receive a substantial discount (\$2 per person) on general admission to the DH. In exchange the DH receives national advertising directed at a demographic that cherishes places like the DH. We recently received a NT Travel Guide which lists all of the **Partner Places** throughout the US. The Georgia listings are Athens (Destination), Rhodes Hall, Hay House, Isaiah Davenport House, Massie Heritage Center, Jekyll Island

Club Hotel (Historic hotel), River Street Inn (Historic hotel), Mulberry Inn (historic hotel) and King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort (historic hotel).

**- SuperMuseumSunday:** Five hundred seventy-two (572) visitors toured the DH on February 6 during **SuperMuseumSunday**. The house was staffed with JIs including **Lindsey Braden, Annabelle F.-Moe, Lauren Booker, Annelise Wornat, Ellie Darbyshire, Cassidy Hatcher, Rachel Zettler, Madison Thomas, Carlie Ayn Williams, Tyler Allen, Milla Kelly, Lindsey Scott, Matthew Portman and Elijah Scott.**

**- Valentine’s Day Weddings:** We cannot say enough good things about **Judge Harris Lewis** who when asked if he could up the number of weddings from 10 to 14 because of demand he said yes. Harris wed 14 couples between 4:30 and 7 p.m. on Valentine’s Day. All were extremely happy and appreciative of the opportunity to get married at such a lovely place. Savannah Morning News sent a reporter and a news photographer. They also sent a photographer from “Spotted” who took wedding photos which could be ordered. After four days on SavannahNow the “Spotted” site with DH weddings had 4000 hits (the power of the Internet). Both WJCL and WTOG sent a camera person/reporter to cover the event. Because of the support the DH has received from lodgings and Internet postings, the event has become so popular that we had to turn several couples away (How many ceremonies can Harris say in one day?). We will work on how to respond to last minute participants next year!

- A Valentine’s Day thank you to JIs **Milla Kelly, Carlie Ayn Williams** and **Rachel Zettler** who assisted with the weddings event.

#### **OYSTER ROAST REPORT:**

The Davenport House Committee hosted an Oyster Roast at Beaulieu Point on Saturday, February 12 and it could not have been lovelier. It was a beautiful day – the first

one in a long time. The weather and the cause brought out 143 people!

The OR Committee members **Gaye Drummond, Cornelia Groves, Ann**



**Koontz and Marilyn Sheridan** attended to every detail. The property had been manicured and made ready. Adding to the natural beauty of the marsh-side location, fourteen tables were set with taupish-brown table clothes, highlighted with pink napkins and bamboo plates. Decorations included camellias, Davenport House paper boxes and a centerpiece featuring driftwood and oyster shells. The oyster shuckers had a heyday at tables set up in the driveway. The oysters were steamed just to the right texture (for most!). Following the mollusks consumption those assembled sat down to a buffet meal which concluded with cake and trifle. The gospel group **Joyful Sounds** from the Macedonia Baptist Church in Savannah provided inspiring entertainment. During one of their breaks, DH and HSF representatives **Hugh Golson**, DH Endowment Directors Chairman, **Roger Smith**, Davenport House Committee chairman, and **Daniel Carey**, President and CEO of HSF, spoke of the meaning of the day (Georgia Day), the history of the location, the beneficiaries of the event – the Davenport House and Kennedy Pharmacy programming – and the hard work of the committee.

Attendees were greet by friendly faces – **Jeff Freeman, Raleigh Marcell and Tiffany Miller** — who worked the gate and parking detail. Volunteer **Elizabeth Farish** held down the fort at the DH – answering phones – allowing the office staff to be away. An anonymous donor covered the expenses of the day allowing for all that was raised to go to pharmacy programming! Huzzah for good people!

#### **TO A JI FROM A PATRON:**

I attended your Museum Sunday yesterday and had a wonderful time. Several of your Junior Interpreters

seem to be grossed out by the animal fat soap. Just about all "Bar" hand soap today is made from Glycerin which is the fatty oil produced from animal or vegetable fat. Today it is a by-product of making bio-diesel. You may want to relay to them that today it is used in most higher-end soaps along with lipstick, hair products and even used to make cookies. So not only is it a "green" but as a humectant, meaning it attracts moisture to your skin it was much better for you than using an alcohol product like hand sanitizer that dries your skin out.



Another one in the Dining Room was grossed out that there would be a dish made from Gelatin that was boiled out of animal bones. Today marshmallows, Peeps, gummy bears and worm, jelly, jam and margarine are made with Gelatin. Most pharmaceutical capsules and paintballs shell are made from gelatin; it makes beta-carotene water-soluble thus imparting a yellow color to any soft drinks containing beta-carotene so their Mountain Dew owes it color to gelatin. Most boiled ham and turkey lunch meat uses gelatin to hold it together. Gelatin is also used in nail polish remover and makeup applications. If they watch the Cooking Channel they will see most chefs making their own gelatin rather than using Jell-O from the pack to make their dishes. So what we call "green" today is actual a return to the way our forefathers did it.

I often volunteer with scouts as General Oglethorpe and am amazed how young people see the world. The Juniors Interpreters all did a wonderful job and were very entertaining and informative.

Norman "Storm" Munthe



### **Volunteer Spotlight: Gaye Drummond**

This month's spotlight falls on Gaye Drummond who is devoting her numerous talents to the good work with the Davenport House

Committee. She led the committee which presents a very successful Oyster Roast in February!

**DH:** How did you come to be associated with the Davenport House?

**Gaye:** Cornelia Groves invited me to join the committee.

**DH:** What professions did you or do you have outside of the DH?

**Gaye:** I was a qualified nurse and studied floral design before becoming a floral designer.

**DH:** What is your favorite thing about the Davenport House?

**Gaye:** It's English charm – like being back home!

**DH:** What's the most unusual thing that has ever happened to you at the DH?

**Gaye:** Suggesting to my husband that he help us raise funds. He designed a beautiful Davenport House tea towel – now on sale in the shop!

**DH:** What made you decide to become a volunteer at the Davenport House?

**Gaye:** Fun people to work with and I have a keen interest in gardening. It is always a privilege to be working one of the best gardens in Savannah.

**DH:** What do you love most about the Davenport House?

**Gaye:** The staircase.

**DH:** How long have you been in Savannah and where are you from originally?

**Gaye:** I am English and moved to Savannah just over six years ago with my three sons and my husband, Allan, who is chair of illustration at SCAD.

**DH:** Where else have you lived and what is your favorite?

**Gaye:** We lived in South Kensington London for the first five years of our marriage and moved back to our countryside roots for the birth of our second son. We have been lucky and have always lived in historic houses. I think our house on Gordon Street, Savannah was the best. It was like living in a giant doll's house, with great views to Forsyth Park.

**DH:** What is your favorite season in Savannah and why?

**Gaye:** Spring when fresh new

blooms appear like magic.

**DH:** What is your favorite thing to do in Savannah (besides being a volunteer at the DH)?

**Gaye:** Walking Downtown and soaking up the atmosphere all year round and packing a picnic and taking it to the Back River at Tybee with Allan and the boys.

### **A Look at the DH Guest Register:**

During the month of February (2011), we saw visitors from 36 states as well as from Brazil, Canada, China, England and Luxembourg. Interesting hometowns include Indio, CA, Truckee, CA, DeFuniak Springs, IL, Varus, IL, Ida Grove, IA, Pierceton, IN, Shickley, NE, Cranbury, NJ, Elmer, NJ, Skaneateles, NY, Ashaway, RI, Elberon, VA, Mauston, WI.

### **Where They Heard About Us (in descending order of frequency)**

Tour Guides (cited by name: JGL Birthplace, Owens-Thomas House, Architectural Tours, Dirk Hardison); guide books (cited by name: Frommer's, AAA, CAA); trolley tours (cited by name: Old Savannah Tours, Old Town Trolley, Oglethorpe Tours); brochures; concierge (cited by name: Folley House, Spring Hill Suites, Double Tree Inn, President's Quarters, Marriott); Internet; friend; Group On, walked by, newspaper; local; SCAD; Visitors Center; Georgia Historical Society; Midnight in the Garden...; relative; return visit; and one who wrote "my wife knows everything!"

### **What They Had To Say**

"Nicely done tour - thanks."  
 "Wonderful restoration tour by Sue"  
 "Wonderful! Excellent preservation."  
 "Marty did a super job as a docent!"  
 "Beautiful restoration!" "Very informative about the period." "Beautiful house and great guide." "Terrific tour!"  
 "Remarkable." "Very nice house and guide tour lady." "Great home. Go Packers!" "Very educational! Excellent!" "This is an amazing house!"  
 "Loved the tour. It is my favorite home in Savannah!" "Beautifully restored and very informative interpreters!" "Thanks! Great student guides!" "Excellent presentation, S.A.A.!" "Diane did a great job." "Keep treasuring this beautiful home." "Absolutely fascinating!"  
 "Love being here in Savannah."

# The Davenports & Marriage Early 19th Century Style

## Text of the Davenports wedding certificate:

Georgia.)Edward White, Clerk of Court of the Ordinary for the County of Chatham, in the State aforesaid.

To the Reverend Mr. Henry Kollock or any  
Magistrate in said State.



You are hereby authorized to join in Holy State of Matrimony,  
Mr. Isaiah Davenport of New Bedford  
and Miss Sarah Rosamond Clark, of the City of Savannah

For which this is your License.

Given under my Hand and Seal, in the City of Savannah,  
the fourteenth Day of March in the Year of  
OUR LORD 1809 and in the thirty-third Year  
of American Independence.

By Virtue of this License I have joined in the Bands of Matrimony,

*In conformity with this license I have joined in the bands of matrimony  
the above mentioned I. Davenport and S. R. Clark this 15<sup>th</sup> day of March 1809.*

*Henry Kollock.*

## Notes from the Ward Notebooks (Green Ward) housed at HSF: 517 E. York Street St., Greene Ward, Susannah Clark

### Title history:

1799 Mayor and Alderman to Joseph Tippin				
1805-1806 T.D. Ground Rents Book: Susanna Clark				
1809	T. D.	Susannah Clark	bds. Lot 30	\$250
1811	T. D.	"	"	256.
1813	T.D.	"	"	219.
1814	T.D.	"	"	219.
1816	T.D.	"	"	200.
1817	T.D.			
1818	T.D.			
1819	T.D.	"	"	800.
1820	T.D.	"	"	300.
1821	T.D.			
		Peter Cariter	"	300.
1824	T.D.	Susannah Clark	"	200.
		Sarah Middleton	Lot & bds.	400.
1826	T.D.	Susannah Clark	bds. Lot 30	300.
1827	T.D.	S. Clark	bds.	300.
1828	T.D.	S. Clark (in pencil: "see Mr. Davenport 1830".)		300.
(1830	T.D.	not listed and Cartier is on lot 29, Sarah Middleton on lot 31)		
1831	T.D.	Sarah Davenport	bds. Lot 30	300.
1832, June 15	(2R 161)	Mrs. Sarah Davenport to John H. G. Davis for \$300. All lot 30 and heriditments		

### Remarks:

*Gable roof, dormer with shed roof.  
History: The lot on which this house stands was bought in 1799 by Joseph Tippin who two years later sold it to Susannah Rosamond Clarke, widow of Archibald Campbell Clark, who with her daughter and namesake had moved from Beaufort, South Carolina to Savannah. It was from this house on March 15, 1809, that Sarah Rosamond Clark, aged 20, was married to Isaiah Davenport, Savannah's noted master builder, who had come down from Rhode Island 2 years before to ply his trade. This house is one of several in Greene Ward that has been restored by Mrs. Lindsey P. Henderson.*

### From: Jack Larson, The Reshaping of Everyday Life.

p. 63 "Most American couples were wed by a clergyman at the home of the bride, in such informal ceremonies of republican simplicity.

p. 63 "American women began to marry in their late teens; around different parts of the United States the average age of marriage varied from nineteen to twenty-three."

p. 63 "Throughout the American countryside the bride's family tradi-

tionally invited the entire neighborhood to the wedding as a matter of course."

p. 64 "American brides rarely received presents and only occasionally wore white; women who could afford wedding outfits much more commonly

[Note: March 15, 1809 was a Wednesday.]

chose brown or dove-colored silk and were sometimes married in their traveling clothes.

p. 64 “Although slave marriages were not recognized in law, it was ‘very common for slaves to be married,’ as the ex-slave William Wells Brown noted. Slaves usually took permanent partners, and marked their unions with some kind of ceremony—one which mirrored the relationships of power in slaves’ lives, for it involved not informing parents or gaining their assent but obtaining the permission of the master.”

p. 65 “Marrying couples in the rural North followed patterns that their ancestors had established in the seventeenth century. Overwhelmingly they chose to marry in the early spring months of March and April, or the after-harvest months of November and December, avoiding both the dead of winter and the months of heavy farm work of May through October.

### How things have changed:

#### *Jessaym’s Regency Costume Companion Weddings* (web resource)

- **The ring:** An engagement was not often sealed with a ring.

- **Age of consent:** “Strangely, in 1823 the legal ages of marriage were returned once more to fourteen and twelve.”

- **Invitations:** These were not printed. A personal letter was written to each invitee.

- **Weddings ceremony and reception:** These were much more simple than today.

**The Dress:** The Regency bride usually just wore the best church-going clothes, although sometimes a gown would be made for the occasion and then worn ‘for best’ afterward.

- **White wedding dresses did not come into popularity until Victoria . . .** “the bride’s gown could be any color, and the further down the social scale she was, the more likely that it would be some practical, darker shade or print.

- **Regency bride likely wore a bonnet,** as women did any time when out in public, keeping them on in church. It could be anything from a straw bonnet to a simple turban, however, and could certainly have a veil attached to it. . . “

- **The size of the audience** is referred to in the same paragraph, as ‘the small

band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony.”

Since the wedding gowns were often worn – to the point of being worn out – after the wedding, brides had to cherish something else. Often this was her wedding shoes, a natural choice give the lucky connotations of shoes in this context. Many carefully preserved satin slippers remain with notes inscribed in the instep attesting to the wearer’s wedding

### **There is a question of where the Davenports went after they were wed.**

Mr. D leased lot 14 on Columbia Ward three months after the marriage. **Ward Notebook—Lot 14 Col. GHS** “1812 DR (Deeb Reg.) Stebbins, Edward 2E20 Davenport I.

June 19, 1809 – Edward Stebbins leased to Isaiah for 7 years Lot 14 Columbia Ward ‘and whereas the said Isaiah Davenport both erected certain buildings on the said lot consisting of a dwelling house and certain outbuildings . . .’ released from the lease for \$2,500.00 bargained and sold unto Edward the said buildings on the said lot ‘erected and being consisting of a two story dwelling house and sundry out buildings.’”

**SARAH THE BRIDE IN 1809:** Marriage was the defining moment in a woman’s life. But let’s not be nostalgic about Mrs. Davenport’s wedding or the life that followed. Mrs. Davenport had to deal with a number of complicated and tragic occurrences so comparing her life to the antebellum woman of novels would not be useful. Other things affected her life along with her gender identity including being Presbyterian, a non-native to Savannah, an artisan’s wife and later an artisan’s widow – which included being a head of the household!, being urban, being a property owner (as a widow ) which included being a slave owner.

### **From Berkin and Norton’s**

#### **Women in America: A History:**

- “. . . the tendency has been for American women to marry, on average, between the ages of 20 and 23. [in other cultures it varied from 15 to 30 years].” **Mrs. D was 20.**

- “. . . with few exceptions, about 9 of every 10 females who lived to a marriageable age eventually took a spouse, regardless of the century we might choose to examine.” **Mrs. D. married.**

“Data for the nineteenth century suggest that women married later and less often than they did at any other time in American history . . .” [Mrs. D married only once.]

- “Throughout much of the first three hundred years of American history, men took wives at relatively late ages (25 to 28 on average), following patterns common in Europe at the time.” [Mr. D was 25.]

- “Before 1800, most marriages ended with the death of one spouse. Despite the rigors of childbearing, it appears that wives outlived their husbands about as often as husbands survived wives. Frequently, marriages ended before all the children left home.” [True of Mrs. D.]

- “We should note here that the preceding comments are based primarily on the experience of white females. Black American women have never enjoyed the same levels of marriage stability. Under slavery, black unions had no standing in a court of law, which left them vulnerable to forced separation by the sale of one spouse. Despite this fact, . . . study has shown that black women formed and maintained stable unions whenever possible.”

### **One wonders what the status was of Davenport’s female slaves:**

Purchase (deed from George Rentz to ID - 1/4/1812 for \$327) “one negro woman named **Nancy** about thirty years of age.”

Slaves Deed - 2G 302-303 David Baldwin of Sav to ID 1Feb 1817

“\$1250 for “Five Negroes, to wit **Bellar** (Bella) a woman about Twenty –eight years old and her four children – viz. Jack aged about nine years, Isaac & Jacob twin boys aged about five years, and a girl child about one year old named Polly.” [Wonder who Bella’s husband was?]

- The slaves Mr. Davenport owned at the time of his death were: Ned, Davy, **Bella** (around 38 years), Jack (around 20), Jacob and Isaac (around 16), **Polly** (around 11 whose labor was rented out), **Peggy** and **Nancy** (around 47).