



Isaiah Davenport House Volunteer Newsletter

May 2011

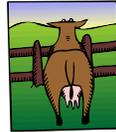
www.davenportmuseum.org
Become a Facebook fan at "Davenport House Museum"

236-8097



Notice.

Came to the estate of R. S. Gibson some time back, a stray Heifer, no mark nor brand, the owner can have her by proving property and paying the expense, on application to



HENRY HARBOCK.

May 26, 1820, Savannah Republican

Brought to Gaol

In Savannah, May 24, 1820 – A Negro man who says his name is DAVEY, and that he belongs to Capt. Chisholm, near Beaufort. He is about 25 years of age, and five feet 4 inches high. Has the marks of his country in his face.

H. McCall. J.C.C.

May 26, 1820, Savannah Republican

Stucco Plastering.

The subscriber having a number of hands, and being accustomed to a southern climate, intends making this City his residence; he will engage work in the above line, and will do it with neatness and dispatch—as respects his capability he refers to Andrew Knox, and N. Turnbull, esqrs. He having plastered a house for each of them.

JOHN DOUGHERTY.

President street opposite the African Church.

May 22, 1820. Savannah Republican.

Five Dollars' reward.

Ran away from the subscriber on the 22d February, a negro girl named PAM, about 16 years old, not long since purchased from Mrs. Stark of Savannah. Her mother belongs to Mr. Stark. She has several scars on her neck from soars and is small for her age. All persons are hereby cautioned from harboring or employing her, as the law in that case will be strictly enforced. The above reward will be paid to any person that will deliver at my house five miles from Savannah on the Augusta Road, or lodge her in jail.

W.M. KIRKPATRICK

May 22, 1820. Savannah Republican.

DH CALENDAR: May 2011

Tuesday, May 3 at 4:30 – Rehearsal for readers theater "1824" (JI event)

Wednesday, May 4 at 4:30 p.m. – *Curator's Tour and Highlights of the Collection*

Thursday, May 5 at 9 a.m. – Spring planting (garden pots and parterre)

- 11:30 a.m. - HSF Awards Luncheon (Old Pinks House)
- 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Friday, May 6 at 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Saturday, May 7 at 7:30 a.m. – *Discovering 1820s Savannah: Early Bird's Walking Tour of the City Isaiah Knew*

- 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. – HSF use Kennedy Pharmacy

- 4 to 7 p.m. – Garden Rental

Tuesday, May 10 at noon – Davenport House Committee

- 6 p.m. – Rehearsal readers theater "1824" (JI event)

- 7 p.m. at the Hyatt – Readers Theater performance of "1824"

– Georgia Retired Teachers Association

Wednesday, May 11 at 4:30 p.m. – *Curator's Tour and Highlights of the Collection*

Thursday, May 12 at 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Friday, May 13 at 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Saturday, May 14 at 7:30 a.m. – *Discovering 1820s Savannah: Early Bird's Walking Tour of the City Isaiah Knew*

- 4 to 7 – Garden Rental

Sunday, May 15 from 5 to 7 p.m. – **SPRING GARDEN PARTY/**

Awarding of Service Scholarship

Monday, May 16 at 6:30 p.m. – Orientation for summer Junior Interpreter program

Tuesday, May 17 from 5 to 9 p.m. – Downtown Neighborhood Association's annual picnic (garden, pharmacy)

Wednesday, May 18 at 4:30 p.m. – *Curator's Tour and Highlight of the Collection*
- 5 to 8 p.m. – HSF/1733 Society garden use

Thursday, May 19 and Friday, May 21 – SCAD Metals and Jewelry Department Kennedy Pharmacy use

Thursday, May 19 at 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*
- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Friday, May 20 at 4:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*
- 6:30 p.m. – Madeira motor coach tour

Saturday, May 21 at 7:30 a.m. – *Discovering 1820s Savannah: Early Bird's Walking Tour of the City Isaiah Knew*

- 4 to 7 p.m. – Garden Rental
Wednesday, May 25 at 4:30 p.m. – *Curator's Tour and Highlights of the Collection*

Thursday, May 26 at 5:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

Friday, May 27 at 5:30 p.m. – *Tea in the Garden*

Saturday, May 28 at 7:30 a.m. – *Discovering 1820s Savannah: Early Bird's Walking Tour of the City Isaiah Knew*

BUSY SEASON TOURS

AND SPECIALS:

Sunday, May 1 from 2 to 5 p.m. – Lovingood Middle School (139 students, 33 adults)

Monday, May 2 at 3:15 – SCAD group (20)

Tuesday, May 3 at 3:15 p.m. – SCAD group (20)



Wednesday, May 4 at 4 p.m. –
tour with refreshments - Harbor City Travel (25+2)

Tuesday, May 17 at 11:30 a.m. –
SCAD/Interior Design (40)

Wednesday, May 18 at 1:30 p.m.
– tour with refreshments –
Coastline Travel (35)

Thursday, May 19 at 12:30 p.m. –
ATHE- Mantee (social studies
teachers all grades/study trip)

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S

TREASURES. DH GARDEN PARTY ON MAY 15TH—PARTY WITH A



PURPOSE! **IT'S
OUR TIME TO
COME TO-
GETHER!**
(**AND BRING A
DISH . . .**)

The National
Trust for Historic

Preservation designates May
“Preservation Month” and this
year’s theme is *Celebrating Amer-
ica's Treasures*. What better way
to show your preservation spirit
than by partying with your peers in
the DH garden! Our annual garden
party is **Sunday, May 15, 2011** from
5 to 7 p.m. when volunteers and
Friends of the Davenport House
are feted, celebrated and appreci-
ated! By socializing with like-
minded DH'ers you (y'all) demon-
strate your support for what the
museum does while you strengthen
the bonds of community. This
year’s garden party will initiate the
awarding of the first Davenport
House Community Service Scholar-
ship to a worthy graduating high
school senior! Invitations should be
in your mailboxes soon if they are
not already there.

SHOP NEWS:

- **Ben Head** is home after rehabili-
tation has returned to his duties as
shop manager.

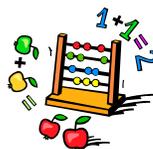
Welcome: Frances Colón has
been hired to assist with a number
of jobs through the next few
months particularly as shop assis-
tant and rentals assistant.

DOCENT NEWS:

- **Docents Up and Ready:** Con-
gratulate **Phyllis Champion, Fran-
ces Colón, Brooke Wilford** and
Roseann Hooper for completing
the Docent Training Program. All
presented clearance tours in April
and got on the calendar immediately
to help with the busy time.

- **Busy time and the Number of
People on Your Tour:** It has been
very busy and we are grateful to our
visitors and to you. We try to keep
the tour size to 16 people but some-
times we will have as many of 21 on
a tour. If we are so busy as to have
a full tour at least ten to fifteen min-
utes before the next scheduled a
docent may be asked to begin a tour
immediately. A staff member will
take a tour if there are visitors at the
regular time. No museum wants to
turn guests away. All staff trained
to give tours will be pressed into
service if necessary.

- **Crossing Paths:** When giving
tours please do not cross paths with
another tour group if you can help
it. For example, if you are asked to
start your tour in the Drawing
Room, please proceed from this
room to the Morning Room, Dining
Room – then you can decide if
available whether to go into the Of-
fice or go upstairs. Don't go back-
ward and try to pick up the Hall and
the Office after beginning in the
Drawing Room (because chances
are there will be someone in there –
or you would have been asked to
start there). If you go upstairs –
follow the normal flow – Cornelia's
Room, Master Bedroom, Boys
Room. Do not begin a tour in the
Master Bedroom. If you get up-
stairs and Cornelia's Room is full
and the tour guide has just begun to
talk about it either talk to your
group in the Hall or (least prefer-
able) begin in the Boys Room and
then come back to Cornelia's
Room. Crossing groups
gives the idea of “people
city” – too many people
and not enough room.



- **Calm and Cool
in Any Situation
– Even With
Large Groups:**

The calmer, more
relaxed and more
flexible you are the more congenial
the whole experience will be. Say-
ing, “There are a(n awful) lot of
people in the house”, “This is an
usually large group”, etc. can lead to
unease with our guests.

- **Reading Your Group and Our
Most Senior Audience:** If you
have a group of elderly seniors, be
aware of their stamina and the fact
that they may not want (or be able)
to go upstairs. They may also not
want to feel trapped in a room
(particularly if they have mobility
issues). Know a way out of a room
and point out seating at the begin-
ning of our tour.

- **Time!:** Recently a tour company
told us if the DH cannot provide 25
to 30 minute tours for their guests
it will not bring groups to visit.

When a tour company escort speci-
fies a total amount of time in the
house and this is made clear to do-
cents this request needs to be re-
spected. We are all there to serve.

- **Needing Time to Shop:** Tour
groups need time to shop. Filling
up all of their time with an overly
long tour does not allow time to
experience the entire site – which
includes the shop.

- **Whole Household:** Recently a
guest let us know that she had a
terrific and enjoyable tour without a
mention of the enslaved people
who lived at the DH. She said that
if she learned the family had ten
children should not the rest of the
household be discussed?

- **Question:** What happened to
the Davenports slaves? Were they
sold before or freed after the war?
From a discussion with Anna
Habersham Wright Smith a few
years ago, she offered that the slaves
(listed below) may not have been
sold away from Mrs. Davenport.
But we do not have the documents
to study and understand further. So



our answer to the question is: “The Davenports slaves were to be sold after Mr. D.’s death. Any further understanding requires additional research and documentation. Go forth and research (and please share with the DH).”

Estate – Lot 14 Col.; slaves 4/7/1828 p. 3 c. 4; Savh. Georgian “SHERIFF’S SALES”

One the first Tuesday in May next will be sold before the court house in the city of Savannah, between the usual hours of sale, the following property, viz:

. . . . nine negroes; viz: Ned, Davy, Bella, Jack, Jacob, Isaac, Polly, Peggy and Nancy; levied on as the property of Isaiah Davenport, to satisfy an execution in favor of Robert Mitchell. . . . Geo. Millen, SCC”

MAY IS HUGE! NEEDING YOU!

As we try to capture the visitors in Savannah with our lively programs and daily tours, we may be “burning the candle at both ends” and need your help to get through the next month. We need you to spread the word about our programs so all of the work will not be for naught. Jeff will present the ***Curator’s Tour and Highlights of the Collection*** on Wednesday afternoons at 4:30 p.m. On this experience he provides an in-depth discussion of DH curatorial issues and uses Cornelia Davenport and Henry Rootes Jackson’s portraits and materials related to them as a case study. Visitors view and discuss our collections storage. Staff and volunteers present the **Tea in the Garden** program on Thursday and Fridays. See information about that below. On Saturdays, Jamie will do the **Discovering 1820s Savannah: Early Bird’s Walking Tour of the City Isaiah Knew**. Last year this program was new and had lots of local publicity to the point it sold out three extra dates in June. The program will be the same and let’s hope it finds an audience! Our series of



Madeira tours continues on Thursday and Friday evenings through May 20. In addition to programs and after hours events, we offer special daytime tours and our Spring Garden party as the busy season continues. Participate in as many as you can and know the DH needs you!

TEA IN THE GARDEN:

This program will be presented on Thursday, May 5 at 4:30, Friday, May 6 at 4:30, Thursday, May 12 at 4:30, Friday, May 13 at 4:30, Thursday, May 19 at 4:30, and Friday, May 20 at 4:30. On Thursday, May 25 and Friday, May 26 the program begins at 5:30 p.m. The reason for the time changes (4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.) is that for the first three weeks of the program, there is a Madeira motor coach tour that arrives at 6:30 p.m. We need to be finished and cleaned up from tea before the motor coach pulls up. Having the teas show at 4:30 p.m. will cause some logistical maneuvering because the intro to the program begins in the basement hallway which is just about the time the last tour of the day comes through.

For **Tea in the Garden** (during good weather days) tea is served in the southwest corner of the garden.

Anne Hagan has agreed to perform as Margaret Bayard Smith in May for the newly revised program, taking over for Jan Vach who will be away in May. Anne joins performers **Lauren Purcell, Jamie Credle, Jeff Freeman** and **Shannon Wichers** – all are spritely and provide a deliciously fun way to experience our garden and early 19th century social history.

(Speaking of delicious) Bakers for Tea: This is what we have as of now – Thursday, May 5/Sally Lunn and gingerbread – **Helen Linskey**, Friday, May 6/Sally Lunn –**OPEN**, gingerbread – **Karen Matteo**, Thursday, May 12/Sally Lunn – **Gayle Mongrandi**, gingerbread



– **Charlotte Rehmert**, Friday, May 14/Sally Lunn and gingerbread – **Helen Linskey**, Thursday, May 19/Sally Lunn – **Gayle Mongrandi**, gingerbread – **OPEN**, Friday, May 20/Sally Lunn and gingerbread – **OPEN**, Thursday, May 26/Sally Lunn and gingerbread – **OPEN**, Friday, May 27/Sally Lunn and gingerbread – **OPEN**. See lots of open places.

MADEIRA TOURS:

A motor coach will roll in at 6:30 on Thursday, May 5, Friday, May 6, Thursday, May 12, Friday, May 13, Thursday, May 19 and Friday, May 20. Because the tea program will go on just prior to the motor coaches arrival, volunteers are asked to work independently to set up for the tour while staff finish in the tea performance. Thank you to the Madeira workers: **Marty Barnes, Phyllis Champion, Frances Colón, Pat Fraker, De Gassman, Raleigh Marcell, John Miller, Katherine Owens, Abby Schreiber, Pat Seguire, Roger Smith, Charlotte Rehmert, Maria Sanchez, and Brooke Wilford**. You have put forth a huge commitment after hours!

JUNIOR INTERPRETERS:

-Hugh Golson asked that a group of Junior Interpreters provide 10 to 15 minutes of entertainment for the annual meeting of the **Georgia Association of Retired Teachers**. JIs will perform a readers theater (they will read) piece from the “**1824**” living history program presented in 2007. This script includes recountings of life as conveyed by Savannah newspapers in 1824. Following the readers theater, **Jamal Touré** will provide a memorable finale for the audience.

There will be a rehearsal on Tuesday, May 3 at 4:30 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. just prior to the performance.

-At the Spring Garden Party, a graduating senior JI will be presented with the first DH Service Scholarship.

-On Monday, May 16 there will be

orientation for the summer JI program. Please inform the young people you know that this tour guide training program is available to high school students and will be presented on Thursday nights from 6 to 8 p.m. June 16 through July 28.



DONATIONS FOR FRIENDS OF THE DAVENPORT HOUSE IN MARCH AND APRIL:

- Scott and Lorraine Boice (to receive a match from Merck)
- Diantha Barstow
- Mari and Jim Buchman
- Dr. Tom and Sally Clark
- Judy Crisp
- ExxonMobil Foundation gift through Diane Reitman's service
- Jane and Ed Feiler
- Nancy Gates
- Erv and Diane Houston
- Jessica Mathis
- Emily Amburgey-Pidgeon
- Richard Platt
- Ann Stevens
- Anna Wasden

SAVANNAH GARDEN EXPO:

This year the museum and its parent organization HSF experienced the Expo in a whole new way. With a new venue (Charles Morris Center) and new personnel (HSF Development Director Terri O'Neil) the event came together. We are grateful to those who gave time, expertise and muscle to the event. We will keep you updated on the event's outcome and future plans. Also, thank you to those who donated items to the preview party silent auction, sold tickets and attended the event in mid-April.

Expo Committee: Lorraine Boice, Jamie Chisholm, Karen Jenkins, Jean Doliber, Philip Sandifer, Chris White
DH JIs: Raven Bryant, Rebecca Carter, Lindsey Deering, Jamillah

Kelly, Sarah Lanier, Matt Portman, Carlie Ayn Williams



Preservation High students:

Deanna Lazare, Devin Waters
EVENT VOLUNTEERS: Lisa Andrejack, Kate Bathe and her husband, Cynthia Bendler, Caroline Berry, Sue and Dick Bordenkircher, Connie Border, Jan Bradley, Meg Bremer, Vicki Brooks, Eden Combs, Phyllis Champion, Judy Crisp, Kim Ergul, Marc Friedman, Kay Gardner, Nancy Gates, Susan G. Hamilton, Karen Halloran, Meredith Halloran, Roseann Hooper, Diane Houston, Helen Iocovoci, Jim Janson, Helen Johnson, Jake Kawatski, Melissa Kendrick, India King, Ann Koontz, Pam Lee, Helen Linskey, Bill Linskey, Mary Jane Mataxas, Bill Mataxas, Jody McGovern, Carolyn McLaughlin, Linda Meyer, Rob Molard, Elizabeth Oliver, Yaires Oliveras, Katherine Owens, Ann Quinn, Jessica Pedigo, Ann Ramee, Hank Reed, Heidi Reed, Margaret Romanelli, Laurie Ross, Carol Schmidt, Abby Schreiber, Sarah Stamper, Mary Ann Scott, Jackie Sirlin, Pat Seguire, Diana Shelley, Bill Stuebe, Carole Suddath, Charlie VandenBulck, Jan VandenBulck, Wilma Wheten, Laura Williams, Sherri Wittkamp

WORTH MENTIONING:

- **Kelsey Chandler** graduates from Georgia in May and will attend North Carolina State University's public history graduate program with an archival assistantship.
- **Received a nice note:** *The Davenport House was the most beautiful and perfect location for the Smith/Ganz wedding.*
- **Crazy weather:** If you hear a tornado warning, bring your group to the basement hall and remain there until given the all-clear.
- **Screen:** **Kathy and Jake Ross** donated the screen which is used in the Kennedy Pharmacy behind the window display. **Jan Vach** did the spring window display in the pharmacy.
- **Come June:** Interns (at least two), planning for Yellow Fever, maintenance projects undertaken, Junior Interpreter program begins, weddings, staff development and cross training, hurricane preparedness.

- **Savannah in the Movies:** We urge you to see *The Conspirator* before it leaves Savannah. Our sister museums look beautiful through the eye of **Robert Redford**.



You will be able to pick out the Owens Thomas House, Harper Fowlkes House, Green Meldrim House, Andrew Low House, Fort Pulaski, Railroad Roundhouse – along with squares and streetscapes. Jeff Freeman, Betty Schwarz and Raleigh Marcell are extras (You can't miss Raleigh at the prosecutor's table during the trial scenes). Huzzah to Savannah in the movies! Huzzah to rarely told stories presented to the public!

- HSF's Preservation Month Programs:

- Historic Savannah Foundation has a slate of programs to recognize National Historic Preservation Month in May. For details see www.myhsf.org
- May 4 at 3 p.m.** – Presentation of Preservation Month Poster Contest Awards
- May 5 from 11:30 – 1 p.m.** – Preservation Awards Luncheon at the Olde Pink House
- May 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** – HSF & Mopper Stapen, Realtors Revolving Fund Workshop
- May 12** – Preservation Lecture Series – Christine Madrid- French to speak on Modernism and the Recent Past at Savannah Country Day School
- May 20** – Preservation Award House & Wine Tour
- May 23** – "The Greenest Building" Movie Screening at Savannah Theater



Docent Spotlight BROOKE WILFORD

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

Broke: One of the reasons that we moved to Savannah

from Westchester, New York, is that my husband and I have long been interested in house renovation and restoration. We renovated an 1890s carriage house in Hoboken, New Jersey that appeared on the New Jersey House Tour and we renovated a 1953 raised ranch to look like a 1920s craftsman-style home to fit into our neighborhood looking over the Hudson River in Dobbs Ferry, New York. We were thrilled to find an 1872 house on East York Street about 5 years ago and to become members of the Historic Savannah Foundation. We knew that when we finally moved here we would become involved in restoration and preservation – starting with our own house. When I learned that the Davenport House, owned by HSF and right around the corner from us, had docent opportunities, I knew I had found my place!

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

Brooke: I taught nursery school for nearly 20 years and earned a degree in Music Pedagogy from Hollins College and a Masters degree in Education from Fordham University. I love teaching and singing, however, when my husband changed from being managing partner to senior partner in his law firm, I stepped in to become the office manager. Since we now work together, we have had the opportunity to open a branch of the firm on the first floor of our new Savannah home. I have always been involved in music and play the piano and sing. I also love to make jewelry and to travel.

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

Brooke: I think I am most taken by the historic preservation history of the Davenport House. I am fascinated by the inventory of Mr. Davenport's home at the time of his death and seeing the house come to life using that truth.

DH: What is the most unusual thing that has ever happened to you at the Davenport House.

Brooke: Nothing unusual has happened to me yet – but I am looking forward to some stories.

DH: How long have you been in Savannah? If not from Savannah, where are you from originally?

Brooke: I moved to Savannah in November of last year from Westchester, New York, but I am originally from Connecticut.

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

Brooke: I did spend about 4 years in my pre-teen years living in Thomson, Georgia. And I own a home in New Hampshire and have spent summers and holidays there with my husband and children (MacKay, 27 and Miles ,22) for over 20 years. My parents, brother and I have been going there for many, many years. It is a beautiful area in the foothills of the White Mountains on a lovely lake.

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

Brooke: One of the many reasons we wanted to move to Savannah is the warmer weather in winter. While my family has been neck deep in snow this year, we have happily enjoyed what everyone here has called a “cold winter”!

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

Brooke: Savannah has so much to offer and we have been enjoying the exhibits at the Telfair, concerts at the Lucas, the book and music festivals, wine tastings and restaurants, and meeting lots of interesting people from all over the world. But my favorite thing to do is to work on restoring our old house and being part of the preservation of Savannah.

A look at the DH guest register:
During the month of April 2011,

the DH saw visitors from 46 states and 9 foreign countries. Most came from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Illinois but Minnesota, California, Kentucky, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Michigan sent us good numbers too. Our international guests were from Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, India and Scotland. Interesting hometowns included Eva, AL, Cool, CA; Leaf River, IL; Coon Rapids, MN; Freedom, NH; Budd Lake, NJ; Ruidoso, NM; Belfontaine, OH; Indian Land, SC; Lenoir City, TN.

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

Tour Guides (Ghost Tour, JGL, AL); trolley tour (Old Town Trolley, Oglethorpe Tours, Old Savannah Tours); Internet (Trip Advisor); brochures; guide books (AAA, Frommer's, Lonely Planet); friends; concierge (Hyatt, Marriott, Kehoe House, Best Western, Springhill Suites, Mulberry Inn, Bohemian, Hilton); relatives; repeat visit; Visitors Center; walk by; magazine; map; Historical Society; books (Eugenia Price); HSF; school; Julia Credle.

What They Had To Say:

"Cool", "Exceptional", "Great", "Informative", "Pretty City", "Very informative; continue to preserve history.", "Enjoyed the details.", "Excellent house tour.", "Really enjoyed the tour guide.", "Entertaining.", "Excellent tour and history.", "Nice restoration.", "Very interesting and well presented.", "Fabulous tour", "Fun & informative. What else could you ask?", "Nice period pieces and family story", "Loved it!", "It was amazing.", "Would help if summary in other languages was available.", "Super tour, Marty!"

You made our spring!



A Letter From Cornelia – 1852

By Jeff Freeman

Back in October, we reviewed a letter written by **Cornelia Davenport** in March, 1849 from Savannah to her sister-in-law **Sarah R. J. Prince** residing in Clarke County, GA, near Athens. In it, Cornelia spoke of the demands of raising two young boys, her fears regarding scarlet fever and whooping cough, and the hiring out of a slave name **Frank** to the Pulaski House in hopes of curing him of his “laziness” In this issue, we look at a second letter Cornelia wrote to Sarah Prince, this one dated September 12, 1852. In a span of only three and a half years, much had changed in Cornelia’s life. She was now the mother of four children. In addition to **Harry** and **Howell**, there was another son, **Davenport Jackson**, born April 10, 1850 and little **Cornelia Augusta Jackson**, born April 23, 1852 and barely five months old. Her husband **Henry** was now a superior court judge and an active and respected voice in state politics. Brother **McCall** was superintendant of a cotton press at Kain’s Wharf and had an infant son **Archibald**. Of Cornelia’s other siblings, her brother Archibald remained a bachelor and was working in Savannah while the youngest, **Dudley**, was a teenager and living with his mother. Her two eldest brothers, **Isaiah, Jr.** and **Benjamin** were residing in St. Louis according to the 1850 census and each had four children of their own.

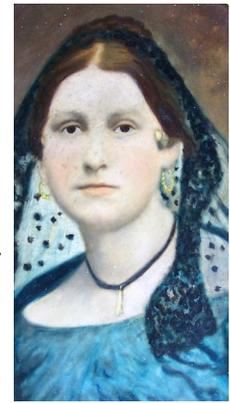
Nationally, tensions between the North and South were at a fever pitch, especially in light of the fact that 1852 was a presidential election year. The great statesman **Henry Clay** had died in July and his final legacy – the Compromise of 1850 - had left the nation in turmoil. The balance in Congress between free states and slave states had been broken with the entry of California as a free state but the

passage of the Fugitive Slave Act had temporarily mollified southern states. Dissatisfied elements on both sides of the slave issue continued to stir the pot and the publication of Uncle Tom’s Cabin in March only added fuel to the fire. The two major political parties, the Whigs and the Democrats, both desperately sought to unify their northern and southern supporters in order to secure the election but it was a maddeningly difficult task. Judge Jackson would play a role in this debate in Georgia.

Savannah, meanwhile, was booming. Newspapers are filled with notices of ships and trains arriving and departing, rice and cotton shipments and a countless variety of goods and consumables for sale. The summer had been relatively free from disease, though not completely, and citizens would have been breathing a sigh of relief as fall and the promise of the first frost drew nearer.

Savannah, Sept 12th 1852

Your last welcome letter, containing some commissions which you wished executed by me, I received on Thursday and have attended to the purchase of the articles desired. They went up, I hope, on Friday, in time to meet the wagon on Friday evening. Please say to your Mother that the pieces vary some little from the number of yards mentioned in the list but as it was cheaper to buy by the piece than by the yard, I thought she would prefer my purchasing in that way. We are pleased to learn by your Mother’s letter of the 10th that you expect to leave for the up-country on the 15th as we cannot help thinking a change of air will be beneficial to all of you after your repeated attacks of chills & fever. From the different newspaper accounts of the sickness all through the up-country, we are led to believe that we are in the most healthy part of the state after all for Savannah has been remarkable free from disease of any kind this summer. There have been some few cases of chills & fever and some few of fever,



(resembling somewhat the broken bone fever) but all of a mild character. We have been blessed so far, for we have not had a Doctor to any member of the family since last summer except when little Rosa was born in April.

Broken bone fever was a common name for Dengue fever with symptoms including fever, skin rash, muscle pain and joint pain, hence the moniker. Interestingly, dengue is carried by the **Aedes Aegypti** mosquito which also hosts the yellow fever virus that played such a devastating role in Cornelia’s life, robbing her of an uncle and her father. According to **Wikipedia**, “*Aedes aegypti* prefers to lay its eggs in artificial water containers and tends to live in close proximity to humans, and prefers to feed off people rather than other vertebrates.” Stagnant water containers of a multitude of types were ubiquitous features of Savannah’s landscape in the 19th century. Efforts to curb outbreaks of yellow fever in the 1800’s correctly focused on the elimination of many of these sources without knowing the real reason for their danger. In the last sentence of the paragraph above, Cornelia illuminates another commonplace practice of the time that is rare today and that we here at the Davenport House frequently note when talking to visitors about the master bedroom. Doctors made house calls as a matter of course.

Cornelia continues with a revealing portrait of her young children.

The children are all quite well and growing fairly. Howell still retains his peculiar manners & style of conversation and is considered an oddity by all who see

him. Davenport is almost too beautiful for a boy, but is very unwilling to be considered anything else, for he repeats all that Howell says and he tries to imitate him in all he does. My precious little daughter is as sweet as she can well be, and I think you will say so when you see her. Her brothers are very proud of her and think there never was a baby half so pretty as "Sister." Altogether, I have a decidedly interesting "quartette" and would be willing to show them against any other four anywhere. Harry talks a great deal about you and is extremely anxious to pay you a visit at the plantation. He has a pleasant recollection of the time spent there & frequently boasts to Howell of his feats in cotton-picking, horsemanship, etc.

At this time, Cornelia's four children are ages six, four, two and 5 months. Isaiah's children are proving to be as prolific as their parents. Isaiah Jr has four children, the oldest of which is Isabella who in 1852 is 14. Benjamin has 4, McCall has 1, and Henry Kollock has 2. This would make Sarah Davenport, the matriarch of the family, the proud grandmother of 15 grandchildren!

Cornelia next mentions a very interesting occurrence – a marriage of two African-American slaves.

I suppose, from what your Mother says in her letter, that Frank & Mary were married last night. I wish it was convenient for you to do without them at the plantation, for they would both be most serviceable to us at the present time. Frank to assist me in putting my house in order for the winter and Mary to do our cooking, but Henry will write your Mother more at length upon this subject.

Marriages involving slaves while not uncommon were not

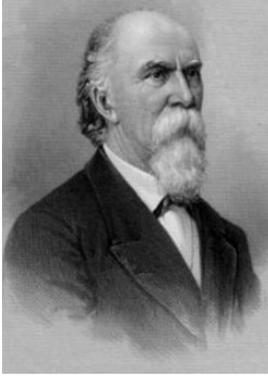
the same as unions between non-slaves. There were other circumstances that placed slave marriages in a different light. For one thing, though they were sanctioned by religious institutions, they were not recognized by state law. That might have interfered with the slave owner's right to buy or sell what he considered to be his property. So even though **Frank & Mary** were married, there was no guarantee that they would remain together. That was up to the discretion of the owner. For this reason, slaves often had to seek out the permission of their owners before a marriage could be performed. Additionally, any children they produced would be classified as slaves as well and the property of Henry Rootes Jackson as the children's status followed the status of the mother.

Cousin Howell paid us a flying visit last week. He was looking well and said he left his family in good health except cousin Mary Ann – she had been suffering from a carbuncle on one of her fingers. The Colonel is at home again and is looking better than he has done in many years. Bullock leaves on Thursday morning on a little up-country trip. He proposes visiting the Compens, and Athens and will probably be absent some three or four weeks. Henry will go up to Atlanta next week to attend the Mass meeting & you may possibly meet with him in the Cars(?) I had almost made up my mind to take the baby & go with him & spend a month with our friends in Athens, but finally concluded I could not leave home. When you get to be a housekeeper & the head of a family, you will understand some of the difficulties which lie in my way when I think of going away from home. I am glad to hear of the birth of Marion's son, and sincerely hope it may be spared to them. They suffered so much

in the loss of the other little boy and perhaps this one may reconcile them to it.



The "Cousin Howell" Cornelia refers to here is her husband's cousin Howell – **Howell Cobb**, lately a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and now governor of the state of Georgia. The ailing Mary Ann is his wife **Mary Ann Lamar**. The mass meeting in Atlanta that Cornelia refers to was an event that was to have a noticeable effect on the outcome of the upcoming presidential election. The Georgia Democratic party was torn between two major factions. One faction, championed by Howell Cobb and his cousin Henry Rootes Jackson favored preserving the rights of the slave states while remaining in the Union. They supported the national Democratic Party ticket which had nominated **Franklin Pierce** of New Hampshire for president and **Rufus King** of Alabama for vice-president. The other faction favored joining the **Southern Rights Party** which held that the South was under assault from the free state factions and that if they remained within the Union, their destruction as a political and financial power was assured. Their solution was secession. On September 1, a meeting of the Chatham County Democratic Party had been held in the Long Room of the Exchange Building here in Savannah. They had declared their support for the national party ticket and in a motion seconded



by Judge H. R. Jackson, had agreed to call a meeting of all the state Democratic parties

to be held in Atlanta on September 18 to solidify support for Pierce and King. According to the Savannah Georgian, “the meeting was then eloquently addressed by Judge H. R. Jackson, Solomon Cohen, Esq. and Dr. R. D. Arnold. Judge Jackson was appointed to a committee of correspondence to get the message out to other parties in the state.” Jackson did attend the Atlanta meeting as Cornelia says and “delivered an eloquent address in favor of the majority report and re-union.” The outcome of the affair was that the Georgia Democrats threw their support to the national Democratic ticket. Pierce and King went on to win the 1852 election by a landslide.

Cornelia concludes her portion of the letter with some talk of the weather. Apparently, the entire state had been beset with severe storms as the newspaper had been running stories throughout the month about “freshets” or flooding in the upcountry that had washed out bridges, damaged fields and killed people and livestock.

How was Mary Miller when you heard from her last? Cousin Howell told me she was still in Athens but said nothing of her health. We have had incessant rain for a week. This afternoon it looks a little brighter and

promises to clear off. I hope it may, for such weather is well calculated to engender “blues” as well as sickness. Thank your Mother for the vegetables sent & tell her they will be most ?????? We hope to get them tomorrow evening. I delivered Jane & Mary’s message to their father & he says he will attend to their desires. Say to them that the children & myself thank them for the recollection of us. I have left the last page for Henry to write on and must now say Adieu. Mother unites with Henry and myself in sending much love to all. The children send the usual number of kisses. Howell says “Grand Mudder Jackson does not come to see him at all.”

Let us hear from you as soon as you reach Athens. You know women like I love news.

*Most affec. Yrs.
C. A. J.*

Finally, there is Henry’s note to his mother which he devotes almost entirely to the disposition of the slaves Frank & Mary. Clearly, his intent is to keep them together but rather than leave them with his mother, he writes that he and Cornelia have need of them in Savannah.

*My dear Mother,
What you say in reference to Frank in your last letter is rather ambiguous. You speak as if I contemplated leaving him at the plantation or leasing him out in your vicinity after the close of the present year. Such has not been my intention, especially since the bad health which he has suffered this summer. I am afraid that his constitution will be undermined by these repeated attacks of chill & fever; I do not desire him to work in the field another year. At no time have I thought of leaving him to any one else than yourself away from Savannah; I would prefer to sell him. But since I have abandoned all idea*

whatever of changing my position, I have come to the conclusion of carrying out our arrangement by the purchase of Mary to make her our cook. You ????? that she was to be exchanged for Eliza, & I was to take her from you in payment of your note to me. I hope that nothing has occurred to change or to forestall this plan. It was upon this understanding that I consented to Frank’s marriage. Cornelia mentions in her letter that if it be convenient to you to spare Frank & Mary, they could not come to us at a more convenient time than this. We are in need of a cook and she would like to conceive.

For us, this is an ominous note to end on. Cornelia did indeed soon conceive and almost ten months to the day after this letter was written, Isaiah and Sarah’s beautiful daughter, Henry Jackson’s beloved wife and mother of his children died of childbed fever following the birth of a stillborn child. The date was July 16, 1853.

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