



# Isaiah Davenport House Volunteer Newsletter

January 2014

[www.davenportmuseum.org](http://www.davenportmuseum.org)

912/236-8097

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Piracy. – We learn from captain White, of the schooner Illinois, who arrived yesterday evening, in 14 days from Port-au-Prince, that the British brig Nymph, for Liverpool, Jones, master, with a cargo invoiced at 30,000 l. sterling, was captured on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> November, off Cape Nichola Mole, by a piratical hermaphrodite brig. Her officers and crew, together with the passengers, some of whom were females, were driven into the boat, with nothing but clothing they had upon their backs, and the boat cut adrift, at sea, out of sight of land, and not one morsel of provisions on board. After remaining in that situation 24 hours, without chart or compass, perfectly at the mercy of the seas, they were fortunately fallen in with by a Swedish ship from Hamburg, and carried into Port-au-Prince in a most distressed situation, where a subscription was immediately set on foot, and a handsome sum raised for their relief. Capt. W

was among the contributors. – There were two other freebooters hovering on the coast, and plundering every defenseless vessel they fell in with.



New York Mer. Advertiser. Daily Georgian. January 4, 1821.

[*hermaphrodite brig* - a two-masted sailing ship which has square sails on the foremast combined with a schooner rig on the mainmast (triangular topsail over a gaff mainsail). As such it has a mix of the two main types of sail plan, hence the term hermaphrodite. Web dictionary.]

## DAVENPORT HOUSE CALENDAR January 2014

- Wednesday, January 1** – Museum Closed  
**Wednesday, January 8 at 2 p.m.** – DH Oyster Roast Committee meeting  
 - **5 p.m.** – Dance rehearsal

- Monday, January 13 through Friday, January 17** – Annual Cleaning/Museum Closed  
**Wednesday, January 15 from 4 to 6 p.m.** – DH Archaeology Project Workshop  
**ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE PROPERTY**  
 – Thursday, January 16 through Friday, January 24  
**Friday, January 17 at 2 p.m.** – Interpretation Walk Through (DHC)  
**Saturday, January 18 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.** – KP Special Property Use  
 - **9 a.m. to 5 p.m.** – Archaeology at the DH  
**Tuesday, January 21 at noon** – Lunch and Tour Special  
 - **3 p.m.** – Finance Discussion/DHC  
 - **4 p.m.** – Davenport House Committee  
**Wednesday, January 22 at 5 p.m.** – Dance Rehearsal  
**Thursday, January 23 at 6 p.m.** – JI meeting  
**Wednesday, January 29 at 5 p.m.** – Dance rehearsal  
**Thursday, January 30 at 4:30 p.m.** – *Lafayette Fête* – program developmental meeting

### SHOP NEWS:

- **Going to Market:** Ben Head and Adrienne Williams will attend the Atlanta Gift Market in January.  
 - **Thinking about the future:** A group of six Davenport House folks visited Charleston to look at museum shops on December 20. They visited the Charleston Museum and its museum property the Manigault House, Historic Charleston Foundation's shop in the Market and it's shop on Meeting Street as well as it's museum property Nathaniel Russell House, the Gibbes Museum and the Preservation Society of Charleston's shop on King Street. Susan McKellar of the Charleston Museum was generous with her time and Kathy Noland, manager of HCF Market Shop, was

informative and helpful. The group had an insightful time and now sees our shop with new eyes. What they all realized anew is that a welcoming presence at the front desk can make or break an experience. The information gathered from the trip will be used to acquire new products for the current shop and aid in decision making about the shop's move to Broughton Street.



Rice and grits in a Charleston vending machine

The travelers were **Hugh Golsen, Ben Head, Liz Demos, Brooke Wilford, Adrienne Williams and Jamie Credle.**

### ANNUAL CLEANING:

- The museum will be closed January 13 through 17 for Annual Cleaning. **Raleigh Marcell** will need a couple of volunteers to help from 9 until noon on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week.  
 - Prior to cleaning, staff puts away the holiday interpretation materials, cleans and organizes the attic, which houses collection storage as well as decorations and catering supplies. During the cleaning week each exhibit room's walls and blinds are wiped down with electrostatic cloths. The mouldings and woodwork are dusted with natural bristle brushes. Collection items are evaluated and cleaned as necessary. The textiles are shaken and/or vacuumed. The brass is polished and there are touch ups to the floor cloth (which is not sealed during cleaning because of its close proximity to **Super-MuseumSunday**).



### COLLECTIONS:

- During January, **Jeff Freeman** will put together a plan and move DH Collections Storage from the third floor of the museum house to the

second floor of HSF's administrative building in the Abraham Sheftall House. This will begin the long range process to interpret the attic area.

- Following cleaning Davenport House Committee members and volunteers/staff interested in the museum's interpretation will walk through the property on Friday, January 17 at 2 p.m. to review the room exhibits.

#### DOCENTS NEWS:

- **2014 Winter Docent Training Class:** There will be a Docent Training Class in February.

Emails will be sent to those who have expressed an interest in giving tours. Please let your friends and neighbors know of this opportunity. The DH would love fresh new docents to supplement our terrific veteran docents during the spring busy season.



#### JIs IN THE NEW YEAR:

- **JI meeting:** The DH hopes our JIs will participate in the DH's archaeology workshop and excavation. Also, there will be a JI meeting on Thursday, **January 23 at 6:30 p.m.** The meeting is for participating JIs including the newly trained SAA JIs and veteran JIs. We will discuss upcoming activities such as **SuperMuseumSunday**, which is scheduled for February 9. In the past JIs have staffed the house for this important community day when most area museums are open free-of-charge.



#### PLANNING FOR 2014

##### PROGRAMMING:

**Note the scheduled 2014 programs and volunteer needs.** Staff will present

**Potable Gold: Savannah's Madeira Traditions** at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings in February (and 7:30 on Valentine's Day). Our **Road Scholars** series begins at the end of February. Towards the end of March the DH will need help for our Madeira motor coach series which runs throughout the spring. Also, mark your calendars for the **Savannah**

**Tour of Homes and Gardens** when the DH will preview it's **LAFAYETTE FÊTE**. Instead of presenting a Madeira program the site will present an evening of interpretation and dance with one performance from 5:30 until 7 and another from 7:30 to 9 p.m. We anticipate 60 people per performance. Also note, the DH will present its **TEA PROGRAMS** in March and May. Of course we will need bakers! Performers will be contacted in January for February rehearsals.

- **Madeira series dates:** 3/21, 3/27, 3/28, 4/3, 4/4, 4/10, 4/11, 4/17, 4/18, 4/24, 4/25, 5/1, 5/2, 5/8, 5/9, 5/15 and 5/16. We will have a refresher/training for this in March.

- **AASU/Road Scholars dates** 2/19, 3/5, 2/12, 3/26, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30, 5/7 and 5/14. The DH will offer training and instruction in how to assist staff in presenting this program in February.

#### LAFAYETTE FÊTE:

**Raleigh Marcell** will think about dialogue for the Lafayette event over winter break in early January. Our dancers are already ready for the program. Those wishing to perform (non-dancing) should contact Jamie. There will be several small speaking parts.



The house will need to be staffed with fabulous docents and we will need to decide on activities, etc. for the family program scheduled for March 28, April 6 and April 13. Those inclined should think about (new) Regency dresses. If all goes well, this event will be modified for future programs.

#### WORTH MENTIONING:

- **MESDA Textile Seminar:** **Jamie Credle** will attend the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts' Textile Seminar entitled "Useful, Ornamental, & Necessary – Needlework,

Clothing & Household Textiles in Colonial Charles Town" in Charleston, SC January 12 through 14.

- **Planning for the February Field Trip:** In mid-January you will be emailed about plans for the winter continuing education field trip. Staff is thinking about Fort Jackson, Fort Pulaski and the Tybee Lighthouse with lunch at the North Beach Grill. All is tentative including the date of Thursday, February 20.

- **Tales from Tour Land: Harriet Meyerhoff** sent us a fun recollection - *We feel lucky to live so close to the Davenport House. I don't know if I ever told you that I was a docent at the D.H. in the 1970's, and the attic was open for viewing. Of course, Savannah had fewer tourists then.*

*One day a Russian ship was in port, and a group of them toured the house, not sure why or how it was arranged. I met the capt. and navigator, and Eric and I toured them in our car. They in turn invited us to their ship for vodka...straight!*

#### THANK YOU FOR THE SEASON:

- **Holiday party celebrants who brought treats and wine:** It was grand. An extra thank you to JI **Kate Bosen, Liana Mosley and Jarrod Smith** for working the event and helping clean up.

- **Decking Our Halls:** Thank you to **Jan Vach, Linda Meyer, Abby Schreiber and Liz Schreiber** for decorating the DH wreathes and Kennedy Pharmacy windows.

- **Photography:** Thank you to **Ally Schreiber** for taking some terrific photos of our December interpretation.

- **Treats for the season:** For those who brought by holly treats and sweets, all was consumed and appreciated.

- **Informed worker:** Thank you to docents and Junior Interpreters who came to review the December interpretation and those who reviewed it on their own.

- **Road Scholars:** On Sunday morning, December 15, the DH put on a festive



and informative experience for Road Scholar travelers. **Claudette Engvall** and **Chassidy Malloy** gave tours. **Sherene LaMarche**, **Raleigh Marcell**, **Stacy Hess** and **Jeff Freeman** danced.

- **Holly Jolly - OTT:** It was a big undertaking but the DH soldiered through with 18 nights of Holly Jolly Trolley visits. The museum saw over 1,600 visitors. Thanks to **Raleigh Marcell**, **Jeff Freeman**, **Betty Schwarz**, **Dottie Kraft**, **Cierra Smith**, **Catie Morris**, **Pamela Eaton**, **Katherine Owens**, **Fran Molettiere**, **Gayle Mongrandi**, **John Leonti**, **Chassidy Malloy**, **Maria Sanchez**, **Leo Moorshead**, **Charlotte Rehmer**, **John Sorel**, **Kate Bosen** and **Annie Schemmel** who staffed the program.

- **Flyer distributors:** Volunteers **Debbie Yeagley** and **Judy Doyle** distributed holiday program flyers around the historic district.

- **Getting the Word Out:** The local media and tourist industry is always generous to the DH - this December was no different. Concierges and Visitor Center personnel gave out information about our programs. Store owners allowed us to post flyers. B & Bs and inns distributed flyers. **ConnectSavannah**, **South Magazine**, **SMN** ("Do" section article by Linda Sickler), **WTOC** (Mid-Morning Live on Christmas Eve), [www.southernmamas.com](http://www.southernmamas.com), **Explore Georgia** and **Visit Savannah** got the word out about Holiday Evening Tours.

- HOLIDAY EVENING TOURS BY CANDLELIGHT:

Musicians: **Jim McGaw**, **Shari Laist** and **The Back Porch Band**, **Katherine Albert**, **Giuliana Stovall**, **Liana Mosley** and **Kate Bosen**

Commander of First Impressions and Shop Director: **Chassidy Malloy**

Performers: **Catie Morris**, **Sage Hooten** and **Raleigh Marcell**

Docents: and Helpers **Kenlaysia Brown**, **Adam Caracci**, **Jody Christie**, **Clare Devlin**, **Claudette Engvall**, **Maddie Grove**, **Katherine Hewitt**, **Ariannah Kubli**, **Leo**

**Moorshead**, **Usha Rahn**, **Maria Sanchez**, **Betty Schwarz**, **Mary Ann Scott**, **Cierra Smith**, **Jarrod Smith** and **Jan Vach**.



#### DOCENT SPOTLIGHT

**Kate Bosen**

**DH:** How did you become involved with the Davenport House?

**Kate:** I first came to the Davenport House when I was around 9 years old, and I obviously had no idea I would eventually find myself volunteering at the museum! Like many of the Junior Interpreters, I was encouraged by my history teacher to join the program in order to learn more about Savannah.

**DH:** What do you do outside of the DH?

**Kate:** I'm a music enthusiast working on my third year at Savannah Arts Academy, and I also enjoy taking trips down to the Savannah Bee Company with my good friend Catie and eating all of their free samples.

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

**Kate:** My favorite thing about the Davenport House is all of the amazing guests I get to meet! People from all over the world come to visit the museum, and that is wonderful to me. I also love the sense of community I get from volunteering at the Davenport house, and sharing part of Savannah's history with them.

**DH:** What is the most unusual thing that has happened to you at the DH?

**Kate:** One of my teachers from school came in for a tour one day, and it was almost unbearably uncomfortable. I did my best to focus on my tour, but I kept thinking "What does she think? Am I doing a good job? I hope she doesn't ask me about that project due tomorrow..."

**DH:** How long have you been in Savannah?

**Kate:** I moved to Savannah on my 9th birthday from Baltimore, so I've been here for about half of my life.

**DH:** Do you miss anything about Maryland?

**Kate:** Savannah it great if you want to stay warm, but what I miss about

Maryland is having four distinct seasons. Both cities are rich in history though, which I adore.

**DH:** What are your plans for the future?

**Kate:** I'm currently looking at studying international business after I graduate in 2015, but I would also be okay with owning a small tea shop in Charleston.

**DH:** What is your favorite thing to do in Savannah?

**Kate:** My favorite events are all of the different music festivals that are in Savannah throughout the year, but when it's warm I like to go down to city market, sit in the sun, and people watch.



#### A look at the DH Guest Register:

During the month of December (2013), the DH saw visitors from 31 states and 4 countries visited us last month. Our international visitors hailed from Canada, Guatemala, Luxembourg and Poland. Interesting hometown names included Lewes, DE; Tamarac, FL; Battletown, KY; Howard City, MI; Waldwick, NJ; Salt Point, NY; Burnt Hills, NY; Angier, NC; College Corner, OH; Upper Darby, PA; Greenback, TN and Salado, TX.

**How They Heard About Us (in descending order of frequency):** Trolley Tour (Old Town Trolley, Oglethorpe); tour guides (Owens-Thomas, Grayline); brochures; Internet (Trip Advisor, Google, Visit Savannah); friends; Visitor Center; Concierge (Inn at Ellis Square, Kehoe House); guidebooks (AAA); relatives; repeat visit; AASU; research; walked by.

**What They Had To Say:** "Absolutely wonderful! Thank you, Susan." "Great tour, very energetic guides." "Very interesting. Nice garden." "Cool, love it!" "Sage was great!" "Sage and Jared were great!" "Outstanding." "Beautiful restoration!" "Fantastic." "Great tour lady." "Great restoration effort." "Enjoyed commentary" "Very interesting and educational." "Very interesting. John did a great job!" "Wonderful. Had archaeology lesson!" "Great house and guide." "Very interesting! Thank you for a great tour, Roseann." "Delightful, fascinating tour." "Gayle and John gave a fabulous tour." "Neat! Thank you!"

# BASEMENT LEVEL: NOT JUST FOR COOKING – What went on down there?

We recently found a recipe for washing clothes and looked up some quotes about that activity which would have taken place in the DH's case in the basement level and outside in the yard.

## Washing clothes

On the night preceding the day Intended to be set apart as washday Have all your clothes white and coloured Coarse & fine put into tubs of clear water & let them remain there all night Put on your boiling vessel one that Holds 6 gallons fills it half full of water & raise the water to be boiling heat After which put in a vessel of the size of the one we use, two teaspoonsful sal soda one quart soft soap & one quart of Lime water made by pouring three gallons of water to the quart of lime the night previous, so that it may have had time to settle & in proportion of smaller vessels are used: Stir the water & get the sal soda soap & lime water well mixed up & then put in your clothes boil rapidly one hour & the works is done Take them out & rise them well rubbing. The same Lime water may be kept until it is consumed. For making the soap take 6 pounds of potash. 4 lbs Lard one fourth pound of Rosin 25. All amounting to 150-- Beat up the rosin mix all together well & set aside for 5 days then put the whole into a ten gallon cask of warm water & stir twice a day for ten days at the expiration of which time or sooner you will have one hundred pounds of excellent soap for 150.

Ruth Erwin Welman Reid Cookbook, 1838-1849. MS: 652. Georgia Historical Society. Savannah, Georgia

[Sal soda - A hydrated sodium carbonate used as a general cleanser. Web dictionary.]

## Material Culture of Laundry:

“Cleaning supplies of all kinds-iron and tin dustpans, brooms and brushes galore, pails, and mops- would be stored

here (in the kitchen) as well. And then there was the multitudinous laundry apparatus necessary to ensure the success of the Monday wash and Tuesday ironing: copper or brass kettle, tubs, baskets and clothespins, horsehair clothesline, folding board or ironing table, clotheshorse, flatirons, box irons, iron holders, iron wipers, and little pieces of beeswax or spermaceti to smooth the path of the iron over the fresh-scented, line-dried linens.” (At Home)

**Labor of Washing Clothes:** “Most washing . . . was performed by hand . . . and there was often the attendant duties of making soap, hauling water from the river or the rain barrel, and bringing it to a boil. Soap was usually made in cool weather – a task redolent of evil-smelling fats and lye and one fraught with some anxiety, as the quality of the product could not be predicted.” (At Home)

**Frequency of Washing Clothes:** “The wash was attended to weekly, although such adversities as sickness or seasonal housecleaning could mean it might accrue over some two to three weeks. It is difficult to determine the regularity with which bed, table, and personal linens were changed, but the heat of the American summer seems to have accelerated the frequency.” (At Home)

**Labor of Washing Clothes:** “The theater for washing might be down by the river, under the quince bushes, over in the washhouse, or out in the kitchen with the brass or copper kettle at center stage. The multioperational process might involve soaking, washing in suds, boiling in strong suds, stirring with a



clothes stick, and then transferring the clothes to another tub of water, scouring the spots, rinsing, wringing, immersing in bleaching or bluing water, and wringing again. Some fabrics were then stiffened with starch, and all having been subjected to five completed baths, were carried out to the lines to be pegged firmly against the wind.” (At Home)

**Drying Clothes:** “Clotheslines of horsehair or twisted sea grass were to be wiped clean before being hung for use taken down when the clothes were brought in.” (At Home)

**Material Culture of Drying and Ironing Clothes:** “Clothes lines and clotheshorses, baskets and pins, irons and ironing boards abound in the inventory listings of colonial kitchens. . . . Clotheshorses were desirable supports for the freshly ironed items, for ironing followed washing as the night the day.” (At Home)

**Labor of Cleaning After Ironing:** “Even when the ironing was completed, the play had not concluded, for the theater must be scrubbed, the ironing table scoured.” (At Home)

**And the Bleach:** “Linen and cotton cloth and clothes were carefully bleached. . . .” (At Home)

Elisabeth Donaghy Garrett. [At Home: The American Family 1750-1870.](#)

# Be the Indiana Jones of the Davenport House!

## PARTICIPATE in the DH's Archaeology Project.

As hopefully you know, The Museum contracted with **The Lamar Institute** to conduct an archeological project at the DH which will include historical research, project design, field work, laboratory analysis, interpretation and report writing and curation. From this project the Museum hopes to uncover information about the lives of the Davenport household and life on Columbia Ward lots 13 (where the historic house is located) and 14 (where today's courtyard garden is).

In mid-December **Dan Elliot** of The Lamar Institute conducted a series of surveys using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) on our urban property. The surveys include both inside the ground level of the house, as well as in the courtyard and garden. Along with remains under the ground, museum staff hopes the GPR finds evidence of the kitchen and a bake oven within the walls of the house.

Evidence from the surveys will be analyzed to determine the best areas to locate test pits for the dig which will take place in January. In executing the project, there are exciting community participation components. On Wednesday, January 15 from 4 to 6 p.m., The Lamar Institute staff will conduct a workshop in the Kennedy Pharmacy explaining conclusions drawn from the GPR as well as how personnel will dig and where test pits will be located on the site. Then for the next eight days, January 16 through 24 (excluding Sunday, January 19) personnel will "conduct test unit excavations" or in layman's terms "digs". For the dig, archaeologists can handle up to 4 "helpers" per hour on January 18.

This project will be one of several studies used to help the Museum leaders with plans to completely restore the Museum house from the attic to the basement. Finding the kitchen and evidence about foodways and lifeways

will help to create an accurate presentation of 1820s life when the Davenports lived in the home. Evidence could also reveal materials about the site's earlier inhabitants as well as later activity. "One of the most important and practical parts of the project will be finding out about irrigation, air conditioning, gas and power lines under the ground. The Ground Penetrating Radar will reveal this information which will help us better maintain the property," concludes Raleigh Marcell, DH Maintenance Technician.

The Lamar Institute has an international reputation for high-quality archaeology and scholarship. It was incorporated in 1982 and has conducted a wide range of archaeological research from Native American sites dating to 8,500 B.C., underwater surveys, excavation at 18<sup>th</sup> century lost cities, to the study of French Huguenots and German Salzburger sites. The personnel involved in the DH project include **Rita Elliott**, who is the principal investigator and field director. She has over 27 years of archaeological experience and has directed projects ranging from investigating individual historic homes to conducting the archaeology of a ten-city-block project. She is well versed in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century historical archaeology, having directed many projects from the period including the tabby Horton House (Jekyll Island, GA), the Governor's Mansion (Milledgeville, GA), the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Farmstead (Gwinnett County, GA) and the Owens-Ware-Teague House/Alabama State Historic Preservation Office (Montgomery, AL). **Daniel Elliott** will conduct the ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey work. He has completed several dozen GRP survey projects on archaeological sites in Georgia including multiple projects for the Housing Authority of Savannah, the Coastal Heritage Society, and private individuals.

For additional information about the Davenport House Archaeology Project, to attend the workshop or to participate in the excavation (dig), please contact the museum at 912/236-8097 or [info@davenportmuseum.org](mailto:info@davenportmuseum.org)



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### INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATION— DH ARCHAEOLOGY

**WHO:** Davenport House Museum and the Lamar Institute and YOU

**What:** Workshop and Archeological Excavation

**WHEN:** WORKSHOP on Wednesday, **January 15 from 4 to 6 p.m.** Learn about the evidence found from a Ground Penetrating Radar analysis as well as techniques and plans for the excavations at the DH.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION ("a dig") on **Saturday, January 18 from 9 a.m. til 5 p.m.** Sign-up to help in one hour increments.

**WHERE:** Davenport House Museum – Courtyard Garden, 324 E. State Street

**ADDITIONALLY:** The Davenport House is conducting an archaeological project to learn more about the history of its property – Lots 13 and 14 in Columbia Ward. The community is invited to participate in the workshop and excavation at the Davenport House.

Call to learn more and to reserve a place. 912/236-8097

