GOLDEN SHOVEL IN THE GROUND!
Construction Begins–Kennedy Pharmacy Conversion and Addition

For the past three years, the front of this Friends of the Davenport House newsletter stated DH has been “on the verge.” That meant it was posed for a seismic shift into a new and better iteration. Well, it has taken longer than hoped but here it is – a golden shovel in the ground. A big construction fence went up around the courtyard of the Kennedy Pharmacy on December 1 and work has begun to transform the building and courtyard from a meeting space and rental apartment into a museum shop, offices, tour orientation area and multipurpose program space. Once the Kennedy Pharmacy addition and renovation are complete, the functions currently in the historic house basement will move across the lane into new digs. That will allow for the conversion of the newly emptied space into a new and engaging Urban Enslaved Exhibit, spotlighting recent scholarly research on the Davenport household.

All of this has gotten us thinking about time – what it takes to get things done and where timing fits into the equation. Great actors master timing to make what would be an acceptable performance into something outstanding. Sometimes when the planning for a project is ready, the timing is off, and it never comes to pass. For us the planets were aligned to start the KP/DH project. Surprisingly, we got our timing absolutely right. We broke ground in the middle of the nation’s worst pandemic in 100 years! Over the next few months as our community pulls itself out of the pandemic hole and returns to its place as a world class tourist destination, residents and visitors alike will see evidence of generosity and public spiritedness at the corner of Habersham and East Broughton Streets.

The roots of the expansion are deep and go back years — many years. In 1999, an anonymous donor purchased the Kennedy Pharmacy to benefit the Museum with the idea of moving museum operational functions inside. But the timing was not right. In 2009 the KP was rehabilitated to its present state which worked out nicely for years. In 2011, HSF’s first Capital Campaign in many years brought foundation funding to begin the renovation process and in 2017 a new campaign raised the effort to the current point. Along the way, and dovetailing with fundraising, was community input and thoughtful programmatic planning. An Ad Hoc Committee met and set goals; scholars made recommendations; and for five years a group of dedicated stakeholders met with regularity to conceptualize the new exhibit and accompanying historic house tour. If we were to enumerate everyone who has helped – providing thoughtful input and needed resources - it would be a very long list.

If you are feeling humbug this holiday season or experiencing something more profound, please look to the DH and HSF as a sign of realignment for a common purpose, striving to tell meaningful stories and providing a context for community history. 2020 was to have been a year of celebration as the DH marked its 200th birthday. Instead it was time of essential and final planning that put the shovel into the ground.

If you wish to contribute to the building project, Megan Kerley (mkerley@myHSF.org) at Historic Savannah Foundation is happy to explore the options with you. And know . . . the Museum continues to operate day in and day out, providing a welcoming experience in early 19th century port city urban life. If you have not made your contribution to the 2020-2021 Friends of the Davenport House Annual Giving Campaign, please know it is needed. Until there is an effective Covid-19 vaccine, securing operational income will be a struggle, but you can help with whatever amount is possible for your particular situation. Here’s to 2021!
Musings on Pandemic Savannah and After

In Savannah we pretty much know what the old city will look like when the pandemic is over, but what will it feel like? The buildings, which have withstood the test of time, will still be here, but what about the people. Will we rush out to hug those we have been unable to touch for so long? Or will we recoil from the intimacy and back into our houses? Or is it something in between?

Will we once again eat crab dip from a communal bowl and dance cheek-to-cheek? There are many questions which cannot be answered at this moment. One thing we hope that people grasp . . . is at this time of loss and uncertainty how much closer our lives seem to people of the past. While there remains an incomprehensible gulf, some things are surely more relatable. In the midst of something awful, life goes on. People, such as members of the Davenport household, persevered either out of hope or the compulsion to survive.

When the story of the pandemic is written one wonders how Savannah’s chapter will be different from other places. What will stand out? What we have noticed is that our squares offer a distancing space to connect and to share even if we cannot hug and carry-on. In Columbia Square, with regularity on weekends and evenings after the business day, neighbors bring out their lawn chairs and commune - sometimes for hours. There is a value to human contact and the availability of a safe, attractive place to come together that our city plan offers.

As we can see from our neighbors in the square, Savannahians are incredibly social beings. This is particularly true for those of us in the entertainment and tourism industries, which includes our docents and tour guides. We need to touch people and see what we do reflected in the eyes of our patrons. We are ready to do what we do. As the winter and spring unfold, know that we want and need to get back doing what we do best welcoming visitors and communicating our city’s remarkable past.

Looking forward to seeing you – in-person - on the other side of the pandemic. In the meantime, please follow DH happenings on social media — Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
Non-native Savannahians are sometimes curious about how our town became so fabulous. There are many answers. We particularly wanted to know – How did Savannah become an international tourist destination? And how did the Davenport House become the beloved and renowned house museum it is? Recently we took the opportunity to look around for answers. What we found were people, primarily women, who followed in the footsteps of HSF’s founders - our Seven Ladies, to become trailblazers themselves and put Savannah on the map.

For years I had heard snippets of stories of HSF’s Tour Service, the tour buses and the comradery of HSF tour guides “back in the day.” With those bits and pieces in mind, I visited with several veteran tour guides and looked at HSF’s files. Though this is not a definitive history of the Tour Service, hopefully the next few paragraphs provide hallmarks and stories for future historians to piece together or perhaps refute. What it lacks in hard data – visitor stats, expenses and income reports, it makes up for in passion and love – something that hard data cannot reveal.

The genesis of Historic Savannah’s Tour Service was a gift. HSF files contain a document from July 1971 stating, “Savannah Visitors Service [was] given to Historic Savannah Foundation by its owners Betty Rauers, Franklin Traub and Betty Lee.” The threesome began their tour company in 1965 and donated it to HSF six years later. A retired tour guide explained that they were women involved with Christ Church and interested in HSF. They were inspired by Savannah’s blooming preservation enthusiasm and the potential it held for their beloved city. They researched and wrote *SOURN IN SAVANNAH: An Official Guidebook and Map of Historic Savannah and the Surrounding Countryside* which became HSF’s recommended guide. Rauers, Traub and Lee had a passion for uncovering, documenting and presenting to the public layers of history and its relationship to physical remnants – buildings, landscapes, and the city plan.

And then there were the buses. Joan Sumner, who worked with the HSF Tour Service from 1976 to 1990, said in its earliest iteration the Tour Service had three Mercedes buses, which were sold because “nobody could read the manual.” The Service eventually purchased American-made buses which needed to be adapted for their special use. Sumner said a man named Winter Wright rigged a vehicular air conditioning system to work on the slow moving 24-passenger Blue Bird buses.

Once equipped with a fleet, the Tour Service was ready for the women, and some men, as it evolved into Savannah’s premier preservation promoter. The Tour Service was primarily staffed by middle-aged, college-educated, white women with social connections and a passion for Savannah’s story. Sumner noted the HSF had 50 tour guides on its Tour Service roster. They put the city, HSF and the Davenport House on the cultural radar of the nation at a time – around the American Bicentennial and later – when Americans with disposable income were eager to learn more about the colonial and early American past and to visit historic sites.

The neatly-coiffed, well-spoken and suited-up women did it all – drove the vans, buses and trolleys, narrated and did the financial transactions to make it work. Mary Waddell, who worked with the service beginning in 1986, said the guides called their work “show biz.” They used every sense available to them, and the corps of tour guides was a “force to be reckoned with.” By the time she got involved, the buses were ancient. One of the favorite stories I heard was from an unnamed guide who told of an experience while visiting Wormsloe. The bus she was driving broke down. While waiting for repairs she called her husband to “bring napkins, paper cups and a bottle of wine”. Once he arrived, the group of travelers refreshed
themselves under the oaks at the one of the Lowcountry’s most stunning locations. What a journey!

The service offered daily tours as well as specialty itineraries for groups including dinners and/or cocktail parties at distinctive venues, especially private homes. In the late 1970s, the service was located in what is now the DH’s Dining Room. Sumner remembers preparing for a cocktail party in the house when the formidable Mrs. Ethelyn McKinnon, the Museum’s founding director, ventured in and said, “Hello, I am Mrs. McKinnon.” Evidently the evening’s party had not been cleared with the Museum staff. Sumner, a bit unsure, said, “I am so happy you are here. We are having a reception. Won’t you join us?” And she did. When HSF’s headquarters moved to the Scarborough House, the Tour Service, including bus parking, relocated there.

Visiting the Davenport House was a cornerstone of the Tour Service. Every tour that visited the city came to the DH. Early on, it was the only house visitors saw and the period rooms were the only part of the experience available to visitors. As time passed and business grew, the DH Gift Shop opened, and it became a revenue generator — and an experience extender — for the Foundation. Its visibility within the Tour Service put the DH at the forefront of visitors’ perception of what Savannah and the Foundation were about.

Being the city’s premier tour service did not mean it was the only one. Mary Ann Smith, whose company, Convention Consultants, purchased the specialty tours half of HSF’s Tour Service in the 1990s, recalled that in the early days there was another tour company in town called AAA. Smith spoke of “the one that got away.” When word got out that Mrs. Onassis was coming to town and using AAA instead of HSF, there were disappointing words all around.

At that time, visitation to the city was seasonal with very few tourists venturing into town in the summer. The spring and fall seasons however brought crowds. Around 1985 Sumner remembered saying, “Let’s do a Halloween tour – A Haunted House Tour.” What they put together brought 400 reservations which was, at that time, an unimaginable attendance. One wonders if that was the first of Savannah’s haunted tours.

As time passed, the business changed and in the 1990s the Daily Tour Service was sold to Gray Line Savannah Landmark Tours, so that the Foundation could focus on its core mission of historic preservation. HSF’s relationship and partnership with Landmark Tours was close business-wise as was its emphasis on quality interpretation. A 1996 document from Landmark Tours reads “HSF shall be responsible . . . to provide information on historical facts and development in the historic district of the tour guides of LTI, monitoring the quality of tours, review and update the training manual with respect to the guides of oral presentation to the public and generally monitor the quality of tours . . .” Though guides were expected to view existing docents’ tours and be evaluated by the trainer, they were encouraged to do their own research and speak with their own voice, instead of presenting a scripted tour. They were instructed to be accurate and to develop something that reflected their own interests and passion. Linda Garner who came to Gray Line in 2000, recalled an essential quality of Savannah tour guides was being able to speak well. Many of the best guides were retired teachers and businesspeople.

Much has changed within the tour business in Savannah. Gray Line left Savannah in the early 2000s. Most of the formidable women of the Tour Service are no longer with us. A recent Google search referenced 75 tour companies, which includes walking tours, trolley tours and specialty tours in Savannah. Additionally, there are 34 museums and cultural sites in the Savannah area. Everything has become much more sophisticated with so many more options than 30, 40, or 50 years ago. It is hard to imagine a group of tourists being content to sit beside the road drinking a little wine, watching the Spanish Moss swaying in the breeze and listening to the stories of Oglethorpe and Tomachichi. Or is it?

Thank you to Dottie Barrett, Linda Garner, Kim Newbold, Mary Ann Smith, Joan Sumner, Mary Waddell.
Recently, Olivia Arfuso, Cathy Adler, Bob Prettyman and Amir Jamal Touré joined the Davenport House Committee. Beth Brooks is our newest Davenport House Endowment Director. Meet them! They are the most interesting and giving people. We look forward to their involvement and stewardship into the future!

CATHERINE ADLER

Hometown? Where have you lived other than Savannah?
I was born in Maine but grew up in the historical town of Concord, Mass. Except for small stints in Chapel Hill and Durham, NC and over a year in London, England, Savannah has been my home for over 35 years.

Ed./College?
I went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for my undergraduate work and the University of London, London School of Economics for my Master’s Degree.

Professional/Working Career?
I have had an interesting work career. Early in my career, I worked in social science research at the Research Triangle Institute. I have started and managed several companies over the years, including a small business accounting firm, a wholesale pharmaceutical company and a concierge moving service company. However, my love has been in the world of non-profits. In addition to volunteering and serving on the board of directors, I have served as the executive director for three different non-profit organizations.

What do you like about the Davenport House?
I love the Davenport House for several different reasons. I consider the house to be one of the finest examples of Federal architecture in the country. Saving it was the catalyst for the founding of Historic Savannah Foundation, which has worked to preserve a large portion of the historic architecture of the city. Finally, through its tours and programs, it tells the meaningful story of life in Savannah in the 1820’s.

Additionally:
I enjoy gardening, the natural world and my very spoiled dog, Warren.

OLIVA ARFUSO

Hometown? Where have you lived other than Savannah?
I am originally from Northern Bergen County, New Jersey; a suburb of New York City. Savannah is the only other place that I have called home, since moving out of the Tri-state area.

Ed./College?
I originally came to Savannah to attend the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). I graduated in 2018 with a degree in Historic Preservation. While in school, I fell in love with the South and all of Savannah’s beautiful architecture.

Other volunteer service?
During my senior year of college, I interned with the Save Ellis Island Foundation at the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration in New York City. I loved my experience there so much that I stayed on as a volunteer docent through the winter of 2017-2018.

Professional/Working Career?
I had planned to stay in Savannah after I graduated, but when no job came to fruition, I found my way back to New Jersey. I accepted a seasonal position with the Jersey City Division of Planning’s Historic Preservation Commission as a Historic Preservation Assistant. I always kept my eye out for opportunities in Savannah, and when a job arose at the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan
Planning Commission (MPC) not even a world pandemic could keep me from applying. I accepted a position in August of 2020 as an Assistant Planner in the Historic Preservation Department.

What do you like about the Davenport House?
The Davenport House has always interested me. Its Federal style of architecture is idyllic, but the home's role as a key catalyst in Savannah’s preservation movement is what truly inspires me. The group of individuals who saved the Davenport House from demolition ensured a prosperous future for not only this historic property but also many other historic buildings throughout the city with the establishment of the Historic Savannah Foundation. Without this series of events, Savannah would not be the architectural gem that we all cherish.

What do you hope the future holds for the DH?
I hope that the Davenport House continues to have stewards who protect the integrity of this historic home.

BETH BROOKS
Home town? Where you have lived other than Savannah?
I grew up in a small town in Northeast Georgia called Carnesville, and moved to Macon, Georgia for college. I lived in Macon for a total of ten years before moving to Savannah last July.

Ed./College?
I went to Mercer University for both undergrad and law school. In undergrad, I double majored in English Literature and Southern Studies. Southern Studies was comprised of African American Studies, Southern Literature, and Southern History.

Profession/working career?
I’m an attorney with the law firm of Harris Lowry Manton.

Other volunteer service?
Current or past? Currently just the DH, which is a combination of COVID and my work schedule. But in the past I volunteered with an after school program in Macon that was focused on literacy.

What do you like about the Davenport House?

What is NOT to like? From the first time I visited the Davenport House (which was a Madeira Tour on Valentine’s Day) I was completely hooked. I have always had an interest in history which I can attribute to my mother who was a docent at historic Brattonsville in her early 20s (I still have her costume!). But it is the people at the DH who are so special. It is so evident that everyone I meet who either works or volunteers at the DH holds the house and its history and family so dear. It is contagious and I am very fortunate to have caught the bug.

What do you hope the future holds for the DH?
I am very much looking forward to the addition of the Kennedy Pharmacy and the transformation of the DH basement which will tell the story of urban slavery in Savannah.

Anything else you would like to share.
I feel very fortunate to be involved with Davenport House and its many wonderful people. It has given me the opportunity to meet many wonderful folks, and I am always learning something new.

BOB PRETTYMAN
Home town? Where you have lived other than Savannah?
My home town is Philadelphia, PA. I grew up in the suburbs, Newtown Square. My father was an Aerospace Engineer, primarily with General Electric, and his career resulted
in a few family moves - first to Denver, CO when I was a small child, and later to Erie, PA when I was in high school. I returned to Philly for college and graduate school and lived there until 1989 when I changed career paths and moved to San Francisco, CA. In 2003 I was relocated by my employer to Denver, CO and in April of 2017, I retired and we moved to Savannah.

**Ed./College?** I graduated from Cathedral Prep in Erie, PA in 1974 and made the decision to enter the seminary. I have a BA in Philosophy, and an MDiv in Theology from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. I also minored in Social Sciences and Education with courses at St. Joseph's University, Penn State, and Gannon University.

**Profession/working career?** I was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1982. My last assignment, prior to leaving the ministry, was at St. John the Evangelist Church. I loved living in the heart of the city and working with special programs for the Elderly & Disabled, the Homeless, Persons with HIV/AIDS, as well as service to the large Central Business Community. In January of 1989 I moved to San Francisco and was hired as the Director of Community Relations for a large Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE). That was the catalyst to my longer career in the development and management of service-enriched affordable housing. I served as the SVP of Property Operations in California, and later Colorado, for Mercy Housing, Inc. In that capacity I first came to Savannah in 2003 where Mercy was engaged in the historic rehab of properties in the Cuyler-Brownsville community, the Historic District and new senior housing in Pembroke, GA. I fell in love with the beauty and history of Savannah, which resulted in Mike and me making it our home. My last position prior to moving here was as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) - Housing Management for the Denver Housing Authority from which I retired in April of 2017.

**Other volunteer service?** I participate in the Chatham County Housing Coalition (CCHC), and Mike and I recently became foster parents to Sadie, a Pembroke Corgi through Southeast Corgi Rescue (SECR).

**What do you like about the Davenport House?** I love the history of the Davenport House and all of the personal stories that it shares - from the Davenports themselves; to the Enslaved Workers who were integral to their household and their success; to the multiple tenants who lived here in the early 20th century. I particularly enjoy sharing the fact that the Preservation of Savannah's Landmark Historic District began with the seven ladies who saved the house from demolition and established the Historic Savannah Foundation in 1955. Most importantly, I am delighted that the Davenport House offers so many wonderful opportunities to be a part of its amazing family. Staff and Volunteers, Docents and Junior Interpreters make everyone feel welcome, and encourage them to be stewards of preservation!

**What do you hope the future holds for the DH?** I am excited about the addition of new space at the Kennedy Pharmacy building that will provide better orientation, training and meeting facilities, as well as new & improved offices, gift shop and restrooms. All of this, combined with the further restoration of the Davenport House basement; new storage space in the garden; and, other enhanced presentations will add even more value to the many wonderful programs offered by the museum. Most importantly, I am enthused about having a greater ability to share the more complete stories of all who
lived here. I think that the Davenport House is poised to have one of the finest exhibits about the Urban Enslaved and the foundational role they played in the success of our nation. The collaborative work that is being done by the Historic Savannah Foundation and the Davenport House Museum is truly phenomenal.

Amir Jamal Touré

Hometown? Where have you lived other than Savannah?
I am a native of Savannah and Hilton Head Island. My family has been in the Low-country of Georgia and South Carolina since at least 1814 and establishing family compounds in the late 1800 Bulloch County, GA and Beaufort County, SC.

Ed./College?
I graduated from Hershal V. Jenkins High School and Savannah State University where I received a BS in Political Science and a BBA in Marketing. I received my legal education at Mercer University where I received my JD from the Walter F. George School of Law.

Other volunteer service?
I am the resident scholar for Geechee Kunda Cultural Center and Museum in Riceboro, Ga., and am known as a Djeli (cultural historian). I have performed internationally in sharing history and culture.

Professional/Working Career?
My life is a balance of community service, teaching, small business ownership, writing and historic interpretation. I am a small business owner of Day Clean Journeys tour company. Currently I am Professor of Criminal Justice at Georgia Southern University. I authored *African American Journey, African American, Gullah Geechee, and General History in Savannah* and contributed chapters to *We Be Gullah/Geechee: Cultural Capital & Collaboration Anthology* and *Savannah Guide Book*.

What do you like about the Davenport House?
It is the most fabulous house museum in coastal Georgia and the country. And, that is not a shameless plug but an actual plug.

What do you hope the future holds for the DH?
That it continues to tell the story of everyone!
Mask-clad and social distancing, the participants went through the same curriculum as prior classes, being introduced to material culture, social history, the interpretation of the historic house, as well as doing hands-on activities and walking tours. Students gave their first tours to the public Friday, November 27 and Saturday, November 28—the two days after Thanksgiving.

Some of their impressions of the program and giving tours include:

**What did you like least?**  *I didn’t like how spooky it was in the dark...* [The class was held from 6 to 8 p.m. in the fall—after sundown.]

Drake.

**Giving tours?**  *“I loved it a lot.”* Charles.

**A class during Covid-19:**  *“I actually felt better about giving tours during the pandemic for less people would probably come early making me less nervous about the first tour.”* Zelda.

**General comments:**

*“Loved learning about history!”* Kenzie.

*“...it helped me become better at talking to people in large groups and meeting all different types of people.”* Drake.

*“My first tour made me nervous, but I settled down afterwards.”* Kyler.

*“This was a wonderful experience that helped educate me not only on the house but also the time period.”* Madison.

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**Kennedy Pharmacy Archaeology**

For the first 100 years of the Kennedy Pharmacy’s existence, situated on the corner of East Broughton and Habersham Street, its primary relationship with the Davenport House was geography. It rests across Broughton Lane from the DH. It was on the eastern edge of Savannah’s main shopping thoroughfare—Broughton Street. It was a pharmacy for much of its history, beginning with The Anti-Migraine Co., run by Wm. M. Cleveland, manager and druggist, in 1891. Through the years it was the R. V. Nottingham & Co. Drug Store (1892-1893), the Red Cross Pharmacy, Norwood Pharmacy (1916-1948) and LaRoache Pharmacy (1950-1960). Interestingly, it was a laundry for several years in the early 20th century—first listed as the E. Hopp Laundry (1897-1900) and 1901-1902 the Robert & Tong Laundry. One of the owners is listed as T. Kee, who is also listed in the business directory as residing in 324 E. State Street (the Davenport House). The last business before being acquired by the DH/HSF was the Jackson Hewitt Tax Office (1965-1999). The apartment on the second floor was residential rental property from 1897 to 1958.

All of the incarnations left evidence! In order to capture this evidence, as well as evidence from times when there was nothing on the site, The LAMAR Institute archaeological firm was contracted by Historic Savannah Foundation to investigate the property prior to construction of an addition to the structure. Rita and Dan Elliott led the team of archaeologists for a five-day excavation in September. The two pits they dug and examined were in the back of the building under the patio. They unearthed intriguing finds including a portion of a glass bottle reading “Antimigraine cures every variety of headache,” a Revolutionary war era musket ball, a toy pistol—or was it—a real pistol, whole wine bottles, fragments of china, etc. All of the evidence was taken back to the lab. It will be documented and interpreted resulting in a final report.

Stay tuned!
Plum Pudding.—This is one of the relics of barbarous cookery—a compilation of grossness, gastronomically unscientific, and pre-eminently unwholesome. Sugar, dough, and fat, are its bases, and in such proportion, that its lighter ingredients have not power to redeem its crudity. No wonder John Bull is dyspeptic, hypochondriac, and suicidal, when plum puddings and malt liquor occupy his stomach so often. Boiled dough is the food of his youth—solid, stone-like dough—and when he grows up, he mollifies his mess with sugar and raisins; scarcely a day passes without a wedge of his favorite dish—plum pudding; and then he mopes and drinks his ale, until a sufficient quantity of cocculus indicus, or opium—the narcotic portion of his beverage—nods him down to sleep. Yet John wonders why he suffers from indigestion! Leave off plum pudding. The French, who know better than we do the science of cookery, laugh at us for still patronising it. We know what it is to oppose a popular prejudice, we did so with cravats and marriage beds; but we cannot blink truth. Medical Adv. Savannah Republican. November 13, 1824.
To:

Friends of the Davenport House: Annual Giving Response Info

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Contact information: 912-236-8097, info@davenporthousemuseum.org

Requesting you enjoy the small pleasures when you can.

Love,
Your friends at the DH

The day I discovered the drum!
This is Martin, the DH holiday boy.