Noah E. Barnum (1824 - 1913)

Mr. Noah Knapp Barnum was a dealer in hats and caps and hailed from the town of Danbury, Connecticut, an early leader in the “Hatting industry.” He was a resident of Savannah for a period of about 11 or 12 years (1862 - 1863-4?) and during that time operated a prosperous business at 153 (now no. 119) W. Congress Street. He was active in community affairs and was a member of the Trinity Methodist Church.

Noah's family traces back to Thomas Barnum, one of the original eight settlers of Danbury. Phineas T. Barnum, of Circus Fame, was also a direct descendent of Thomas Barnum; however, the relationship to Noah was remote. Noah's wife, Mary (Starr) Barnum, was also a native of Danbury; her ancestor, Mary Starr, having come to the town within a few years of the settling. Both of the Barnum's children were born in Savannah. Charles was born in 1856 and Mary in 1861, however, Mary died in infancy.

Noah Barnum was a close relative (maternal nephew) of Judge Noah Barnum Knapp, a prominent Savannah citizen of the 1800's. There was a close business and personal relationship between the two men and upon Judge Knapp's death (1879), Noah became the administrator of his will.

Upon leaving Savannah, the Barnum's took up residence in Brooklyn, N.Y. where Noah died in 1913 at the age of 99. Mary survived her husband by six years, dying in 1919 at the age of 96. They were both buried back in their original home town of Danbury in the Wooster Cemetery.

Researched and prepared by

James A. Scott

30 July 1976

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Special Collections. Lane Library. Armstrong Atlantic State University. Savannah, GA 31419-1997
NOAH KNAPP BARNUM (1824 - 1913)

Noah K. Barnum was the son of Darius Barnum and Maria (Knapp) Barnum of Danbury, Connecticut. He was born on December 24, 1824 and was one of five children. He had two sisters and two brothers.

The roots of all Barnums in this country during the 1800's trace back to the Danbury/Bethel area of Connecticut. Noah's ancestor, Thomas Barnum, was one of the original eight settlers of Danbury in 1684-5. Phineas T. Barnum, of circus fame, was also a direct descendent of Thomas Barnum; P.T. Barnum appears to have been a second cousin once-removed to Noah Barnum.

Noah Barnum's reply to an interrogatory made by the executors of the will of Noah E. Knapp gives us a glimpse into his early life:

I was acquainted with him [Noah E. Knapp] and with his family from my earliest recollection. He was my mother's brother and visited my family in my boyhood and after I became 21 years of age we associated together.

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1 Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July 1976, information from the town records - Vital Statistics. Danbury, Ct., Compiler - LaGorges Haireth. (copy included - see appendix A)

2 Ibid.

3 Noah E. Knapp, "Last Will and Testament," executed 1879, file number 121, office of the ordinary - Chatham County, Savannah, Georgia.

4 Director-New York Historical Society to James A. Scott, 29 July 1976, information obtained from a "preliminary check" - source not given. (copy included - see appendix B)

5 Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July 1976, additional information on genealogy - source not given. (see note two - appendix A)

6 Director-New York Historical Society to James A. Scott, 29 July 1976, appendix B.
frequently. We saw each other every day. Our families were always upon the most intimate terms. Mrs. Maria Barnum was my mother and Mrs. Clarissa Foot was my aunt, they were sisters of Noah B. Knapp. I was always, from my childhood, well acquainted with the family of Mrs. Clarissa Foot. We were brought up in the same village together and were frequently in each other's company and I was well acquainted with each and all her children. It is a picture of a small town and close family ties.

Noah Knapp Barnum's maternal uncle was Noah Barnum Knapp, a prominent Savannah citizen of the 1800's. Mr. Knapp operated a harness business and in addition, was one of the Directors of the Marine Bank of Georgia, the Marine and Fire Ins. Bank, and the Savannah Institute for Savings. He was also a Trustee of the Savannah Mutual Insurance Co. and on January 4, 1853 was elected Justice of the Inferior Court of Chatham County, an office he held until his death.

1Noah B. Knapp, "Last Will and Testament." An Interrogatory was sent to the Office of the Ordinary in New York City to determine if Noah A. Barnum (residing in Brooklyn, N.Y. at the time) were the nephew of Noah B. Knapp. It and the reply are filed with the will.

2Name relationships suggest that there were probably some intermarriages between the Barnums and Knapps before the marriage of Darius and Maria (Noah's parents). It seems likely that Noah's maternal grandmother was a Barnum; however this has not been verified.

3ANNAIIS OF SAVANNAH, "A Digest and Index of the Newspaper Record of Events and Opinions," written, edited, and typed by the workers of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Georgia, sponsored by the City of Savannah, co-sponsor - Savannah Morning News, 87 vols. (1938), 20:259 (hereafter cited as ANNAIIS).


5Ibid., vol. 1, part 1, p.86.

6Ibid., vol. 4, part 1, p.87.
There was an intimate and personal relationship between Noah Barnum and Noah Knapp as Mr. Barnum has stated above. It was probably that relationship that influenced Mr. Barnum to establish his business in Savannah. In addition, Mr. Knapp aided his nephew financially.  

Mr. Barnum established his business in Savannah in the early part of 1852. He was a dealer in hats and caps which is not surprising since Danbury, Connecticut was an early leader in the "Hetting industry." He ran his first advertisement in the Savannah paper on July 16, 1853 and continued to advertise periodically through May 19, 1862. His business prospered as indicated by the Savannah Tax Digesta. He started in 1853 with an inventory of about $5,000.00 and by 1854 had increased that inventory by almost 100% to $9,700.00. At the  

\[1\] Chatham County Deeds, Grantor-Grantee Books, Office of the Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga., vol. 38, p. 337. (Records a loan by Mr. Knapp to his nephew - note secured by the property bought with the loan)  

\[2\] Savannah Tax Digesta - through 1900, located at the Georgia Historical Society, 501 Whitaker Street, (hereafter cited as Tax Digesta). These records are bound by year and alphabetized by first letter of last name; however, within each alphabetic section, the entries were made as taxes were paid. In addition, the pages are not numbered. Entries for Mr. Barnum were normally toward the front of the "B" section.  

The first record of Mr. Barnum's presence in Savannah is from the Tax Digest of 1852.  

Mr. Barnum was married on July 13, 1852 and the marriage certificate notes that he was from Savannah, Ga. at the time.  

Town Records - Vital Statistics, Danbury, Ct. See appendix A.  


\[4\] W.R. Francis, The History of Hetting in Danbury, (1860), Sent as an enclosure to letter from Dorothy T. Schling, 23 July 76. (photocopy copy included - see appendix A)  

\[5\] Annual, vol. 4, part 1, p.12.  

\[6\] ibid., vol. 13, part 1, p. 5.  

\[7\] Tax Digesta, 1852 - 1860.
same time, he also increased his personal property (furniture, etc.) and real property holdings. By 1859, Mr. Barnum's total assets were estimated at about $12,000.00. Appar-
ently, his success was due, in part, to his enterprising and innovative ability, exemplified by the following article appearing in the Savannah paper on Oct. 27, 1859:

The passersby in Broughton Street last evening were attracted by the unusual display of light that illuminated the west end of our Broad way with a brilliance that caused gas lights to pale. We learned on inquiry that Mr. M.K. Barnum, with a view to experimenting in the burning of gasses, had a beacon light set upon the roof of the building he occupies.

Mr. Barnum's success in business was accompanied by an influence in community affairs. On Jan. 30, 1855, he was elected one of the directors of the YSCA. In the same year, he was somehow involved on a board concerned with the division of school funds. He was also the Secretary of the Trinity Sabbath School as determined by an obituary written by him for one of the students of the school. His stature continued to rise.

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1Tax Digest, 1852 through 1862.
2Federal Census - 1860, roll 115, see reproduction of p.218.
3ANNALS, vol.4, part 1, p. 179.
4Ibid., vol.6, part 1, p. 179.
5Ibid., vol.10, part 1, p. 64.
6A school run by Trinity Methodist Church. Mr. Barnum is listed as a member in the Church Records (in the process of being collated and indexed) in vol. 91 section "B." There is no date or page number but there is a note beside his name, "Removed north without certificate." It is possible that these records contain some illuminating information; however, at present, they are primarily stacks of dusty papers.

7ANNALS, vol. 10, part 1, p. 167.
in the community. He became a member of the Union Society in 1853 \(^1\) and on Jan. 5, 1860, he was appointed by the Governor of Georgia, to the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief as an Aide-de-Camp with the rank of Colonel. \(^2\) After the commencement of the War Between the States, he joined (Jan. 14, 1861) the Savannah Artillery \(^3\) and by Nov. 19, 1861, his business was manufacturing military fatigue caps for the Confederate Army. \(^4\) In March of 1862, he was elected as Third Lieutenant for Company E of the Georgia Militia and on Dec. 15, 1862, Mr. Barnum made a monetary contribution to the Confederate Army in Virginia. \(^5\) From this point on there is a paucity of information.

This insufficiency has been outstanding as to Mr. Barnum's personal life. What little there is has come, primarily, from three sources, the communication of Mrs. Dorothy T. Schling, Director of the Scott-Facton Museum and Historical Society, in Danbury, Connecticut; the will of Noah B. Knapp, \(^7\) and the death record of Mary Starr Barnum (a daughter) \(^8\) who died in infancy.

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\(^1\) Union Society Annual Reports, various printers, bound into volumes by years for the Savannah Public Library, 2002 Bull Street, Savannah, Ga., vol. 1851-1879, 1858 Report, p. 42, 1859 Report, p. 27, 1860 Report, p. 36.

\(^2\) ARNALS, vol. 11, part 1, p. 173.

\(^3\) Ibid., vol. 12, p. 237. (Note: the cover of this vol. is miscalculated on vol. 1.)

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 203.

\(^5\) Ibid., vol. 13, part 1, pp. 5 and 35.

\(^6\) Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July '76. (app. A)

\(^7\) Noah B. Knapp, "Last Will and Testament."

\(^8\) Death Records (1862), Chatham County Bureau of Vital Statistics, Chatham County Health Dept., 2611 Eisenhower Dr., Savannah, Ga.
From Mrs. Schling, we find that Mr. Barnum was in Danbury, Connecticut on July 13, 1852 and married a Mary Starr, also a native of Danbury, her ancestor, Rory Starr, "having come to the town within a few years of the settling." Both of their children were born in Savannah; Charles Knapp Barnum, born March 23, 1856, and Mary Starr Barnum, born Jan. 13, 1861.¹ Their daughter, Mary, died a year and a half later on July 31, 1862, of whooping cough and was buried at the Laurel Grove Cemetery, lot # 1052.² From the will of Noah Knapp, we find certain family relationships.³ James K. Barnum and Samuel R. Barnum were sons of Frederick T. Barnum, the brother of Noah.⁴ Frederick and his wife Lydia M., both died on Jan. 19, 1856 and were also buried in the Laurel Grove Cemetery, lot # 9.⁵ For some reason their sons did not live with them; instead, they lived at the home of an E.S. Zittrouer.⁶ Samuel died of "brain congestion" later the same year as his parents.⁷

¹Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July '76, see note #3 appendix A.
²Death Records (1862), Chatham County, Savannah, Ga.
³Appendix C - abstracted from the will of Noah B. Knapp.
⁴Noah B. Knapp, "Last Will and Testament,"
⁵Laurel Grove Cemetery Records, written, edited, and typed by the workers of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Georgia, sponsored by the Committee of the Savannah Historical Research Association, 4 vols. (1939), names listed alphabetically, vol. 1. (hereafter cited as Cemetery Records).
⁷Death Records (1856), Chatham County, Savannah, Ga.
James K. went on to Medical School and opened a practice in Savannah. However, the only record of Noah Barmum’s contact with this branch of his family is from an article that appeared in the Savannah paper announcing the death of Samuel.

Mr. Barmum’s business addresses are known from the many advertisements he placed in the paper. His first one listed the address at 176 Broughton Street. Then, sometime in 1854, he moved his business to 153 W. Congress Street. However, there is only a hint at his residence address and that comes from the death record of his daughter, Mary. It states that at the time of her death, her residence was on Perry Street, in Brown Ward.

The paucity of information becomes more pronounced in 1863 and 1864, a period which seems to have been critical to Mr. Barmum’s future. There is no reference to him or his business in the 1863 newspapers. The only records available from this year are those in the 1863 Tax Digest and the Deeds book. They

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{1}}\] ANNUAL, vol. 12, p. 47.

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{2}}\] Ibid., vol. 7, part 1, p. 127.

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{3}}\] Ibid., vol. 5, part 1, p. 259; vol. 6, part 1, p. 7. Time-frame was determined from the dates of the advertisements.

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{4}}\] Death Records (1862).

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{5}}\] Chatham County Deeds, Grantor-Grantee Books, Office of the Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga., vol. 3V., p. 16.
indicate that Mr. Barnum bought another ½ lot that year, No. 38. Brown Ward, for $7,500.00. In the year 1864, there is even less information.

From all appearances, Mr. Barnum seems to have had sympathies in keeping with the "southern philosophy." He even purchased a slave during 1862.¹ However, he seems to have run afoul the Confederate States Government in 1864.

There are only two references to him in the papers for 1864 and they are posted by Charles C. Usher, a Confederate States Marshal.² One article, on July 2, is a notice that Mr. Barnum's property has been seized and will be sold the following July. The other article, on July 6, is notification that "Barnum's Hat Store" has been sold. At this point, all is conjecture; however, it seems likely that Mr. Barnum had left Savannah because his uncle, Mr. Knapp, paid the taxes on his property for that year.³

The next record of Mr. Barnum's whereabouts is from the Deed books. Apparently the seizure and sale of his property did not hold up at the termination of the Civil War because on June 23, 1866, he sold the property to an Ezra A. Huyt of New York. Mr. Barnum was himself, in New York at the time and the transaction was recorded there and the information was transmitted to Savannah and recorded at the Court House.⁴

¹*Tax Digest* (1862).
²*Annals*, vol. 15, part 1, p. 8.
³*Tax Digest* (1864). (Note: Mr. Barnum's property was not due to be sold until July 1865)
⁴Chatam County Deeds, Grantor-Grantee Books, Office of the Superior Court, Chatam County Court House, Savannah, Ga., vol. 37, p. 51.
Mr. Barnum remained in New York after the war and it appears that he established a business there in the city.\(^1\) His son, Charles, married an Idaora White on Jan. 19, 1886.\(^2\) In 1879, Noah B. Knapp died and it was stated in his will that Noah Barnum and his sister lived at 29 Halsey St., in Brooklyn, New York.\(^3\) Mr. Knapp left an estate worth over $900,000.00 and in 1892 Mr. Barnum became administrator of his will. He visited Savannah again during that administration.\(^3\)

The communication from the New York historical Society raises some question as to Mr. Barnum's marital record after he left Savannah. Their records indicate that he was married to a Margaret Peck.\(^4\) Whatever may be the case, it is known that upon his death, in 1913, he was buried in the Wooster Cemetery in Danbury, Connecticut and six years later, in 1919, Mary (Starr) Barnum died and was buried there too.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Director-New York Historical Society to James A. Scott, 29 July 1976. (Appendix B)
\(^2\) Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July 1976. (app. A)
\(^3\) Noah B. Knapp, "Last Will and Testament."
\(^4\) Director-New York Historical Society to James A. Scott, 29 July 1976. (app. B)
\(^5\) Dorothy T. Schling to James A. Scott, 23 July 1976. (app. A)
Bibliography


Francis, W.W. The History of Hatting in Danbury, 1860. Photocopy of p. 4 & 5 sent from Scott-Fenton Museum, Danbury, Connecticut. Savannah Public Library nor does Lane Library carry this book. It appears to be a part of a special collection. No publishing information given.


Union Society Annual Reports, 6 vols. Bound into volumes by years for Savannah Public Library. Volume 1851-79.


APPENDIX A

James A. Scott  
2009 Blunshee Rd.  
Savannah, Ga. 31404  
July 1, 1975

Rev. Dorothy T. Schling, Director  
Scott-Ponton Museum and Historical Society Inc.  
Darien, Connecticut 06820

Dear Mrs. Schling,

I am a student at Armstrong State College in Savannah, Ga., and I am working with the Georgia Historical Society on a research project that involves tracing the family history of a Noah B. Barnum.

The Historic Savannah Foundation is concerned with the restoration and preservation of some of the old Savannah homes. Students of the History 300/300 class at Armstrong, in conjunction with the Georgia Historical Society, attempt to supply the history connected with them. My assignment is a house that was constructed in 1859 by Mr. Noah B. Barnum.

Mr. Barnum was born in Danbury, Conn., and resided in Savannah for a period of about 10-15 years. The time frame appears to have been from about 1852 through about 1867 or 1868. I have been unable to find any information on his marriage, his destination upon leaving Savannah, or upon his death. He appears to have been related to the Edwin S. Zitrouzas and the Noah B. Knopp, also from Connecticut; however, I have been unable to unravel those relationships.

I would appreciate any information you could provide that would help me in my quest. In return, if the work I am doing would be complementary to your records, I would be happy to send you a copy of the finished report.

I am enclosing a summary of the information I have found so far. Perhaps it will be helpful. I am also enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please allow me to pay for any expenses incurred. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James A. Scott
Dear Mr. Scott:

Our researcher was away due to a death in her family when your request for information arrived.

We hope the enclosed will be of interest to you. Since you are restoring a house we thought the data about Rory Starr might be of special interest.

We would very much like to have a copy of your finished report. If we can be of further help please let us know. The families are all well known here. The Starrs came within a few years of the first settling.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dorothy T. Scolling (Mrs. M. D.)
Director
APPENDIX B

Communication of 29 July 1976 from the Director of the New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West, New York City.
Director - New York Historical Society
1yo Central Park West
New York, N.Y. 10024

July 15, 1976

James A. Scott
2309 Pinetree Rd.
Savannah, Ga. 31404

Dear Sir:

I am a student at Armstrong State College in Savannah, Ga. and I am working with the Georgia Historical Society on a research project that involves tracing the family history of a Noah K. Barnum.

The Historic Savannah Foundation is concerned with the restoration and preservation of some of the old Savannah homes. Students of the history 300/500 class at Armstrong, in conjunction with the Georgia Historical Society, attempt to supply the history connected with them. My assignment is a house that was constructed in 1859 by Mr. Noah K. Barnum.

Mr. Barnum was born in Danbury, Conn. and came to Savannah sometime around 1852. He resided here about 10 - 15 years and during that time he operated a store dealing in hats and caps. In 1863 - 1864, the records become quite sketchy and the last record is one of a Confederate States Marshal confiscating his property and putting it up for sale. I have since found a lead in the will of N.B. Knapp (1879) indicating that Mr. Barnum went to New York after leaving Savannah. The address given was 29 Halsey Street, Brooklyn, New York. I am trying to construct a biographical sketch of Mr. Barnum and I seem to have exhausted all the available material here in Savannah.

I would appreciate any information you could provide that would help me in my quest. In return, if the work I am doing would be complementary to your records, I would be happy to send you a copy of the finished report.

I am enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. In addition, please allow me to pay for any expenses incurred. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James A. Scott
dear Mr. Scott——

In reply to your letter of July 15, 1976, which we are returning, we regret that we can only provide free reference service by mail to members of the Society. We will make a reasonable effort, however, to find the data you need after receiving your check for three dollars. This fee is to cover part of the cost of making the search. We cannot assure you that we will find any pertinent information.

If you wish us to try to find the answers to your questions, please return your original letter with your check.

Sincerely yours,

The New-York Historical Society

A preliminary check indicates that Knapp had his business in New York City and his residence in Suburban (not then a part of greater New York). We could provide directory listings on that, if they would help.

It also seems likely that Berman was a distant relative of R. T. Berman — the roots of very Berman in this country appear to go back to the Danbury/Bethel area of Connecticut.

There is one Jacob Knapp Berman, born Dec. 24, 1824 who married a Margaret Peck and had a son, Charles Knapp Berman (eventually from which he was in Savannah). He died March 25, 1853. If you think that might be he, he would be a second cousin, once removed, of R. T. Berman, our current field. You may be able to verify it through that of a birth or baptismal certificate was available for the son.