ARCHIBALD C. DAVIDSON:
A BIOGRAPHY

BY

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SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
JUNE 1993
ABSTRACT

Archibald C. Davenport was born in Savannah in 1819. He was the son of Isaiah and Jane Davenport. Archibald was a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards and the Tattnall Guards. He served as a captain during the Civil War. Archibald served as Clerk of City Council for a few years. He was a banker and was employed by the Bank of Commerce and later by the Central Railroad Bank from which he retired. He married Jane Postell around 1870. The couple had no children. Archibald died on April 9, 1892 of a heart attack. He was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery.
Archibald Davenport was a banker and confederate war veteran who spent his entire life in Savannah with the exception being the time he was in the army during the Civil War. He was very fond of the city and was active in the community. He married, worked, and was a devoted citizen in Savannah during the 1890s.

Archibald's life began in Savannah in 1819. The exact month and day were unable to be obtained. He was the son of Isaiah and Sarah Davenport. Neither were native Savannahians, but they met and were married in Savannah at the Independent Presbyterian Church. Isaiah was a carpenter and builder who came to Savannah for his career. He was successful and built many buildings in the city. In 1820, he built the Isaiah Davenport House located on 324 East State Street, which today is a historical landmark.

Archibald was one of ten children. Archibald's father died in 1827 at the age of 43. He died during a yellow fever epidemic. Sarah was left to take care of a large family and Isaiah's affairs. Isaiah left a will but this has been removed from the court's files. Sarah took care of her children by running boarding houses. Very little was known about Archibald at this time as he was only a child. Sarah was able to continue her boys' education. Archibald and his brothers were educated by Mr. Bullough and Mr. Phillips. There was no indication that Archibald received any type of college education.

Archibald did not appear in records again until 1836. That year marked the beginning of his involvement in military affairs. In 1836, at the age of 17, Archibald joined the Savannah Volunteer Guards which was originally organized in 1802. He was a member
for the rest of his life. In 1840, there was a sale recorded at the court house between Archibald and his brother Isaiah Davenport, on May 7, 1840:

Isaiah for sum of $600 by Archibald C. Davenport present all and entire my household and kitchen furniture together with 1 saddle and bridle as per schedule annexed hereto. To have and to hold the said household and kitchen furniture and saddle and bridle unto the said Archibald C. Davenport, executor, administrator and assign to his and their only proper use and behalf forever and know the said, Isaiah Davenport, his heir, executor, administrator the said bargained premises unto the said Archibald C. Davenport his executor, administrator and assigns, from and against all persons shall and will warrant and forever defend by these presents. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal dated at Savannah May 7, 1840 and 64 after the year of the independence of the U.S.A.

The selling of furnishings and household items was a common activity among the Davenport family. On July 12, 1856, Isaiah sells all furnishings to Sarah Davenport for sum of $300. Furniture was again exchanged on July 14, 1857. Sarah sells all furnishings to Hugh Davenport for $240.15. Possibly some sort of financial difficulty was the purpose of these transactions. No exact reason was given.

Archibald devoted more of himself and time to the city. He served as City Clerk of Council from 1846 to 1848. At this time, Archibald was residing with his mother. He is listed as a member of Sarah Davenport's household in the 1850 Federal Census. His occupation was listed as inspector of customs. This was the only time this occupation was ever connected to Archibald. Archibald made his career in Savannah in banking. He left as City Clerk of Council in 1848. During this time Archibald was pursuing his career in banking. He was again involved with the council in 1855.
On January 12, 1855 it was recorded in the Daily Morning News: The city council met and proceeded to the election of city officers which resulted in ... Archibald C. Davenport becoming Clerk of Council. This was the last year Archibald was involved with the council or city government. The City Directories for the years 1858 to 1860 listed Archibald's occupation as teller at the Bank of Commerce. In 1858, he was residing at Quantock's Range on Taylor Street. In 1859 his residence was listed as 87 Taylor Street near Barnard Street. This was the same for 1860. During these years little information was available concerning Archibald's private life. Archibald was seeing a Miss Jane Postell during the 1850s. A lover's quarrel apparently ended the relationship.

Things were beginning to become volatile in the United States between the north and the south. Archibald was eager to serve and protect the city in which he had spent his life. He was involved in activities in the city for the preparation of war. On January 3, 1861 Archibald was elected 1st Lieutenant of Company B of the 18th Battalion Georgia Infantry. The year 1861 was an active one for Archibald as far as military matters are concerned. On February 26, 1861 the Daily Morning News reported: At an election held at the Armory of the Savannah Volunteer Guards the following gentlemen were elected officers for Company A and B. Company B ... A. C. Davenport, Captain. The Daily Morning News for November 9, 1861 reported: At a meeting held this day at the Court House for the purpose of forming a volunteers company for immediate service, the following men signed the roll ... A. C. Davenport. Archibald was one of
any who signed the roll. Within a couple of days the Tattnall
guards was formed. This was a new volunteer company which was
organized for home defense, but afterwards mustered into the
confederate service and attached to the 1st Georgia Regiment.18
This regiment was doing duty at Fort Pulaski but the Tattnall Guards
were doing duty at the Barracks in the city.19 Archibald played
an important role in organizing the Tattnall Guards. On November
12, 1861 the Daily Morning News reported: At an election last night
for commissioned officers of the Tattnall Guards, under supervision
of Justice Staley, the following gentlemen were elected ... A. C.
Davenport, captain.20 Davenport apparently remained in the city
for the remainder of 1861 and most of 1862. On October 23, 1862
the Daily Morning News reported: "We are authorized to announce
Captain A. C. Davenport, as a candidate for Lieutenant Colonel of
1st Volunteer Regiment of Georgia in place of Major John Foley
who declines to qualify."21 Archibald remained with the Guards
for the duration of the Civil War. By 1863, Archibald was serving
Captain at Morris Island, South Carolina.22 Archibald's company
was involved in combat. Captain Davenport was mentioned in a letter
to a Captain W. F. Nance from Headquarters at Battery Wagner. The
letter detailed orders carried to Captain Davenport by a Lieutenant
Hopkins of Company G. Davenport was to detail three gun detachments
from his command and lead them up. One was killed by shrapnel while
carrying out this order.23 Archibald had a number of men under
his command. For August 12, 1863 the strength of Davenport's unit
was listed as approximately 173 total. By the next day, this had
dropped to 155. On August 15, 1863 the effective of his troops was
151 men. These numbers were decreasing probably because of combat
and disease. No official records were available after this time
concerning Archibald's activities in the war.

Archibald returned to Savannah after the war. His life
seemed to basically return to normal. Archibald resumed his career
in banking. In 1866, he accepted a position as clerk at Central
railroad Bank and was living at Number 5 Taylor Street on the North
Side. In 1867, Archibald's occupation was listed in the City
directory as Assistant city treasurer. This was the only reference
found anywhere to this occupation.

Archibald was involved in very few legal matters in the city.
On May 15 1866 Archibald served on the Grand Jury of Superior Court
Judge Honorable William B. Fleming. Archibald was called on
at other times to serve on juries. Archibald was summoned as a
grand juror for the February term of Chatham County Court and made
default. He was fined $40. This was announced in the Daily
Morning News on April 2, 1867. Archibald was executor for a Miss
Ann Mosell and gave notice in the Daily Morning News: "... all persons
Having claims against the estate of Ann Mosell will present them
with in the time prescribed by law; and all indebted to said estate
will make payment." The exact relationship between Archibald and
Ann Mosell was not described.
Archibald's routine seemed to remain the same. In 1870, he was paying teller at Central Railroad Bank and living at 110 Jones street. Archibald and his former sweetheart, Miss Jane Postell had become involved again. 1870 is the approximate year when they were married. No official record of the marriage was on file at the court house in either name. The couple moved around a few times before they settled in 1881 at 90 Taylor Street. Archibald and Jane never had any children. No reason was found for this. It was possibly because the couple married somewhat late in life. Jane was approximately 44 years old when they were married.

Archibald remained active in the community and with work. He was still a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards and was made orderly Sergeant on September 14, 1872. The Savannah Morning News for August 12, 1875 reported: "The articles deposited in the cornerstone of the Wesley Monumental Church are: ... by A. C. Davenport- one $100 confederate bond." Davenport stayed at his position of paying teller at Central Railroad Bank until early 1892. In early 1892, he retired due to failing health. Archibald was not used to being inactive and this inactivity had an effect on him. Archibald had always been healthy and had been able to remain at his post during past yellow fever epidemics.

Archibald Davenport died on April 9, 1892. The Savannah Morning News for April 10, 1892 reported in his obituary: "He dies from heart disease while9aing to his family." The day of Archibald's death began as a routine one for him. He
arose early took his customary walk downtown stopping by the Central railroad Bank and the post office. Archibald returned home in the afternoon and died at approximately 2 p.m. Dr. Duncan and Dr. Chisolm were called to him but were unable to save him. Archibald was 74 years old at the time of death. The cause of death was heart disease brought on by old age. Davenport's funeral was held at the Independent Presbyterian Church where he was a member but not a regular attendant. He was buried April 10, 1892 in Laurel Grove cemetery. The Savannah Volunteer Guards battalion attended the body. Archibald was buried in lot 204 at Laurel Grove. A Confederate States of America Iron Cross was placed by the grave. A trip to the cemetery revealed that Archibald was buried in the same plot with his mother Sarah F. Davenport. No other family members were buried with them.

Archibald was survived by his wife Jane and several other relatives. Archibald did not have a will on file at the court house and there was not a will listed in the indexes. According to her grave Jane Davenport died later in the same year on December 11. She was buried next to Archibald. Jane was 56 years old when she died.

Archibald's name appeared in the news some eight years after his death. The reference is in relation to his duty during the Civil War. A Colonel William S. Basinger of Athens writes on the Savannah Volunteer Guards Battalion. He insists that Captain A. C. Davenport was never Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment. Colonel Basinger made it known that he felt himself to be an unquestionable authority on the matter. Basinger pointed to the fact that Davenport
could not have been a lieutenant in the Guards and in the regiment. It was a rule that one could not be both. Perhaps there was a discrepancy between his service with the Savannah Volunteer Guards and the Tattnall Guards. Regardless Archibald Davenport fought for what he believed right during the Civil War.
Archibald C. Davenport was from a well known family in Savannah. He appeared to have been an upstanding citizen and he was involved in different in the city. Perhaps more research could be done on his marriage. Davenport was also listed in the index of the census for 1870 but could not be located in the raw census. He appeared very little in official records.

Archibald had many relatives. There is a surviving relative in Savannah. The relative is Judge Lionel Drew. His great grandmother was Cornelia Davenport which was one of Archibald’s sisters. Judge Drew was telephoned but could provide no information Archibald Davenport. Archibald had a nephew of the same name which was Hugh M. Davenport’s son. This caused some confusion but dates generally made clarification easy.
NOTE

The following sources were researched but proved fruitless:

- Marriage license
- Estate records
- Wills
- Manuscript collections
- 1870 Federal Census
This Certificate, after being accurately filled, must be taken to the office of the Health Officer. Physicians are requested to be full and explicit in their statements. No alterations will be allowed under any circumstances without written orders from the Health Officer.

Died at Savannah, Ga., A.D., 1817

Age, 70

Exit, 10th April

Cause of Death: Insanity. Died in Bed.

Deepest Sympathy to her relations.

G. W. S.}

M. P. R.
NOTES


2. Ibid., 27.

3. Ibid., 28.


7. Ibid., Book 3Q, Folio 368.


11. City Directory of Savannah 1855.


15. Smith, Gordon B., "Gordon B. Smith Files", (Georgia Historical Society), A-G.


19. Ibid., 258.


23. Ibid., 471.

24. Ibid., 494.

25. City Directory of Savannah 1866.


30. City Directory of Savannah 1870.


33. Savannah Morning News, 10 April 1892, obituary, col. 2.

34. Ibid., col. 2.

35. Ibid., col. 2.

36. Ibid., col. 2.

37. Ibid., col. 2.

38. Ibid., col. 2.

39. Ibid., col. 2.


41. Savannah Morning News, 10 April 1892, obituary, col. 2.

42. Ibid., col. 2.

43. Savannah Morning News, 23 December 1900, page 3, col. 5.
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