THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF
FRANCIS GRIMBALL

Prepared for
Dr. Warlick
Historical Methods
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The dream of every history student is to find, in the past, an actual link to the present, one that might never have been found had it not been for the digging, questioning detective work that is involved in putting together the pieces of an historical jigsaw puzzle.

I am no different from any other history student. As part of the course requirements for Historical Methods, I was given a name, and address, and a date. I was, then, told that I was on my own.

ASSIGNMENT: Find and put together the pieces of the life of a man named Francis Grimball, who was alive in 1879.

In the beginning, he was just a name. As time passed, he became more real and has now become MY Man!

During the course of my investigation, I spotted “Isle of Hope”. The name was significant. Could I have found a Link; could Grimball Point Road have anything to do with MY Man?

I’d hoped I had really come across something big. I had to take it slowly, though; trace and document everything. I could take nothing for granted.

What follows is the result of a kind of strange feeling; while delving into the past, I was coming closer to the present. I was making a contribution to the world of reality - of today.

MY MAN LIYEVES!
Francis Grimball

1824 - 1899

In 1820, there lived in Charleston County, S. C., a couple: John C. and Mary Ann Grimball. They had a son, Francis, born in Charleston, S. C., in 1824. How this family found its way to Savannah, I do not know. Sometime between 1820 and the taking of the 1850 Georgia Census, however, Mr. Grimball must have died; he was not counted, by census-taker #1516, as living in the house with his wife.

About Francis' childhood, I could find nothing. He did, however, meet and fall in love with Nancy Brinson. They obtained marriage license on Feb. 4, 1848, and were evidently married thereafter.

On June 27th of that same year, 1848, a Mr. Alexander J. Maxwell acquired a portion of the land, on the Isle of Hope, that had belonged to (the then-deceased) Dr. William Parker. This land was to become important to both Mr. F. Grimball in the 19th century and to the City of Savannah in the 20th.

1848 must have been a memorable year for Francis and "Anna" due to the birth of their first child; a daughter, Mary Dunn. Three years later, however, the Grimbals lost twin infants only days after they were born, in 1851.

In April of 1853, The Daily Morning News printed a registry list of voters. Francis Grimball's name was connected, for the first of what would be many times, with the city government of Savannah.

The following year held both good and bad fortune for Francis. His mother died of consumption at the age of 63. She was attended by Dr. Arnold. On Feb. 8th, 1854, however, Francis acquired 132 acres of land on the eastern side of the Isle of Hope, that now belonged to Mrs. Sarah M. Maxwell. Mr. Francis S. Bartow had become trustee of the land at Alexander Maxwell's
th, and Francis purchased the land from him for $2,500.00. 11. 11

A copy of this, very important deed is included below.

Things were, evidently, pretty quiet for Francis for several
years. He served on the grand jury in 1860. 12 At sometime during
period from 1854 to 1860 or 1861, he moved to the Isle of Hope.
Although the War Between the States did not begin until
11 13th of 1861, with the firing on Fort Sumter, S. C. 13
Tensions must have been mounting prior to that time. On Feb. 9th
that year;

"a meeting of the citizens of White Bluff
and the Islands was held at the Isle of Hope
... at 10:00, for the purpose of forming a
military organization known as the Coastal
Riflemen. francis Grimball attended that meeting and was elected a 2nd
lieutenant. 15

Just exactly what role Francis played during the war is not
known. He did, however, have a "32-pound" powder gun set up on
his north-east portion of his property. Two juns were also on
his southern portion, facing the creek. 16

After the war, Francis was, for the first time, listed in
the Business Register of Savannah's City Directory. 17 In 1867,
Francis and George Ash were listed as brick masons and builders.
Their business, Grimball and Ash, was located on the northwest
corner of Taylor and Lincoln Streets. 18

That same year, appearing in the Daily News & Herald of July
2nd, the firm of Grimball & Ash was dissolved by mutual consent. 19
Later that month, Francis placed a business advertisement, in
his name only, in the same paper. 20

In 1868, two new partnerships were announced. Francis and
Mr. W. P. Chaplin had formed a business partnership and were
erecting, as builders, a 2-story brick dwelling for a Mr. Wilson
on Gwinnett Street. 21 The other partnership was one for life.
Earlier in the year, Jan. 21st, Mr. and Mrs. Grimball had given
their daughter Mary Dunn, in marriage to Mr. Edwin P. Waite. 22
Francis gained a son-in-law that year, but lost a corn house,
its contents, in a fire set 'evidently [by] Negroes." 23
Two years later, in 1870, the association of Grimbail and Chaplin was prospering. They were erecting a double-tenant, story brick building on the southside of Waldburg Street, between Montgomery and Jefferson Streets. Although the two men worked together, only Francis' name appeared in the City Directory that year. He was listed as a mason, with his business being located on New Houston Street near Jefferson.

The following year, Grimbail and Chaplin were the contractors for the brick work of two buildings, erected by Captain L. J. Ulmartin, on Harris and northside between Whitaker and Barnard streets. In the listing of the 1871 Directory, Francis was now located on New Houston near Montgomery and was "of Grimbail and Chaplin".

Not only did Francis build houses, as he did the one at the address I was given for this project (5-7 West Charlton St), but he also owned a few, too. At the corner of Jefferson Street, to the right of the jail, three of six brick tenements belonged to Mr. Grimbail. Francis was "landed," he was also made a director of the Life Association of America in July of 1872.

1873 was a year of additions. An article appearing in the Sept. 9th edition of the Savannah Morning News announced that "others" were now part of a new co-partnership under the firm name of Grimbail & Chaplin. Earlier that year, Francis had had another addition to his family. On their fifth wedding anniversary, Jan. 21st, Mary and Edwin Waine had a son; they named him Frank Grimbail, after his grandfather, Francis.

The next two years saw both the coming together and the breaking apart of things. In the former case, Francis saw the culmination of work he had begun three years earlier when he had helped to organize the Atlantic Coast Line Co. a railroad from Savannah to Thunderbolt was formally opened on July 27th, 1875. The "breaking apart" was of his co-partnership of Grimbail and Chaplin, by mutual consent; his business appeared in Estill's Savannah City Directory under his name, alone.

In 1876, tribute was paid to Francis in two two ways. In May of that year, the Sunday Schools of Trinity and Wesley
Arches had a picnic on what would be known (here, for the first time) to future generations as "Grimball's Point." Two months later, the Grimball name appeared in the Savannah Morning News on the ad page, but in a letter to the editor. The members of the Board of Assessors had come under fire due to complaints of their injustice. The writer of the article stated that the ward (and, evidently, the city) would be much better off if it included such men as Francis Grimball. The brick mason must have been held in high regard.

As was mentioned above, Francis was involved in city government. He served, several times, on the Grand Jury. His fellow citizens had, evidently, taken not of Mr. Grimball, as they nominated him for the position of Alderman in Jan. of 1877. Mr. Grimball agreed to have his name placed on the ticket.

Francis was involved not only in Savannah's politics but also in her history, culture, and civic affairs. In May of 1879, Mr. Grimball was chosen to be on the citizens' committee of a broader group. A meeting had been called, at the courthouse, of all military commissioned officers, presidents of civic societies, and interested citizens (appointed by the mayor) to consider the proposed centennial celebration of the Siege of Savannah.

In 1880, for the first time, there appeared, in the census, a new name: that of Alice Grimball. She was living with her parents and was, in that year, 18 years old.

In my search, I came across an unexplained discrepancy. In 1882, a notice appeared in the May 6th edition of the Savannah Morning News announcing the dissolution of the firm of Francis Grimball and Co., due to the withdrawal of the former. The business was to continue under the name of C. C. Casey & Co. The City Directories for 1883 and 1884, however, list (on p. 273 and p. 169, respectively) a brick manufacturing concern under the name of Grimball and Company. The address given for the business was listed as Springfield Road. This change of address (from New Houston) may be the cause of this apparent incongruity.

Whatever state Mr. Grimball's professional life was in, his
sonal life must have been brightened by the marriage of his daughter, Alice, to Orren A. Foy, on Tuesday, Dec. 16th, 1884. The year 1888 seems to mark the beginning of a possible line for Mr. Grimball. It was in January that the first sale of a portion of "Greenball's Point" was made. Francis sold Lot of this area to David Y. Dancy (Dancey), for $300.00. The following month, Mr. Cyrenius Hall paid a considerable large (for time) sum of money for another portion of Grimball's Point. $5,000.00, Mr. Hall received all the land that Francis had bought from Mr. Bartow (in 1854) except: a 5-acre tract on the north end of the area described above, which went to Mr. W. P. Chaplin, and 13 separate lots which were "laid off from said northern part immediately south of the 5 acres" mentioned above.

Francis must have either a) needed money or b) been tired of being responsible for so much property. Part of Cyrenius Hall's 1,000.00 went to purchase "all household and kitchen furniture, do and bedding, crockery and glassward now in and upon the homeead and also hogs upon said premises."

In May of 1888, Francis sold Lots # 12 and # 13, of the thirteen mentioned above, to John D. Murphy for $900.00. There is a mortgage of $450.00 with a high rate of interest: 7%. In July of the same year, Lot #11, consisting of about four acres, was sold (for $450.00) to Mr. George E. Cooper, of Dover, New Hampshire. November brought the sale of Lot #2 to David Dancy (who had already purchased Lot #1), for $400.00.

1889 passed and, in November, Francis was rid of Lot #3. His partner, W. Chaplin, had bought it for $400.00. Grimball had made quite a handsome profit on his original investment of $2,500.00, so, for $10.00 (and the love for his younger daughter), he sold Lot #6 to Alice and Orren Foy, on Jan. 1st, 1890. Lot #7 was given, in February, to Anna, his wife.

Later that year, in October (1890), Francis' spirits must have lifted, if, in fact, he was depressed due to the sale of most of his property. His granddaughter, Florence (the daughter of Edwin and Mary), married Mr. J. B. Mell. Exactly one month later, on Nov. 12, Francis was back to business. He sold Lot #4 to
The following year, Francis lost that which was, probably, dearest to him. On July 7th, 1891, Nancy Brinson Grimbball, his loved "Anna," died of paralysis. The funeral was held at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the 8th, at Laurel Grove Cemetery. She was laid to rest in lot 1420.

All was quiet for Francis after his wife's death. There were no business advertisements, no civic affairs, no servings on a jury, and no sales of property.

On January 12th, 1899, Francis Grimbball died; he was 74 years old, and was buried, next to Anna, in lot 1421, at Laurel Grove Cemetery. At his death, he still owned Lots 5, 8, and 10 of his original property at Grimbball Point, on the Isle of Hope.
Post Script

Francis Grimball lived a long and full life. He lives on, name, to the people of Savannah - to the people of Grimball Point Road, and to all those who travel or live on Grimball Point. lives on, in name and spirit, to me.

To find, in the present, a link to the past is to broaden our own horizons.
FAMILY TREE

Mary Ann  Paul C. Grimbail

FRANCIS GRIMBALL

Mary Dunn Grimbail  -  Alice Ann Grimbail  Orren A. Foy

J.B. Metel

Florence Waite  Frank Grimbail Waite  ?

William
Edwin
Emmett
ELIZABETH
Florence Waite Byrd

Nancy (Anna) Brinson

Otto Georgia Census 1850, Chatham Co., p. 41.

Ibid.

Marriage Records Abstracts, 1805-1852, Chatham Co., Ga., #3001.

Chatham County Superior Court Deed Book; 6G folio #401, 1848; Chatham County Court House Records Room, Savannah, Ga. Hereafter referred to as Deed Book.

Otto Georgia Census 1850. The nickname "Anna" appears, for the first time, on this census and all references to Mrs. Grimball from this point forward are to Anna. NOTE: The name Grimball occasionally appears as Grimble.

Ibid. Although Mary's initial, on this census is A., she is thereafter, referred to as Mary Dunn. This may have been an error on the part of #1516, the census-taker. (Note: Isn't it funny how people were called by a number even in the 19th Century?)

St. John's Parish Register - St. John's Episcopal Church; Book A - Burials; p. 6.

Savannah Newspaper Digest, vol. 4, 1853; Savannah Public Library; p. 53. Hereafter referred to as SND.

Chatham County Public Health, Vital Records; Chatham County Department of Public Health; Eisenhower Dr., Savannah, Ga.

Deed Book; 6G folio #401, 1888.

SND, vol. 2; p. 72; The Daily Morning News.

Encyclopaedia Britannica - Macropaedia, vol. II; Helen H. Benton, Publisher; Chicago, Ill.; c. 1978; p. 959.

SND, vol. 1; Daily Morning News.

Ibid.
Interview with Mr. Benjamin T. Byrd (of Byrd's Cookie Co. - Isle of Hope), on 5-21-80. Mr. Byrd is married to the former Florence Waite. She is the great-granddaughter of Francis Grimball.

Savannah, City Directory of 1867, p. 93.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 632.


Marriage Records Abstracts - Chatham Co., Ga 1866-1873, Book 3; Chatham County Record of Marriage Licenses May 8, 1866 to June 3, 1972; Historical research project; p. 51. The license was obtained and the ceremony was performed on Jan. 21st, 1868. An announcement appeared in the Daily News and Herald, ten days later.


SND, vol. 21, p. 66; Savannah Morning News of July 9th, 1870.

Savannah, City Directory of 1870, p. 79.

SND, vol. 22, p. 89.

Savannah, City Directory of 1871, p. 178.

SND, vol. 23, p. 87.

Ibid., p. 237; Savannah Morning News of July 9th, 1872.


Interview with Mr. Byrd. It should be mentioned, here, that Mr. Byrd is, himself, quite an historian. He has served in that office, for the past 16 years, for the Isle of Hope P. T. A. He has also 3 publications to his credit:

Weekly Magazine: 1963 Historical map with Historical places - published of Isle of Hope
Georgia Parents & Teachers Magazine 1964, History of Isle of Hope School
Weekly Magazine: History of Flag Raising over First Rural School in Georgia

SND, vol. 25, 1875.

Ibid., p. 364.
Estill's Savannah City Directory of 1874-75, p. 85.

SND, vol 27, p. 105; Savannah Morning News of May 10th, 1876.

Ibid., p. 439; Savannah Morning News of July 16th, 1876.

SND, vol. 28, p. 118, in the City Government section of the Savannah Morning News of Jan. 12, 1877, a meeting of the municipal nominating convention had been announced. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain if the gentlemen nominated for Mayor and Aldermen would accept. Mayor J. P. Wheaton was to preside over Aldermen including Francis Grimball.


Ibid., p. 77; Savannah Morning News of May 15th, 1879.


SND, vol. 35, p. 422; Savannah Morning News of Dec. 22, 1884. In this announcement, Alice was referred to as the youngest daughter of Francis Grimball. The use of the superlative causes a question. I could find information on only two daughters (no sons). I would expect to see "the younger", with regard to Alice. This may have been the writing style of the period.


2. Ibid., folio #401, 1888.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Deed Book; 6I folio #389, 1888.

6. Deed Book; 6K folio #205, 1888.

7. Deed Book; 6L folio #237, 1888.

8. Deed Book; 6Q folio #96, 1889.

9. Deed Book; 6R folio #294, 1890.

10. Deed Book; 6R folio #294, 1890.

Deed Book: 6V folio #366, 1890.

Vital Records.


Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Ga.; General Index to Keeper's Records Book, vol 2; 1852-1938.

Ibid.

Ibid.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chatham County Public Health, Vital Records; Chatham County Department of Public Health; Eisenhower Dr.; Savannah, Ga.

Chatham County Superior Court Deed Books; Chatham County Court House Records Room; Savannah, Ga. Frank Grimball appeared as Grantor or Grantee in all of the following: 1842-1849 - 30, 3B; 1849-1853 - 3G, 3I, 3K, 3L; 1853-1858 - 3M, 3N, 3O, 3P; 1858-1867 - 3S, 3T, 3W, 3Y; 1867-1871 - 3Z, 4B, 4E, 4F, 4G, 4K; 1872-1879 - 4M, 4P, 4Q, 4V, 4W, 1880-1885 - 4Y, 5A; 1885-1890 - 6G, 6I, 6K, 6L; 1890-1893 - 6Q, 6R, 6V, 6U.

Georgia Census, Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

The Encyclopedia Britannica - Macropaedia, vol. II; Helen H. Benton, Publisher; Chicago, Ill.; c. 1978.

General Index to Keeper's Records Books, vols. 1 and 4 - Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Ga.; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

Interview with Mr. Benjamin T. Byrd (owner of Byrd Cookie Co., Isle of Hope); 3 Ward Lane; Skidaway Island; Savannah, Ga. 31411. Mr. Byrd is married to the former Florence Waite, the granddaughter of Francis Grimball.

Marriage Records Abstracts 1805-1852; Chatham County, Ga.; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

Marriage Records Abstracts, Chatham Co., Ga. 1866-1873, Book 3; Chatham County Record of Marriage Licenses; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

State Census, 1850; Chatham Co., Ga.; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

St. John's Parish Records - St. John's Episcopal Church - Book A Burials; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

Savannah City Directory. Francis Grimball's name appeared in all of the following years' directories: 1867, 1870, 1871, 1875-75, 1877, 1879, and 1880 through 1884.
Savannah Newspaper Digest - vols. 1, 2, 4, 18, 19, 21, 22 through 30, 33 through 35, 41, and 42.

South Carolina Census Index, 1820; published by G.A.M Publications; Gwenn Platt, Publisher; 1st printing 1972; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.

Gods & Sheffield Index to Georgia Census, 1840; Georgia Historical Society; Savannah, Ga.
State of Georgia

An Indenture made and entered into this 11th day of January, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-four, between Francis & Charlotte, late of Savannah, in the County of Chatham, State of Georgia, and Francis Pinball, now of the said County, for the consideration of the sum of one hundred dollars, to be paid in lawful money of the United States, by the said Francis Pinball, within six months from the date hereof, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged by the said Francis & Charlotte, witnesses whereof to this present Indenture, have hereunto set their hands and seals, the day and year first above written.

Witnesses:

[Signatures]

[Seals]