A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF EDWARD PADELFORD

By Larry Tinker
On June 27, 1870 Edward Padelford, one of Savannah's oldest merchants and most respected citizens, died at the age of seventy-one years, one month and twenty-eight days. Marion, his daughter and only surviving child, was with him at his home at the time of death. His career in the shipping business had been eminently successful, and at the time of his death he was among the wealthiest of Southern merchants.

Edward's climb to the top of the Southern business world began with his arrival in Savannah from his native Massachusetts in April of 1820. His success was very rapid, for after serving a commercial pupilage of approximately five years, he became connected in the shipping business with Orrey Taft, under the firm name of Taft & Padelford. Although his business endeavors were destined to be of great success, his family life was to be marred with many tragedies.

On November 11, 1823, while still under his pupilage, Edward married Elizabeth Louisa Farnum of Providence, Rhode Island, and in July of 1824 a daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born. But she died thirteen months later while the family was on a visit to Providence. Another daughter, Elizabeth, was born in September of 1826, but her life was also very brief as she died on December 18 of the same year.

After these two premature deaths the tragedy of the Padelford family was postponed, for the remaining four children would live to adulthood. Carolina was born in November of 1827; Edward, Jr. in January of 1831; Marion in February of 1833; and George P. in March of 1835; and during these happier times, Edward's success and prestige in the field of business continued to increase.
On January 20, 1831 Edward Padelford began his civic career when he was elected one of the Commissioners of Pilotage in Savannah and in August of the same year when he was elected to the Grand Jury. He made a major business change when, on January 20, 1833, the copartnership of Taft & Padelford was dissolved, and on November 6, 1833 Edward then joined with Samuel H. Fay and C.B. Carter to organize a General Commission Business under the firm name of Padelford & Fay Company. He continued his civic activities on December 1, 1833 when he was placed on a mail committee to petition for better service between Savannah, Macon and Augusta, and on February 3, 1834 he began what was to be a long and successful career in the banking industry when he was elected a director of the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank.

During the latter half of the decade, Padelford's business and civic activities did not decrease but actually seemed to intensify. In April of 1836 he was elected as a director of the Georgia Insurance and Trust Co., but probably one of his greatest accomplishments occurred on January 2, 1839 when he was unanimously elected President of the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank. But these added responsibilities did not hinder his involvement in his own shipping business because in November of 1840 his partnership with Samuel H. Fay and C.B. Carter was dissolved, and he became sole owner of Padelford & Fay Company. With all of these commitments he somehow found time for personal pleasures.

Edward was a member and at one time was elected as a steward of the Jockey Club, but his prime personal interest was confined to the arts. His acquaintance with current literature was considerable, and he cherished
an extremely high appreciation for the writings of Shakespeare. Not only did he appreciate art, but he also succeeded in bringing a work of art to Savannah for public display. This work of art was a representation in mosaic of the ruins of Paestum and was purchased for $5000 by Padelford in Rome, Italy in the summer of 1814. Another pleasure that he took a great deal of interest in was religion, and when St. John's Episcopal Church was chartered in 1814, he showed his interest by being one of its founders and by being one of the first citizens to buy a family pew.

At the beginning of 1842 Edward was elected to the Committee of Appeals of the Savannah Chamber of Commerce, and for the remainder of the decade he continued his duties as President of the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank, but in June of 1853 he resigned his Presidency.

Evidently, Edward Padelford's resignation from the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank was a necessity because of other impending commitments. A family responsibility was created with the purchase of the Fay House on the corner of Bull and Liberty Streets on May 25, 1853. A business responsibility also existed with the completion of the Padelford Building in early 1854. The lot was purchased from Andrew J. Lebey at a cost of $6000 and was located on the corner of Bay and Lincoln Streets.

Edward Padelford's fame and success was further increased on April 1, 1854, when he was appointed as one of four directors of the Iron Steamboat Company, but his renown was not limited to just the city of Savannah. In early December of 1854 a handsome locomotive engine, recently purchased by the Macon & Western Railroad Company, made its appearance in Savannah. Its name was the "Edward Padelford." But being one not to rest on his
laurels, in February of 1855 he came out of retirement from the banking industry and was elected director of the Marine and Fire Insurance Bank.

During the last half of the 1850's the Padelford family experienced both joys and sorrows. On November 13, 1855 Edward Padelford, Jr. and Kate Steenburgen were married at St. John's Episcopal Church by the Reverend George H. Clark. A few months after this marriage, George, the youngest of the Padelford children, added prestige and pride to the family name by graduating from the Savannah Medical College, but this period of time also saw the death of Mary E.H. Padelford, sister of Edward, on November 7, 1857 at the age of sixty-two. Another Padelford marriage took place at St. John's Episcopal Church on November 24, 1857 when Marion Padelford married Francis C. Foster of Boston, Massachusetts, but grief again intruded upon the family when Carolina, the eldest of the children, died on April 29, 1858 at the age of thirty.

During the latter part of the decade, Edward Padelford not only continued his many business and civic activities but actually took on new responsibilities. At the beginning of 1855 Padelford was a member of the Grand Jury of the First Panel Superior Court of Chatham County which recommended the construction of a new jail and discussed the illegal sale of liquor. In late February of the same year he was elected First Vice-President of the Savannah Chamber of Commerce, and on April 21, 1856 he was chosen as one of the directors of the Savannah Gas Company. Later in the decade, March 1, 1859, he served on the Grand Jury of the City Court, but with the beginning of the 1860's and the Civil War, Edward would take on no new responsibilities for several years.
Edward Padelford's habit had been to spend the warm season in the North, but during the war he remained in Savannah. Although he was a Northerner by birth, his family's allegiance was to the South, and his two sons chose to serve with the Confederacy. Dr. George P. Padelford joined the Oglethorpe Light Infantry and went with them to Virginia, but he died July 28, 1861 at Capon Springs, Virginia, as a result of wounds suffered prior to the Battle of Bull Run.

When the Artillary Company of the Savannah Volunteer Guard was organized in January of 1861, Edward Padelford, Jr. immediately joined and rose in rank very quickly. In August of 1861 he was elected 3rd Lieutenant of Company A, and on April 3, 1862 he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant of Company B. His military career seemed to be one of great promise, but on June 7, 1863 at the age of thirty-two he died in Savannah of typhoid fever. He was survived by his wife, Kate, and two young sons.

The Civil War had been very costly to the Padelford family, but with the end of the conflict, Edward again accelerated his civic duties. In late May of 1865 he was elected as a delegate to visit Washington D.C. and represent the sentiments of the loyal citizens of Chatham County to the President. On January 7, 1867 he was elected as a director of the Central Railroad and Banking Company, and four months later, he was chosen as an officer of the Union Society at Bethesda. In March of 1869, at the age of sixty-nine, he accepted his last post when he was elected one of two directors of the Cotton States Life Insurance Company.

Although Edward Padelford was a wealthy and successful merchant, he did not ignore the plight of the poor and underprivileged but was an active con-
tributor to various charities. Each spring for several years, he had donated $1000 to the Union Society of Bethesda, and in May of 1869 he further added an unsolicited gift of $5000. Within the next few months, he also donated $4000 to the Episcopal Orphan's Home and gave $10,000 to be applied to the construction of a suitable building for the accommodation of sick, poor, aged and infirm colored people of Savannah.

In the middle months of 1869 tragedy and old age seemed to combine to halt Edward's many and various activities. His ill health became so serious that he was unable to attend to business, and his once familiar figure was seldom seen on the streets of Savannah. With the death of Elizabeth, his wife, on November 17, 1869, the last tragedy of his life was over. He died seven months later, leaving one daughter, Marion, and four grandchildren.

Two of Edward's grandchildren were Marion Padelford Foster's offspring, and two were Edward Jr.'s. After Marion married Francis Foster, they made their home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Francis died on October 24, 1915, and Marion died on September 24, 1923 in Cambridge at the age of ninety years, seven months and twenty-four days. Their children's names were Leonard and Caroline P., and they probably made their homes in the Cambridge area.

Edward Jr.'s Children's names were Edward M. and Arthur. Edward M. was confirmed at St. John's Episcopal Church in January of 1870 at probably the age of twelve. There is no confirmation record of Arthur, and there is no marriage records of either Edward M. or Arthur at St. John's. I found no mention of either name in census reports from 1870 to 1920. There is no reference to Arthur in the Newspaper Digests from 1870 to 1890, but there
is reference made to Edward. In January of 1881 he visited Savannah on his yacht with his new bride and stayed as a guest at the Screven House. The yacht arrived from Baltimore, so possibly he was a resident of the Maryland area. The only reference that I could find concerning Arthur was in the will of Edward Padelford, so I must assume that he moved away or either died somewhere outside of Chatham County.

One hundred and seven years after his death, the name of Edward Padelford is not dead and forgotten but still exists in Savannah today. Although his home at Bull and Liberty Streets does not still bear his name, it is still standing, and today it is known as the Knights of Columbus Building. In 1872, two years after his death, the city of Savannah showed its gratitude to the contributions of Edward Padelford when a city ordinance was passed, laying off and naming a newly created ward after him. Today, the ward still bears his name and is bound by Park Avenue on the North and Anderson Street on the South with Atlantic Street on the West and Paulsen Street on the East. Probably the most obvious appearance of his name is at St. John's Episcopal Church. Twelve stained-glass windows bear the names of twelve of the most famous early members of the church. One of the windows reads: "In Memory of Edward Padelford; Born April 30, 1799, Died June 27, 1870."
ENDNOTES

4. Ibid.
7. "Chatham County Marriage Records, 1805-1852", File #959, Chatham County Probate Court.
8. Tombstone of Mary Elizabeth Padelford, Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lots 6&9.
9. Ibid. and "Daily Georgian", September 8, 1825, p.3, c.3.
11. Ibid.
18. Ibid., August 11, 1831, p.3, c.3.
19. Ibid., January 22, 1833, p.3, c.2.
21. Ibid., December 5, 1833, p.2, c.1.
22. Ibid., February 5, 1834, p.2, c.2.
23. Ibid., April 8, 1836, p.2, c.2.
24. Ibid., January 3, 1839, p.2, c.2.
25. Ibid., December 1, 1840, p.3, c.1.
29. Ibid.
30. Vestry Records, St. John's Episcopal Church.
31. Ibid.
34. Ibid., June 15, 1853, p.2, c.1.
37. Ibid.
39. Ibid., December 16, 1854, p.2, c.2.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., February 7, 1855, p.1, c.1.
42. "Chatham County Marriage Records, 1851-1866", File #192, Chatham County Probate Court.
Tombstone of Mary B.H. Padelford, Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lots 6&9.

"Chatham County Marriage Records, 1851-1866", File #78, Chatham County Probate Court.

Tombstone of Carolina Padelford, Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lots 6&9.


Ibid., March 1, 1855, p.2, c.2.

Ibid., April 22, 1856, p.2, c.2.

Ibid., March 2, 1859, p.1, c.2.


"Daily Morning News", May 9, 1862, p.1, c.1.

Tombstone of George P. Padelford, Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lots 6&9.


Ibid., August 29, 1861, p.2, c.1.

Ibid., April 4, 1862, p.2, c.1.


"Savannah Daily Herald", June 1, 1865, p.1, c.1.


Ibid., April 5, 1867, p.3, c.2.


Ibid., May 8, 1869, p.3, c.1.

Ibid., May 6, 1870, p.2, c.1.

Ibid., June 28, 1870, p.2, c.1.

Tombstone of Elizabeth Padelford, Bonaventure, Section D, Lots 6&9.

Tombstone of Edward Padelford, Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lots 6&9.

Will of Edward Padelford, File #160, 1870-1892, Chatham County Probate Court.

Ibid.

Ibid. and Record of Death, File #1389, Cambridge, Mass.

Record of Death, File #1389, Cambridge, Mass.

Ibid.

Will of Edward Padelford, File #160, 1870-1892, Chatham County Probate Court.

Ibid.

Conformation Records, St. John's Episcopal Church.

Ibid.

Marriage Records, 1855-1903, St. John's Episcopal Church.

Georgia Census Reports, 1870-1890.

Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1870-1890.

"Savannah Morning News", January 10, 1881, p.3, c.4.

Ibid.

Will of Edward Padelford, File #160, 1870-1892, Chatham County Probate Court.

"Jasper Ward Book", Lots 1&5, Georgia Historical Society.


1953 Ward Map, Department of Engineering, City of Savannah.

5th window on th right, St. John's Episcopal Church.
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Will of Edward Padelford, Jr., File #148, 1866, Chatham County Probate Court.

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