The Story of George M. Waldenburg

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History 300
8-2-79
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From The Savannah Biographies, Volume 5. Lane Library, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, Georgia 31410-1997
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George M. Waldburg was a wealthy landowner of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, Georgia. He grew cotton on his plantation, owned a number of slaves, and invested in the railroad and banking companies. He was active in community affairs. Doctors and judges were included in his friendship circle in Savannah. He died in 1856 at the age of sixty-one; leaving an estate valued at $51,955.00 to his brother Jacob.
The Story of George M. Waldburg

Writing history is an exciting adventure. It could be compared to putting the small pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together -- a piece of evidence fits into the whole, or it has to be set aside until the picture is more complete. This paper reports on George M. Waldburg: his family, his early life, his occupation, and his death. In the hopes that research will continue on George and his family, a bibliography is not only included, but some sources are given in detail which give numerous pointers to other valuable information.

To begin with, George M. Waldburg was born about 1795 to Jacob and Catherine Millen Waldburger (er dropped from name), wealthy landowners of Savannah, Georgia. George joined a brother, Jacob, to complete the Waldburg family. As early as 1797, George's father was making plans for an education for his sons. In his will he placed the care of his children into the hands of executors: John Morel, John Milledge, Donal McLeod, and James Jones in case of his death. He instructed them to remove them from their...
parent as soon as age permitted and have his sons educated in a manner ensuring that they would become valuable citizens. In December 1797, George's education proceeded under the direction of Dorcas McGaver who taught him for four dollars per quarter. In March of the same year, George's father had previously made an interesting request probably because of his health--he had been ill in the Bahamas. He stated that he had seen the bad effects of second marriages on children; therefore, he directed his executors that in the event his wife, Catherine, remarried, they were to take George and Jacob from her to a distant state within the United States at least five hundred miles away. Furthermore, she was not to see them unless permission was given by all four executors. George's father died in the Bahamas that year and his care, his mother's, and his brother's passed into the hands of the executors.

For the next several years, Mrs. Waldburg had to write notes for money or supplies which she needed to Mr. Belcher, a merchant, who had been instructed by Mr. Morel to supply her. Mr. Belcher would then be reimbursed by the executors from her husband's estate. George got new hats, new $1.75 boots, and new suits made by David Engel, and all were paid for in the same manner from his father's estate.
According to the Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser, Mrs. Waldburg did indeed remarry! Rev. Holcombe performed the ceremony in June 1803 for Mrs. Waldburg and John H. Morel, her late husband's executor. It is my speculation that George and his brother, Jacob, were sent away to school as specified in their father's will since their mother, Catherine, remarried. They probably did not return until around 1819 at which time they began dividing the property left to them in common by their father. George received:

# 5 LaRoche Tything, Heathcote Ward
# 5 Tower Tything, Decker Ward
#26 Columbia Ward (See tables 1-10)

Jacob received:

# 6 First Tything, Anson Ward
# 25, 26, 27, 28, Washington Ward
# 6 Eyler Tything, Heathcote Ward
# - in Elbert Ward

Then August 6, 1828, they divided their property on St. Catherine's Island except some on the northern portion which they would still hold in common. If any controversy came up, it would be referred to C. Powers who made the survey. George was to have the right of hunting and cutting timber on the portion of land south of the "pasture fence", as well as other rights spelled out including the use of Jacob's boat house. (See Fig. 11, p. 17)

George owned a number of slaves and apparently shipped his cotton to Savannah by sloop from St. Catherine's Island.
In addition to planting, George had other business interests; for example, sixty shares in Savannah Gas-Light Company, seventy-seven shares in capital stock in Central Railroad and Banking Company. He had rental property which he rented to James Kennedy, and he also made several promissory notes to James Ker. Typically, not everyone paid George on time, and as a result, he took one of them, Joseph Hewes, to court where he recovered $500.00 plus interest for a promissory note.

George seemed to be active in the community. He made a speech in Savannah celebrating the American Independence in 1819, and he served on the grand jury January 29, 1856 and recommended an increase in the judge's salary of the Circuit Court and to alter the penalty for selling liquor to slaves to a punishment in the penitentiary or a fine of $500.00. Additionally, George raised money by private subscriptions for the poor who were attacked by the fever. He obtained money from the merchants of Savannah and put in $1,000.00 himself.

Conceivably, George never married since he left Jacob all of his property and goods, and since Jacob is the only relative mentioned in George's funeral invitation. However, there remains one disturbing fact. Vital statistics show that George W. Waldbourg (different spelling) died July 29, 1847 at the age of twenty-three and lived at
South Broad Street in Heathcote Ward where the Waldburg family owned property. Furthermore, the Georgian newspaper reported that G. M. Waldburg, Jun. bought five shares in the Bank of Georgia on May 12, 1837. One explanation of this is that George married outside of Savannah; therefore, his name would not appear in the records here. Also, both wife and child could have died before George did.

Another puzzling aspect has to do with George's family. (See family tables 11, 12, 13). His niece, Elizabeth L. Waldburg Clinch eventually inherited the Waldburg property including George's property, in addition, she is the only child mentioned in her mother, Elizabeth's will. Nevertheless, the Savannah Morning News listed among the passengers who arrived from Europe in May 1872, Mrs. R. A. Anderson, daughter of Jacob Waldburg, of St. Catherine's Island. This puzzle may be solved in Jacob's will (#369), but it was not available to me.

Finally, George died August 5, 1856 at the age of sixty-one of congestive chills on St. Catherine's Island and was buried in lot 558 in Laurel Grove Cemetery. A special invitation was extended to Judge Nicoll, Dr. William H. Cuyler, and Dr. and Mrs. Wayne to the funeral which would be at the residence of Dr. Wayne at the corner of South Broad and Montgomery Streets in Savannah at 5 o'clock P. M. August 7, 1856. The area where George was buried is surrounded by a wrought iron fence with the marker 558 at
the right hand corner of the fence. I could not identify George's grave, but it is my speculation that he was buried in one of the unmarked graves.

George left Jacob the following in his will:

Lot #5 LaRoche Tything, Heathcote Ward at Eakleton and Whitaker Streets.
Lot #26 Columbia Ward
Lot #5 Tower Tything, Decker Ward at Congress and Jefferson Streets.
2,000 acres on St. Catherine's Island
Island near St. Catherine's
23 acres of hamrock
60 shares capital stock ($1500.00) Savannah Gas-Light
77 shares capital stock in Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia ($8162.00)
Promissory Notes-James Ker ($900.00)
Total cash ($8480.40)
92 slaves some valued at $5.00 to $900.00 each $47,705.00
Plantation stock and etc. $4250.00
Total Value $51,955.00 (See Fig. 12, p. 18)

From Jacob, George's property was passed to his niece as has already been mentioned previously. Then in 1903 at her death it was willed to the following:

Savannah Widow's Society
Orphan's Home of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Savannah
Union Society of Savannah
St. Paul's Free Episcopal Church
Bishop of Georgia, Trustee
Fund for support of Indigent Widows and Orphans of deceased clergymen. (See Shreck Index tables 8,9,10).
(Also, Fig. 13-16, pp. 19-22)

It appears at this point that George's immediate family came to an end since this niece apparently left no children.

It seems that his family were somewhat wealthy since the final figures showed a value of $242,563.76.
In sum, certain conclusions can be drawn about George. He was born into a wealthy family who owned much valuable land and slaves. He was educated to become a responsible citizen, and he was active in the community. He left an estate valued at $51,955.00 to his brother, Jacob, of which his ninety-two slaves were valued at $47,705.00. Finally, by 1903 it appears that his immediate family came to an end with the death of his niece, Elizabeth Waldburg Clinch.

After calling each Waldburg in the Savannah Telephone Directory, only one thought that he could have had connections with George Waldburg. Mr. David Waldburg stated that his people came from St. Catherine's Island; and therefore, may have been descendants of some of the Waldburg slaves.
Notes


2 Jacob Waldburger. Will # 33. Probate Court of Chatham County. Savannah, Georgia.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser. March 21, 1797, p.3, c. 3.

11 Will # 33.

12 Ibid.


14 Will # 33.

15 Chatham County Deed Book. Savannah: 21, Folio 322.

16 Deed Book, 20, Folio 579.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 George Waldburg. Will # 244. Probate Court of Chatham County. Savannah, Georgia.
Columbian. January 30, 1819.

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Chatham County Judgement Records. Savannah: # 4365.

Columbian. July 8, 1819, p2, c. 5.


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Ibid.

Will # 244.


Vital Statistics.

Deed Book 8 Y, Folio 363.

Savannah Georgian. May 12, 1837, p2, c. 6.

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Will # 723.

Elizabeth L. Higbe Waldburger. Will # 428.

Savannah Morning News. May 18, 1872.

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42. Will # 244.

43. Will # 723.

44. Deed Book, 8 Y, Folio 364:

45. Wills # 723 and 740.

46. Will # 723.


48. Will # 33.

49. Ibid.

50. Columbian, July 8, 1819, p. 2, c. 5.

51. Will # 244.

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