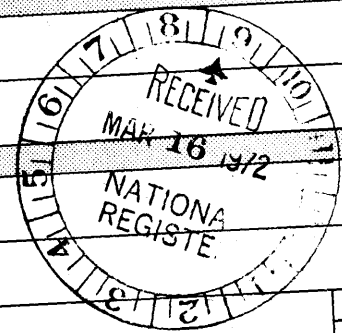


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

G. Elliott Hagan
STATE: Georgia
COUNTY: Chatham
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: DATE:

PH0002501
2/5/73



1. NAME
COMMON: **Isaiah Davenport House**
AND/OR HISTORIC: **Same**

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: **324 East State Street, on Columbia Square**
CITY OR TOWN: **Savannah**
STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13** COUNTY: **Chatham** CODE: **051**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headquarters for Historic Savannah Foundation Comments <input type="checkbox"/>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNERS NAME: **Historic Savannah Foundation, Inc.**
STREET AND NUMBER: **119 Habersham Street**
CITY OR TOWN: **Savannah** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: **Chatham County Courthouse**
STREET AND NUMBER: **Wright Square**
CITY OR TOWN: **Savannah** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY: (a) **Historic American Buildings Survey** (b) **Historic Savannah Architectural Survey, Pub. 1968**
DATE OF SURVEY: (A) **1934, '36, '62** (b) '62 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: (a) **Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs** (b) **Historic Savannah Foundation, Inc.**
STREET AND NUMBER: (b) **119 Habersham Street**
CITY OR TOWN: (a) **Washington, 25** (b) **Savannah** STATE: (a) **D. C. (08)** (b) **Georgia (13)** CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Georgia
Chatham

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

I. Exterior Main or South Facade: With the possible exception of blinds which may or may not have been added at a later date, the Davenport House at 324 East State Street retains in every detail its original appearance. Facing Columbia Square, it is a small but imposing four story brick structure built between 1815 and 1820 by Rhode Island-born architect Isaiah Davenport for his own use. Rectangular in shape and only two reens deep it stands directly on the sidewalk with no front lawn or foundation planting to detract from its clean austere handsome lines. The gabled terraplate roof is broken by three round topped dormer windows in the attic and is flanked at each end by imposing turn chimneys, each pair joined by a parapet. The Classic entrance at second floor level is approached by a double semi-circular stairway with delicate wrought iron handrails imported from Italy, and an intricately designed center medallion. This stairway and the bold Georgian chimneys are the most distinguished features of an otherwise starkly simple facade. /To quote Frederick Nichols: "From the Early Republican period is the sophisticated door to the Davenport House with an elliptical fan framed in a browstone architrave, sunk panels, and pilasters without bases or caps between which the door is recessed."

Davenport repeated his use of browstone in the front steps and in the lintels and sills of all windows except the attic dormers and small basement windows. Walter Hartridge, noted Savannah historian, says of Davenport "He showed great ability by the harmony with which he combined elements of the newer Regency and Greek Revival architecture in the design of his Georgian house. Because of this his house is especially interesting to the student of American architecture."

Frederick Nichols in the Early Architecture of Georgia frequently refers to details of the house as "Early Republican", but whatever its classification, it is noted in Savannah for the simplicity of its exterior and the charm of its interior. It continues to be one of the most popular houses on the Savannah Tour of Homes.

II. Interior - Davenport House Parler Floor: The entrance hall is enhanced by two ionesscreen columns supporting an elliptical arch which frames the stairway. Frederick Nichols says "An outstanding stair of the Early Republican period is the lovely free-standing circular one at the Davenport House. It is set in a niche in the hall and seperated by columns from the entrance corridor." The oval mahogany handrail of the stair is supported by tapered spindles, and winds, unbroken, to the fourth floor.

Opening from the entrance hall are four reems of varying sizes, the most elaborate of which is the drawing reem. Here a delicately moulded plaster cornice in leaf design and a large center medallion decorate the ceiling. At each end of the reem moulded arches spring from pairs of engaged columns and serve as a framework for a double multi-panelled door leading to a small sitting reem at the far end. All of the woodwerk in the drawing reem is hand carved, the window and door frames being centered with a three-quarter round and corner blocks carved in acanthus leaf design.

Centered between the two east windows is a handsome white Italian marble mantle. The other three reems have simple wooden mantles and plaster cornices of simpler design.

(Con't)

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Georgia	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

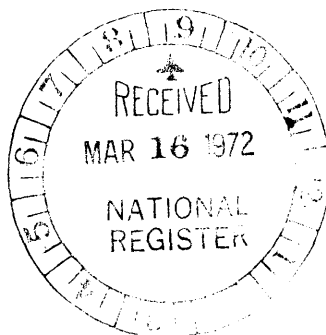
(Number all entries)

7. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION, ISAIAH DAVENPORT HOUSE

III. Bedroom or 3rd Floor: On this floor a central hall with a modified version of the columned archway below leads to four large bedrooms. The two front rooms are connected by a small dressing room. Each has four windows, a simple wood mantle and a large fireplace. The back bedrooms have three windows. The plaster cornices and woodwork in these rooms are exceedingly plain. The heart pine floors, all original throughout the house are of random width, and are wider than those on the main floor. It is characteristic of all Savannah houses of this period that floor boards are wider on each succeeding floor, the widest being always reserved for the attic.

IV. Attic or 4th Floor: The attic of the Davenport House has been left unrestored, due originally to lack of funds, but lately to repeated requests from students of architecture who tour the house in increasing numbers. This floor is divided into two very large rooms (presumably bedrooms), two smaller rooms and a very small dressing room across the end of a short hall. Only the dressing room and hall are plastered. The other rooms have walls, ceilings and floors of exceptionally wide and sturdy heart pine, each wall board having a hand-beaded (or reeded) edge. This detail indicates an earlier period and is responsible for HABS and earlier surveys dating the house from 1810-12. Further research and family records indicate that it was started in 1815 and not completed until some time later. (The most recent indication of a completion date comes from the City tax digests... the lot was Ground Rent until 1821 when buildings first appear in the digest. This would put a completion date of 1820 on the present improvements.)

V. Basement: Unfortunately when the Davenport House was restored in 1954 the basement was sacrificed to provide air conditioning and rental income. The old kitchen mantle, now stored in the attic is the sole remaining relic. This floor with its 7 and 1/2 foot ceilings and private entrance is now headquarters of the Historic Savannah Foundation and provides offices and conference rooms for its burgeoning activities and programs, which include a guided tour service.



6. SIGNIFICANCE

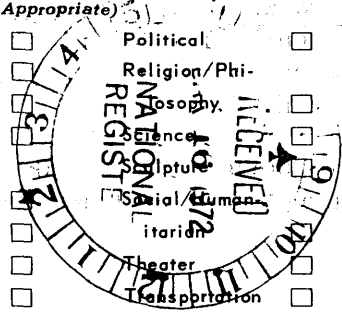
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1815-1820

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> | Education <input type="checkbox"/> | Political <input type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/> | Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic <input type="checkbox"/> | Industry <input type="checkbox"/> | Science <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Headquarters and</u> |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> | Invention <input type="checkbox"/> | Art <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Offices and meeting</u> |
| Art <input type="checkbox"/> | Architecture | Architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <u>rooms of Historic Savannah</u> |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> | Literature <input type="checkbox"/> | Communication <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Foundation, Inc.</u> |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/> | Military <input type="checkbox"/> | History <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>History</u> |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> | Music <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Television <input type="checkbox"/> | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

I. The Architect: Isaiah Davenport, architect, Master Builder and City Alderman was born in Little Compton, Rhode Island in 1784. The son of Jonathan and Sarah Thurston Davenport, his two most distinguished ancestors were both named John Davenport. The first John, Isaiah's great grandfather, came from England with two Oxford degrees and settled in Boston in 1636 where he was the controversial minister of the First Church of Boston and was instrumental in founding New Haven, Connecticut, and later the famous Old South Church in Boston. The second John Davenport founded the Davenport-Longport pottery in Staffordshire where he made the coronation service for King William IV of England.

Isaiah, the architect having lost his father at the age of 2 learned early in life to earn his own living. After serving his apprenticeship in New Bedford, Mass. he decided to move to Savannah at the turn of the Century to make a name for himself in the building trade. This he seems to have done rather quickly for on March 15, 1809 having achieved a certain degree of wealth and prominence he married Sarah Resamond Clarke of South Carolina. In 1812 he bought Lot 13 on the corner of State and Habersham Streets to build a home for his rapidly growing family. The lot faces Columbia Square which was laid out in 1799. In 1757 when Savannah was a walled city the Bethesda gate, one of six entrances to the city was located ^{near} the square. A bronze marker about forty feet from the lot tells the story and adds distinction to the site that Davenport chose for his home. Several years passed during which he postponed his personal plans while he built the Martelle Tower (Demolished) on Tybee Island, the Gilmer House (Demo), the "Davenport Tenement" and several other structures. It was not until some time later that the house was completed. But Isaiah Davenport was destined to live but a short time in the house of his dreams. He died at the height of his success in 1827 leaving his wife to raise six sons and one daughter alone. In later years four of the sons fought in the War Between the States. Amazingly two joined the Union Army and two fought for the Confederacy. The only daughter, Cornelia, was married February 1, 1844 to Henry Roetes Jackson, a Judge, a military general and an ambassador to Austria. Cornelia died in 1853 leaving three young children. Her husband died in 1898, a Savannahian of great renown.

II. Davenport House: In 1840 after Mr. Davenport's death, his widow, finding herself in reduced circumstances sold the house to William Baynard of Hilton Head, South Carolina who rented it for a time to the Samuel Adams family, but seldom if ever used it himself. For the next 109 years it remained

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Antiques Magazine, March 1967
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 McCann, Coward. Heritage of Early American Houses (Country Beautiful, 1970)
 Murphy & Hartridge. Savannah (Bestic & Thornley, Columbia, S. C. 1947)
 Nichols, Frederick Devoten, The Early Architecture of Georgia. (U. of N. C. Press, Chapel Hill, N. C. 1957)
 Savannah Morning News, 9-9-1963, 3-13-1964
 Tax Assessment & Digest Books, 19th C. (Ga. Historical Sec. Record Room)
 Williams. Treasury of Great American Houses (G. P. Putnam, 1970)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

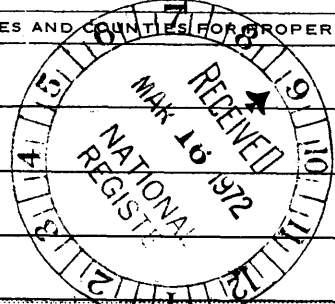
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "	32	04	38
SE	° ' "	° ' "	°	'	"
SW	° ' "	° ' "	81	05	18

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LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Ethelyn N. McKinnon, Curator, Davenport House

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Savannah Foundation, Inc.** DATE: **11-29-1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
119 Habersham Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Savannah** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Mary Gregory Juett

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: March 7, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 9/22/72

ATTEST:
William H. Stutz
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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COUNTY	Chatham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE, ISAIAH DAVENPORT HOUSE

in the negligent hands of non-resident Baynard descendants where it deteriorated sadly over the years. By 1954 the house was one of the city's most delapidated slums in an equally delapidated neighborhood. Its chimneys were crumbling, its windows were patched with cardboard and it was occupied by ten impoverished families. Yet the majestic dignity of the house seemed unimpaired by the indignity of its condition. It had managed to endear itself to so many Savannahians that the discovery of plans for its demolition stirred a city-wide wave of violent protest.

It was then that the Historic Savannah Foundation was hastily organized for the sole purpose of restoring this once proud old house. Once this was accomplished the transformation was so dramatic that properties throughout the neighborhood began to change hands. Two architectural firms bought and restored nearby slum houses for their offices. The spark had begun to ignite.

Meanwhile the Davenport House, resplendent since its restoration, had been rented to a Welfare Organization which complained that their work was hampered by too many visitors wishing to be shown through the house. Shortly they moved to less impressive quarters. This gave Lee Adler, II, then president of the Foundation, the opportunity he had yearned for. Within six months the Davenport House had been redecorated and furnished with the handsomest antiques available and in August 1963 it was opened to the public as a house museum. The Historic Savannah Foundation then moved its offices into the basement.

The site of this house and lot is within the Savannah Historic District, a registered National Historic Landmark, so designated by the Department of the Interior through the National Park Service.

Historic Savannah Foundation has placed legal protective covenants on the Davenport House regarding its future sale, insuring the preservation of the integrity of the building.

