

Armstrong State College

Dr. Stephen F. Dupon
An Incomplete Biography

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Dr. Roger K. Warlick
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Dr. Stephen F. Dupon

Stephen F. Dupon was born Oct. 22, 1823 and died Dec. 7, 1893. He lived most of his life on the Isle of Hope. He was a prominent and well respected physician and citizen. He was involved in local politics and in 1871 was appointed as Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Hope. He worked for the betterment and fair treatment of the black communittee. He was active in supporting religion by donating land to both the Methodist Church and the Benedictine Monks. He was a family man, married to Catherine Bransby and they had three children.

Dr. Stephen Frederick Dupon was a lifelong resident of the Isle of Hope, near Savannah Georgia. Born on the Isle of Hope, October 22, 1823 and died December 7, 1893 at his home, "Harrock Place", whose land bordered on the Isle of Hope.

According to his obituary, Dr. Dupon was a physician of the "old school".¹ I'm not certain what they meant by that, possibly that he was a dedicated physician, because he maintained his practice right up to his death. His obituary also says "few were more successful in the treatment of diseases peculiar to this climate."² Yellow fever epidemics broke out in Savannah³ during Dr. Dupon's lifetime, I would assume he had a great deal of experience treating this disease.

I wasn't able to find any records of Dr. Dupon's education, in primary schools or college or medical school. In fact I wasn't able to find anything of his childhood or early life. The first record I have is in the 1850 Census⁴ and at that point it listed his occupation as a farmer. However from this point on there are many records in deeds and newspapers. Possibly prior to 1850 Dr. Dupon was in school somewhere and not in the Savannah area.

Earlier census and deed records turn up the names of Peter and Paul Dupon. Peter, I assume was Stephen's father and the other his uncle. I didn't turn up any records to prove this assumption, however Stephen named a son Peter, and there is no indication that Paul ever married. Both

Peter and Paul were naturalized citizens coming to the United States from Parish of Borgne, Isle of St. Domingo around 1794 and arriving in Georgia in 1802.⁵ Paul was born March of 1775⁶ and though Peter's date of birth isn't recorded, I found in his death record his age at time of death. This put his birth date in the year 1768 making him the older brother. As stated earlier there is no record of Paul ever marrying, but he did serve in the Georgia Militia as a private in Lt. Col. James Johnston's 1st. Regiment in the War of 1812.⁷ I found a newspaper article announcing, those serving in the War of 1812 were entitled to one draw in the land lottery. Private Paul Dupon's name was listed as being eligible having served with Savannah's Heavy Artillery.⁸ The only other records concerning Paul Dupon were some deed records at the Chatham County Courthouse. Most of these transactions were between 1825 and 1837.⁹ In one transaction Paul acts as a guardian for Doris, wife of Peter Dupon, involving the sale of a slave named Charles to a William Bransby.¹⁰ Paul's name appears on a variety of other deed transactions before his death. Paul died of apoplexy October 25, 1839 at the age of 64, being attended to by a Dr. Chevier.¹¹ Paul is buried in lot 757, in Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah Georgia.¹²

Peter Dupon was married to Doris Calabro(?) April 29, 1815 by a Pastor Cates.¹³ In the 1820 Federal Census Peter is listed as a head of household in Chatham County, no other information is found there.¹⁴ Peter was again recorded in

the 1840 Census, again as a head of household in Chatham County.¹⁵ A newspaper advertisement in 1832 offers for sale or lease the plantation of Peter Dupon's on the Isle of Hope, near Skidaway road, 8 miles from the city of Savannah. Also listed for sale were cattle, swine, and 3 good field hands.¹⁶ Like Paul, Peter's name is recorded in various deed transactions in Chatham County.¹⁷ Peter died of a hernia on July 9, 1844, being brought from the Isle of Hope to a Dr. Bulloch. Peter was dead on arrival.¹⁸ His occupation at the time of his death is reported as a planter. Stephen F. Dupon evidently had a brother J.P. Augustus Dupon. This name first appeared in the same 1850 census that Stephen's name first appeared. In that census J.P.A. Dupon is recorded as being 30 years old and Stephen as 27.¹⁹ It listed a Dorythea, aged 52 born in Maryland as living with J.P.A. Dupon. I'm assuming that Dorythea and Doris (who married Peter) are the same woman. Doris's age is never given in the marriage record or in her death record. It was stated in the county death records that she was removed from Barnwell South Carolina and Buried in Lot 757 July 14, 1855.²⁰ However if Dorythea is the same woman, she would be 30 years younger than Peter. Peter would have been 47 at the time he married and Doris or Dorythea 17.

Also living with J.P.A. Dupon and listed in the 1850 census was a Thomas C. age 18. A Thomas Carlton Dupon age 23 died of yellow fever at the Isle of Hope October 10, 1854

and is buried in the same family plot at Laurel Grove cemetery as Peter, Paul and Doris Dupon.²¹ Another piece of evidence linking J.P.A. to Stephen was a death announcement in the Savannah Morning News on April 21, 1863, "The friends and acquaintances of Capt. J.P.A. Dupon, Dr. S.F. Dupon and their families, are invited to attend the funeral of the former at the family vault, Laurel Grove Cemetary this morning at 8 O'clock".²² J.P.A. is buried in Lot 757 with Doris, Peter, Paul, Thomas Carlton and others.²³ I first thought J.P.A. died due to a mission during the civil war. This announcement appeared in the Savannah Morning News in Jan. 1862 "Company A 5th Georgia Regiment, state troops stationed at Camp Iverson are under command of Capt. J.P. Augustus Dupon. ²⁴

However J.P.A.'s death certificate lists his death as a result of pleurisy, attended by a Dr. Martin.²⁵ The death certificate also lists his residence as Clinch Co. Georgia. Checking the census I found, J.P.A. must have left 3 sons, Augustus 13, Charlton 12, and Lee 6, living with P.A. Herviant in Clinch Co. Georgia. The census records the property valued at \$35,000 with personal property of \$500. I assume this was J.P.A. Dupon's estate because in the census index it listed the Dupon boys' household with P.A. Herviant and Elgin Herviant living with them. Later in the 1900 census, Augustus Dupon, now 43, is recorded as head of household having married and having 2 daughters. It also showed Lee age 36 still living with him, as well as Peter

Herviant now a widower.²⁷ The census has given the Dupon name a T at the end and in 1900 it lists the town in Clinch County as Dupont, Ga.

Stephen F. Dupon married Catherine (sometimes spelled Catharine) E. Bransby on February 8, 1844. They were married by John W. Rinehart, minister of God.²⁸ In the 1850 census Stephen, whose occupation is listed as a farmer, owned real estate valued at \$2,000. At that time the couple had 2 children, Lydia D. age 5 and Peter age 2. Also living with them were Thomas Bransby age 26 and William Bransby age 18. Both of their occupations were recorded as fishermen. I would assume they are Catherine's brothers.²⁹

In the records of deeds dated 1835 is a transaction between Peter Dupon and a Wm. Bransby in the sale of a slave.³⁰ Also Wm. Barnsby is recorded as buying a piece of land containing 104 acres from a Mary Lavender. This land is bounded on the East by Isle of Hope and West and South by land granted to Noble Jones.³¹ The William Bransby in these transactions would probably be the father of Catherine, Thomas, and William, due to their ages. The reason for adding this to this account is that I believe it becomes part of the Harrock Plantation, that was Dr. Dupon's home at the time of his death. I believe the Bransby family had a fair amount of real estate holdings in the Isle of Hope area. Catherine probably received some land as an inheritance and helped to build up her husband Stephen's land holdings. Stephen and Catherine both have many records

of property transactions recorded in Chatham County Superior Court.

The Dupon name and the Bransby name are linked together in other ways besides property transactions. When I found the military records for Stephen, I also found T. J. Bransby as being in the same military unit. In the Muster Roll of Company F. 1st. Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry (Olmstead's) Army of Tennessee C.S.A. Chatham County Georgia. This outfit was also known as the "Coast Rifles", or the "Coast Riflemen". Dupon(t) S.F. is listed as Surgeon, and Bransby T. J. as private.³² Stephen is only recorded on the roll from August 1, 1861 to October 30, 1861. Bransby is listed as being on special duty and is no longer on roll after June 30, 1862.

I also found their names linked together again. This time they were associated with the Isle of Hope Methodist Church. Dr. Stephen F. Dupon is credited as giving the land for the present site of the church. During the time period of this transaction, Thomas J. Bransby is listed as being one of the first Trustees of the church.³³

Dr. Dupon's obituary stated that he was a consistent member of the Roman Catholic Church.³⁴ When he gave the land to the Methodist Church he was not yet a member there. But 13 years later Dr. Dupon was confirmed in the church by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Beckwith, and to this day there is an adult Sunday School class named in his honor.³⁵

Dr. Dupon loyal to his Catholic roots also gave land to

the Benedictine Monks who were trying to establish an order in Savannah. They had purchased a plot of land on the Isle of Hope Dr. Dupon donated the adjoining plot. This plot also contained a small building that was converted into a chapel.³⁶ The deed recorded in Chatham County Superior Court lists the grantor as Catherine Dupon et al.³⁷ Dr. Dupon did seem to have a close association with the Monks however. Some months after establishing themselves on the Isle of Hope, a yellow fever epidemic struck. The Monks new to the area were hit hard and had to give up the work they started. The land was turned over to the St. Vincent Abbey, to establish a school for Negroes. Dr. Dupon the benefactor of the original community was asked to write to try to get the Benedictines to return to run this school.³⁸ Dr. Dupon seemed to be extremely interested in keeping the order in Savannah, because he wrote additional letters and tried to elicit aid for the order. When the Monks returned they sought his advice on the safety of returning to the buildings following the epidemic. Dupon advised that the buildings not be used until aired out and cleaned. He further stated the buildings were miserable and no place for a monastery. Another time Dr. Dupon was called upon by the Monks was following a gunshot accident. It seems a Fr. Daniel went out to get rid of some strange dogs and accidentally shot himself in the intestines and Dr. Dupon said that the wound was such that he could not live.³⁹

Dr. Dupon also had a concern for the Black community,

besides desiring to see a school to educate Blacks, he also desired to see that they were treated fairly in his community. He was put in a position where he was better able to achieve this. On May 5, 1871 the newspaper reported this appointment. Dr. S. F. Dupon, a worthy and well known citizen of this county is appointed as a notary public and an ex-officio Justice of the Peace, with his office at the Isle of Hope.⁴⁰

Another newspaper report gives an account of some cows being stolen. The newspaper gives the account of the crime and how a constable of Justice Dupon's office, by the name of Austin Jones, handled the crime. The principal purpose of reporting this the paper said, was to show the community that there is at least one colored man holding office in the county deserving much praise. Jones was a colored man who established himself as a detective of considerable ability. Constable Jones with the aid of Justice Dupon has become a terror to the evil doers in and around the Isle of Hope.⁴¹ Justice Dupon took exception to a newspaper story that used his name in reporting a disturbance of Blacks in response to the arrest of one of them.⁴² In an editorial appearing the next day, Justice Dupon wrote, "the report published in which my name is brought prominently forward is so incorrect I must ask you to publish my statements as far as my connection with the occurrence is concerned. I sent no message or no one to town. It was simply no business of mine. I saw no excitement among the colored people, nor

heard any threat whatever nor saw any negro with firearms.....Give the negroes of this community the justice due them; a more respectful body of people of that race I do not believe is elsewhere to be found. The best evidence of the fact is their quiet good behavior then and since."⁴³

Dr. Dupon was also concerned with other aspects of the betterment of his community, politics locally, and within the state. Dr. Dupon and Jno. N Dews from the Isle of Hope were appointed to an organizational meeting of the city's Conservative Party.⁴⁴ A short time later at a meeting of the city's Conservatives, Dr. Dupon was appointed to their executive committee.⁴⁵ He was also appointed as a delegate to represent the county at the Democratic Senatorial Convention.⁴⁶ At another time he was appointed to the nominating committee to represent the county in the General Assembly.⁴⁶ Locally he was a county commissioner and as such, appointed to take the school census of children age 6 to 18.⁴⁸ A letter written by Dr. Dupon to the County concerning a projected road on the Isle of Hope was regarded with enough respect to be turned over to the county attorney.⁴⁹

Dr. Dupon was well regarded in the community, as stated in his obituary and in the article reporting his appointment as a justice of the peace. The newspaper accounts regarding him were always reporting of his community service or involvement. One newspaper report that was out of this vein was on August 16, 1874. The report was of true bills being

handed down by the Grand Jury of City Court.....State vs. Stephen Dupon; assault and battery.⁵⁰ I didn't have time to follow this down through the court records, but I can only conclude that it must have been against his son Stephen F. Dupon Jr. Dr. Dupon would have been 51 years old at that time and his son would have been 22 and single. A more likely candidate for an assault charge.

Considering the children of Dr. Stephen and Catherine Dupon, as stated earlier in this text, in the 1850 census two children are recorded. A daughter, Lydia D. born in 1845 and a son Peter, born in 1848. I found records of Lydia as an adult, but I find no other records of a Peter. He might possibly have been a victim of the yellow fever epidemic of 1854. The Chatham County Vital Records however, didn't have any record of a Peter Dupon dying other than the one in 1844. A name that I found in the property deeds, Lavenick P. Dupon may well be the Peter in the 1850 census. In the deed recording distribution and sale of property inherited, it listed Lavenick P. Dupon living in Florida as one of Dr. Dupon's heirs.⁵¹ As an adult he would use the name Lavenick but as a child, if the initial P. stands for Peter, they would more likely call a child of 2 (as he was in 1850), Peter, rather than Lavenick. Lydia married and moved to Texas. Her married name was Lyon and she lived in Sherman, in Greyson county Texas.⁵² Stephen F. Dupon Jr. was born on April 1, 1852.⁵³ These are the names of Dr. Dupon's survivors along with his wife Catherine.

Stephen F. Dupon Jr. also married a Catherine. On November 17, 1775 Stephen Jr. married Catherine E. Smith.⁵⁴ Care must be taken so as not to confuse the mother-in-law with the daughter-in-law, as both are Catherine E. Dupon. The daughter-in-law died first at the age of 47, on January 20, 1897.⁵⁵ The mother-in-law wife of Dr. Dupon lived to be 80 years old and died on February 6, 1909.⁵⁶ Both are buried in the family plot at Laurel Grove Cemetery, lot #938. Curiously the younger Catherine has the larger marker and more prominent position in the family plot. Dr. Dupon's grave is in the center at rear of the plot, but he does have the largest marker. His wife's grave is next to his with a low flat marker. On the other side of Dr. Dupon's grave is Clifford Dupon, Stephen Jr.'s son. In the very center at the front of the plot is the younger Catherine's grave with a marker very nearly the same as Dr. Dupon's. On each side of her are low flat markers like the others. One is for her husband Stephen Jr. and the other is for another son, Frederick Thomas.

Dr. Dupon's estate "Harrock Place" was sold to Edwin Fulton and N. J. Soloman following his death in 1893.⁵⁷ While Dr. Dupon didn't leave any monuments or other great memorials he did leave a legacy still in place today. Harrock Place is still on the maps as well as the Dupon sub-division at the Isle of Hope. Dr. Dupon can be credited with helping the Benedictine School come into existence. The Isle of Hope Methodist Church is still sitting on the land

he donated and the Dr. Stephen F. Dupon Adult Sunday School Class still meets every Sunday.

There are many other things that need to be done to complete this biography of Dr. Dupon. This is just a beginning of an overview of his life and those people in his life. There were many names that came up in this investigation that seemed to be involved with Dr. Dupon on a regular basis. Much more time would be required to check into court minutes and records. Following down his line of descendents into Florida and Texas as well as here in Savannah should offer more insights. Much is left to be done to complete this biography.

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4. Census Records of 1850. Roll M432-64, #132 Chat.331, 13Dist.
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8. Dailey Georgian. April 28, 1832 #130 P.3 C.1.
9. Index to Deeds Book 4 1825-1837. Chatham County
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11. Death Certificate of Paul Dupon. Oct. 23, 1839 Chatham Co.
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12. Laurel Grove Cemetery Index 1852-1932. Vol. 1 A-F
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13. Record of Marriages 1806-1851. Folio 41, #371
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17. Index to Deeds Book 3 1818-1825. Chatham County
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18. Death Certificate of Peter Dupon. July 9, 1844
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19. Census Records of 1850. Roll M432-64, #132 Chat.331
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20. Death Certificate of Doris Dupon. July 14, 1855
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21. Death Certificate of Thomas Carlton Dupon. Oct. 10, 1854
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22. Savannah Morning News. April 21, 1863, P.2 C.4 .
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24. Savannah Morning News. January 23, 1862, P.2 C.1.
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26. Census Records of Clinch Co.. 1870 #568.
27. Census Records of Clinch Co.. 1900 M594-144.
28. Marriage License Index #2594 Chatham County Probate
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29. Census Records of 1850. Roll M432-64, #132 Chat.331
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30. Deed Book 2T. Folio 73 Chatham County Superior
Court (Savannah, Ga.).
31. Ibid. Folio 249 .
32. Roster of Confederate Soldiers of Georgia 1861-1865.
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33. History of the Isle of Hope Methodist Church 1851-1959.
p.7-9 Barrington.
34. Savannah Morning News. Dec. 8, 1893. P.8 C.1.
35. Ibid., 8
36. Tomorrow Comes the Song. Catholicism Among Blacks
of S. Ga. 1850-1978, Griffin 1978.
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38. Georgia Historical Quarterly. "Origins of the
Benedictine Order in Georgia" Vol. 53: p.168-171 Oetgen, 1969.
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41. Savannah Morning News. Aug. 24, 1871. P.3 C.1.
42. Savannah Morning News. Aug. 22, 1876. P.3 C.4.
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50. Savannah Morning News. Augs. 16, 1874. P.3 C.3.
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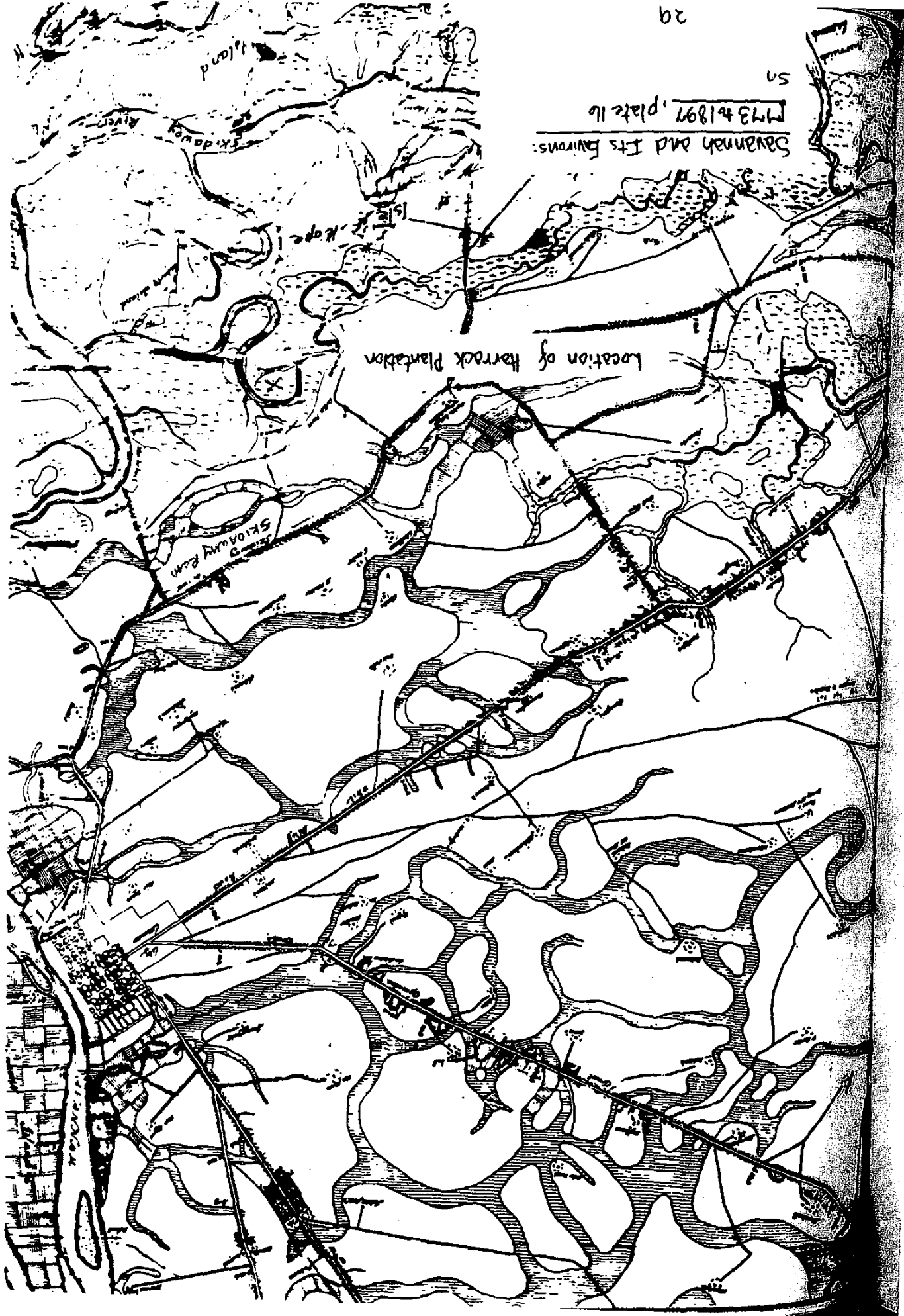
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Savannah and Its Environs.
1713 & 1897, plate II.



Scratch Dec: 8 1884

Dear Doctor

Permit me when we
have such a man as Dr Thomas
to express if I have language to do so
when you con in my behalf to the
widow of my lamented friend
I have not the pleasure of a acquaintance
how I sympathize how bereaved I feel
It is only through the ideal of better
worth - one can appreciate Dr Thomas
There are men in life who is my
unshakable anchor in the storming
worth of one of the best dignitaries
I have met in a long life, one who
sought only after facts to elucidate
truth. I can safely say done more
in the researches of vital statistics
and consistently inform than any
other man in the State. in after
years the quence work will bear
fruit & he name the Father of

This great reform = he may truly say he
was a sacrifice to his Zeal to raise
medical Science, it was his mission in
long years of friendship from an
acquaintance formed when life hung
on a thread with me = I knew the man
and a noble specimen of Manhood
who despised ignorant assumptions
he was always after the truth of facts
and the nobility of his heart I knew
when he could alleviate, his noble
Charity's power times, always, to relieve
human suffering - in all my life no
man I have met. I loved or appreciated
more, Our Country has suffered an irreparable
Loss. his Position in society, his talents
his Zeal his high medical attainments
in my humble Opinion best of all
all = so I recognize his worth, & I was never
disappointed in a case referred to him
Thank God, we believe our possession of
his good heart with such good

impulsed - Lewis near with a true faith that brought Lewis
near unto God, by such noble acts in life for the
well one of his fellow beings and fairer man in the
land, and he is never with the remembrance
Thought soon in my heart regards
and thy's friends

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Coll. name: Colonial Times of America

Dr. James Gray Thomas M.D.

Coll. # 965 Box #

Folder # 76 Vol. #