Alida Harper Fowlkes
1908 - 1985

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Note: Cover photo from engagement announcement in the Savannah Morning News, 23 May 1948.
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I would like to thank Colonel William E. Harper, Jr., Mrs. Donald F. Stroup, and Mrs. Hunter McGuire Clay for welcoming me into their homes and sharing stories about their beloved sister and friend. Without their insight I would have missed so much about Mrs. Fowlkes that simply cannot be pulled from the archives.

I would also like to thank the staffs at Armstrong State College Lane Library, the main branch public library, the Office of Vital Records, and the Probate and Superior Courts of Chatham County for their assistance in helping me locate records needed for my research.

I extend my gratitude as well to the staff at the Georgia Historical Society, who regularly went beyond the call of duty to help me or encourage me with this paper.

Finally, I thank Dr. Warlick for this class and all of his assistance and patience. I am fortunate to have had his instruction.
Introduction

A pioneer in awakening Savannah's architectural and historical consciousness, Alida Harper Fowlkes made a definite imprint on the lives of her contemporary Savannahians, as well as on the city they called home. She was born June 8, 1908,¹ and she died January 19, 1985.² Having lived for most of the present century, life for Mrs. Fowlkes here in the South certainly was not always charming. She and her family experienced perhaps more than their share of troubling times. Her grandparents survived the War of 1812 and the Civil War and, like many southern families of established wealth, were financially devastated in its aftermath.³ Mrs. Fowlkes lived through tumultuous milestones in American history, including the Great Depression, both World Wars, and the Vietnam War. Undoubtedly, these events had an impact on her and her family's lives. Despite these hardships, this Savannah native garnered for herself the title of one of Savannah's first restorationists, making it possible for others to follow her lead. She was a woman of invariable determination and entrepreneurial wisdom, of unwavering conviction and guarded privacy, of traditional values and quiet achievements. She was intensely devoted to her family and went far to preserve their heritage. These characteristics proved to be the recipe for her success as well as the fuel for her commendable career of recognizing, saving, and sharing a heritage on a larger scale -- the architectural traditions of Savannah's beginnings.

¹ Birth Certificate of Alida Harper, Birth Records for 1908, vol. 2, s.v. June 8/08, Office of Vital Records, Chatham County Health Dept., Savannah, GA. These records are simply filed as they were received by date. Because there is not pagination, the only way to locate the record is to thumb through the appropriate volume, looking either for the date of birth, if known, or a familiar name. In Mrs. Fowlkes' case, her original birth certificate only listed her as "an Infant, Race white, Sex female." However, both of her parents signed the certificate, and on March 12, 1970, Mrs. Fowlkes filed a signed affidavit confirming that that particular certificate recorded her birth.

² Certificate of Death for Alida Harper Fowlkes, Death Records, vol. 317, p. 130, Office of Vital Records, Chatham County Health Dept., Savannah, GA. This year's records have been microfilmed.

Branches of the Old Oak Tree:
Alida Harper Fowlkes' Ancestry -- The People and Their Lives

This study of Alida Harper Fowlkes begins with her family because she was so careful to preserve artifacts of their lives, indicating the significance she placed in her family tradition. Alida's family, particularly on her mother's side, was part of what is often termed the exclusive, "old Savannah," that is, they were among those who helped develop the city in its first decades of existence and whose descendants continued for generations afterwards to be at the social, economic, and political core of the city. The Laws, her maternal line, were such cornerstones in Savannah's history. Furthermore, her paternal line, the Harpers, were here by the turn of the eighteenth century to help Savannah in its boom. It is the memory of these ancestors that Alida cherished; as a modern-day guardian, she ensured her family's legacy would be safeguarded for posterity. Therefore, a sketch of the characters in her ancestry will reveal some insight into Mrs. Fowlkes herself.

Some of Mrs. Fowlkes' family and friends still reside in Savannah. The author interviewed Mrs. Fowlkes' brother, Colonel William E. Harper, Jr.;\(^4\) her friend from late in her life, Mrs. Donald F. Stroup;\(^5\) and her long-time friend, Mrs. Hunter McGuire Clay;\(^6\) in an attempt to learn more about Mrs. Fowlkes and her family's history from those who were close to her. Notably, all of these people described a massive collection of family treasures Mrs. Fowlkes kept stored in her basement. As all of the interviewees attested, the contents of her collection were quite eclectic. They all mentioned that because Alida never threw away anything, especially family things, she accumulated quite an assemblage, from her own debutante wardrobe to her mother's toys, from her own finishing school scrapbooks to her great grandparents' furniture. Of course, any

\(^5\) Mrs. Stroup, Oral interview, 10 May.
\(^6\) Mrs. Clay, Oral Interview, 20 May. Also worth mentioning: Mrs. Clay is the wife of the late Hunter McGuire Clay, one of Mrs. Fowlkes' cousins.
of these items would be helpful in understanding Mrs. Fowlkes and her background. However, at this point, the collection has not been completely sifted through or recorded and therefore is inaccessible. Except for what Mrs. Fowlkes herself distributed from the collection before her death,\(^7\) the bulk of it remains in the possession of the Society of the Cincinnati, who was willed her home and most of her possessions it housed.\(^8\) Because the collection is unavailable, it suffices for the purposes of this paper to note that she was so keenly aware of her family's heritage that she created in her own home a museum and an archive of their history.

Unfortunately, another source that potentially would be helpful in tracing Mrs. Fowlkes' lineage, her own family papers, is also inaccessible. The only exceptions discovered were her will\(^9\)\(^10\) and her application for membership into the Society of the Colonial Dames.\(^11\)\(^12\) The Georgia Historical Society has yet to receive all the family

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\(^7\) Mrs. Stroup, Oral interview, 10 May; Mrs. Clay, Oral interview, 20 May. Mrs. Stroup assisted Mrs. Fowlkes in organizing her basement collection a couple years before Alida died. Mrs. Fowlkes knew of Mrs. Stroup keen interest in the Victorian era and therefore asked for her assistance in sorting the collection; therefore, she gave to Mrs. Stroup anything Victorian they found that interested her. Mrs. Stroup retrieved some fragile things, particularly some family toys, which have been put on display at the Savannah History Museum.

Mrs. Clay assisted Alida with sorting out her basement as well, though a few years before Mrs. Stroup. Mrs. Clay showed me a crocheted linen table piece Mrs. Fowlkes gave her from the collection during their work.

\(^8\) Will of Alida Harper Fowlkes, Estate Records, File F1739, Item X, sec. A-F, p. 5-8, Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. Mrs. Fowlkes wrote, "I give, devise and bequeath the real property of 230 Barnard Street,...which is my personal residence,...IN TRUST, for THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA, as a permanent home and headquarters." For reasons why Mrs. Fowlkes left the Society her home, refer to page 18 and footnote 83.

\(^9\) ibid., s.v. "A Partial List of Family Pieces with Their Dates and Origins," First appendix to will, Probate court of Chatham county, Savannah, GA. See Appendix 1, p. 1.

\(^10\) ibid., There are several references to relatives throughout the entire document.

\(^11\) Provided to the author by and used with permission from Col. William E. Harper.

\(^12\) Colonial Dames Application, TDS, 12 Mar 1970; See Appendix 1, p. II-v.
papers Mrs. Fowlkes left them in her will, and those they have received were transferred from her former residence to the archives only recently; hence, anything she may have written to narrate her ancestry has yet to be cataloged and remains unavailable to the public until that is accomplished.

The Law Family Branch

In studying Mrs. Fowlkes' ancestors without her own records and artifact, the saving grace is the work of one of Mrs. Fowlkes' cousins, Benjamin Palmer Axson, who provides great assistance in tracing Mrs. Fowlkes' maternal genealogy. His typewritten and handwritten manuscripts, currently in the archives of the Georgia Historical Society, link Alida to a Nathaniel Law who probably first arrived in South Carolina from England or Scotland on April 22, 1694. However, due to a gap in information available, Alida is part of the branch of the family that is only surmised to be descendent of this Nathaniel Law. Putatively, Joseph Law, Nathaniel's eldest son,

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13 Will of Alida Harper Fowlkes, File F1739, Item IX, p. 4-5, Estate Records, Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. After designating her Rose Medallion Porcelain for the Georgia Historical Society, she writes: "To the GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY I likewise will, give and bequeath my family papers and such other papers, documents and books which may be of some historical importance and which the Georgia Historical Society may wish for its records. These family records are to be filed as 'Collection Concerning Law, Edmonston, Harper, William Edward Harper, Jr., and Alida Harper Fowlkes Records.'"

14 The Society of the Cincinnati is currently still in possession of the family papers that were willed to the Georgia Historical Society. According to the director of the GHS, Anne Smith, the reason for this is that there is a sizable amount of non-manuscript material that must be sorted through before she and her staff can efficiently catalog what will truly be beneficial for the archival collection.

15 See also Walter C. Hartridge, "Genealogies," Handwritten Ms, Newspaper clippings, Box 117, Folders 2150 and 2152, Walter C. Hartridge Papers, Manuscript Collection 1349, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. In these folders are Mr. Hartridge's genealogy notes concerning the Law family as well as several clippings about deaths and marriages of several of its members. His information corroborates most of Mr. Axson's work, though there are some date discrepancies. Overall, from my research, Mr. Axson's records have been correct most often. Hartridge's expertise notwithstanding, I chose to focus on the Axson papers for the Law line because Benjamin Palmer Axson, like Alida Harper Fowlkes, was a direct descendent of Judge William Law, putting Mr. Axson "closer" to the source than Mr. Hartridge would have been.

16 For the entire collection, reference the following: Benjamin Palmer Axson, TMs and handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebookss 1-3 and Box 4, Folder 2, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.
is the father of a second Joseph Law; however, for the junior Joseph, Mr. Axson was unable to absolutely determine whether he was definitely the first Joseph's son. Like Mr. Axson did, for this paper it is assumed that the second Joseph Law was indeed the first Joseph Law's son and Nathaniel Law's grandson.  

Going from Nathaniel, the Law genealogy is a hefty one, like one of the old, giant oak trees whose sturdy branches have draped the streets and squares of Savannah since its beginnings. Because of the extensive number of wives and children the men of the succeeding Law family generations had, a condensed version of Alida's maternal genealogy is provided on the following page in order to trace directly Alida's line and to supplement the reproduction of Mr. Axson's extremely detailed Law family trees.

Benjamin Axson writes that Nathaniel Law was "of some prominence...[in] that he was almost immediately given recognition by Gov. Smith by appointing him an appraiser." He was wealthy as well, owing to the substantial amount of land he purchased between 1694 and 1697.

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17 Benjamin Palmer Axson, "Nathaniel Law and his Descendants of South Carolina," Handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebook 2, p. 73, s.v. Joseph Law of Liberty County, 1933, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. (It should be noted that this notebook is divided into several separate sections, each with its own title, rather than one overall title for the entire notebook. In the Nathaniel Law section, only the first twelve pages are numbered, so for the subsection cited here, the page referenced is assigned by the author, not by Mr. Axson, counting from page 12.) About the youngest Joseph, Mr. Axson writes, "While no absolute proof of the date of his birth, or just who his parents were have been found, we know that he was born in South Carolina....An overwhelming mass of evidence tends to show that he was the son of Joseph & Theodoro Law - and a grandson of Nathaniel Law, who was in the Province of South Carolina April 1694."

18 It appears in his notes that Mr. Hartridge makes this assumption as well.

19 Ibid., Family Tree of Nathaniel Law of South Carolina, Family Tree of Joseph Law, and Family Tree of Judge William Law, Hand-drawn/Written Illustrations, Box 4, Folder 2, 1933, 1928, 1926 respectively, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. See Appendix 1, p. vi-viii.

20 All information about Nathaniel and Joseph (the first and second) Law is from the following: Benjamin Palmer Axson, "Nathaniel Law and his Descendants of South Carolina," Handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebook 2, p. 1-12, 73-end, 1933, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. In Mr. Axson's genealogical outline, Nathaniel is of course person "1" and his descendants can be traced accordingly. As Nathaniel's descendants, Joseph (the first) is person "2" and Joseph (the second) is person "8." Switching to the next outline, which begins with Joseph Law (the second), Benjamin Law is person "10."
Partial Law Family Tree

Nathaniel Law + (wife unknown)
- b. ?
- m. ?
- d. before 1733
  - arrived in SC ca. Apr. 1694
  - → Joseph Law (1 of 3 sons) + Theodora
    - b. ?
    - m. ?
    - d. before 1733
  - → Joseph Law (eldest child of 2) + Mary Bradwell (3rd of five wives)
    - b. 1715? (Liberty Co.)
    - m. Apr. 3, 1765 (South Carolina)
    - d. 1809 (Liberty Co.)
  - → Benjamin Law (1 of 4 children with Mary Bradwell) + Mary Sandford Maybank (widowed daughter of his father's fifth wife)
    - b. 1771
    - m. ?
    - d. Mar. 13, 1827
  - → William Law (to be Judge) + Alethea Jones Stark (last of 3 wives)
    - b. Mar. 27, 1793 (Liberty Co.)
    - m. Feb. 20, 1834
    - d. Jan. 29, 1874 (Savannah)
  - → Alida Stark Law (youngest of 10 children with Alethea Stark) + Charles Edmonston
    - b. May 29, 1853
    - m. Nov. 8, 1877
    - d. Sept. 19, 1935 (Savannah)
    - → Georgia Law Edmonston (eldest of 4 children) William E. Harper
      - b. Sept. 28, 1878 (Savannah)
      - m. June 4, 1902 (Savannah)
      - d. Nov. 16, 1997 (Savannah)
      - → William E. Harper, Jr. (to be Colonel) + Eleanor B. Seay
        - b. Aug. 14, 1905 (Savannah)
        - m. ?
        - d. n/a
        - → Alida Law Harper Gover
          - → Alida Harper + Hunter McGuire Fowlkes
            - b. June 8, 1908 (Savannah)
            - m. June 15, 1948 (Savannah)
            - d. Jan. 19, 1965 (Savannah)
            - → Hunter McGuire Fowlkes
              - b. July 15, 1894 (Rockingham, NC)
              - m. Nov. 2, 1949 (Savannah)

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21 Compiled by the author from the following: 1) Benjamin Palmer Axson, "Genealogy of the Axson Family with the Collateral Branches of Law, Randolph, Palmer," TMs, Box 1, Notebook 1, s.v. Genealogy of the Law Family, 1927; 2) Ibid., "Nathaniel Law and his Descendants of South Carolina" and "Judge William Law and His Descendants of Savannah, Georgia", Handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebook 2, 1933; and 3) Ibid, "Traditions and Early History of the Axson Family, Together with the Collateral Branches of Callaway, Law, Mallard, Randolph and Palmer, Handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebook 3, 1941, all from Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA."

22 Death dates corroborated at grave-sites: Edmonston Family Plot, sec. A, No. 127, Bonaventure Cemetery, Savannah, GA. See Appendix 1, p. ix-x for pictures.


Nathaniel Law had four children, including Joseph Law,26 who was probably his eldest son. This Joseph Law married Theodoro; and these two were the parents of Hannah Law and probably, according to what evidence is available, of the second Joseph Law.26 As Mr. Axson determined, despite the lack of proof of his birth date or parents, "we know that he [Joseph (the second)] was born in South Carolina, that as a young man he lived in St. Bartholemew's Parish, S.C. and that about the year 1769 he, with his wife, four children and more than thirty-five slaves, removed to Midway, Liberty County, Ga. where he died in the year 1803 at the old age of 88 years."

Joseph Law (the second) of Liberty County married five times. His third wife was Mary Bradwell, who bore him four children, including Benjamin Law.27 Benjamin married his step-sister, his father's fifth wife's daughter, widow Mary Sandiford Maybank. They had seven children, including William Law, who later became the renown Judge William Law, Mrs. Fowlkes' great grandfather. Benjamin Law died March 13, 1827.

Judge William Law married three times.28 In 1834, he married his last wife, Alethea Jones Stark, a cousin of his second wife Alethea Jones. She was the mother of ten of his eighteen children. Their youngest child, Alida Stark Law, is Alida Harper's grandmother and namesake. Colonel Harper shared a family story which relates how his sister's name was first introduced into the family. When Judge William and Alethea

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26 Ibid.; Joseph Law (the first) = person "2" under Nathaniel; see footnote 20.
26 Ibid.; Joseph Law (the second) = person "8" under Nathaniel and is person "1" in the next outline that begins with him; see footnote 20.
27 Ibid.; Benjamin = person "10" under Joseph (the second); see footnote 20.
28 All information about Judge William Law is from the following: Ibid., "Judge William Law and his Descendants of Savannah, Georgia," Handwritten Ms, Box 1, Notebook 2, 1933, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society; Ibid., Transcribed obituary, Notebook 1, Back pocket, s.v. Newspaper clipping. The Late Hon. William Law, 1927, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. As Nathaniel Law's descendant through Joseph (the second), Judge Law is person "28;" naturally, he becomes person "1" in the outline that begins with him. Following the outline from Judge Law, Alethea Jones Stark Law is "4"; Alida Stark Law Edmonston is "21;" Georgia Law Edmonston Harper is "72;" William E. Harper, Jr. is "132;" and Alida Harper is "133."
Law had their last child, they were in a quandary as to what they should name her. Judge Law already had a daughter named Alethea from his second wife, who was also an Alethea; with several other Aletheas already in the family, they needed a new name. Hence, their youngest child remained unnamed until the Laws were in New York shortly after their daughter’s birth. There they saw a Norwegian ship in the harbor, the Alida. Figuring that name to be close to but different enough from Alethea, they adopted it for their daughter; Mrs. Fowlkes’ grandmother was finally named.29

Judge Law was the first in this family line to come to Savannah. As a prominent citizen, he established this family as one of those of “old Savannah.” He moved here March 27, 1793 and began studying law. He was admitted to the bar in 1815, appointed Superior Court Judge in 1828, and retired from the bench in 1834. He resumed his law practice until 1873, when an illness, which eventually ended his life, forced him to quit working. He was a cavalry company commander in the War of 1812 and served several times as a Chatham County representative to the state legislature. Judge Law was a member of Independent Presbyterian Church, President of the Board of Trustees of Chatham Academy, member of the Board of Education, and a founding member of the Georgia Historical Society. He died January 29, 1874.

Judge Law’s youngest daughter Alida Stark Law then married Charles Edmonston in 1877. They had four children, the eldest being Georgia Law Edmonston, Alida’s mother.30 Charles and Alida Edmonston, who died in 1909 and 1935 respectively, are buried at Bonaventure Cemetery.31

Georgia Law Edmonston and William Edward Harper married on June 4, 1902

30 All information about Charles and Alida S. Law Edmonston is from the following: Benjamin Palmer Axson, “Genealogy of the Axson Family...” TMs, Box 1, Notebook 1, s.v. Genealogy of the Law Family, 1927, Benjamin Palmer Axson Papers, Manuscript Collection 1330, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.
31 Edmonston Family Plot, sec. A, no. 126, Bonaventure Cemetery, Savannah, GA. See Appendix A, p. lx-x for pictures.
at Independent Presbyterian Church. Mr. Harper had several jobs throughout his life but usually served in some sort of managerial or clerical position with cotton factors. Their first child, William Edward Harper, Jr. (later Colonel) was born on August 14, 1905, and Alida Harper was born on June 8, 1908. William E. Harper (senior) died August 3, 1954 and his wife on November 16, 1967. They are buried beside her parents at Bonaventure Cemetery.

William Edward Harper, Jr. married Eleanor Seay. They had two children, Alida and Eleanor. Colonel Harper currently resides in the home on the Isle of Hope his sister left him in her will.

Alida Harper married late in life. Hunter McGuire Fowlkes was her groom on June 15, 1948. They had no children. Hunter Fowlkes died suddenly from a heart attack on November 2, 1949, only a year and a half after their marriage. Alida Harper Fowlkes was a member of the Colonial Dames, Historic Savannah Foundation, Inc., Savannah Historical Research Association, and Independent Presbyterian

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32 Marriage License of William Harper and Georgia L. Edmonston, Marriage Records, no. 357, 1902, Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA.

33 As determined by tracing Mr. William E Harper (by his name) through the Savannah City Directories, 1890-1954.


36 Edmonston Family Plot, sec. A, no. 126, Bonaventure Cemetery, Savannah, GA. See appendix A, p. ix and xi for pictures.

37 Will of Alida Harper Fowlkes, Estate Records, File F1739, Item III, Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA.

38 "Marriage Register," p. 94, 1948-49, Independent Presbyterian Church, Savannah, GA. corroborated with wedding announcement in Savannah Morning News, 16 June 1948, sec. Society, p. 4 and in the Savannah Evening Press, 16 June 1948, sec. Society, p. ?, col. ?. Note: no marriage license was located at the Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA.

Church.40 She died on January 19, 1985 of complications due to pancreatic cancer.41 Both Alida Harper Fowlkes and her husband are buried at Bonaventure Cemetery in the Edmonston family plot next to her parents and grandparents.42

The Harper Family Branch

Alida's father's line has not been traced nearly as extensively in any records located in Savannah, probably because he and his family were primarily native to South Carolina and Augusta, Georgia. According to a document Walter C. Hartridge transcribed, the first William Harper, "fourth son of Andrew & Margaret Harper of the townland Dungonnell & Parish of Killead in the county of Antrim in Ireland, landed in Charleston, S.C. - on the 5th April 1810 and came to Augusta, Ga on the 29th of same month." This William Harper married Mary Ann Cashin, daughter of John and Catherine Matilda Cashin on the "first of May 1823...in Augusta, Ga."43 William (the first) and Catherine Harper had twelve children, including William Harper, who was born April 13, 1834.

This second William Harper was Mrs. Fowlkes' grandfather. He married Sarah Peyton Bryan from Lawtonville, South Carolina. According to the Federal Census of 1900 for Chatham County, Georgia, William (the second) and Sarah Harper were then living at 1316 Abercorn Street in Savannah, along with their sons, Charles A., Thomas

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40 At this point, this is just a listing of her activities, compiled partly from her obituary and partly from many other sources. Please note that her involvement in these organizations will be examined later in this paper, including the sources used to verify this information. However, she is indicated as a member of Independent Presbyterian Church in their "Marriage Register," where her marriage is logged.


42 Edmonston Family Plot, sec. A, no. 126, Bonaventure Cemetery, Savannah, GA. See Appendix A, p. ix, xii-xiii for pictures.

W., James W. and William Edward Harper," who was Mrs. Fowlkes' father. William Harper (the second) died in Estill, South Carolina on March 3, 1906. His body was transferred and reinterred at Bonaventure Cemetery, alongside his wife's grave, five months after her death on March 3, 1906.45

By some undocumented twist of fate, William Edward Harper and Georgia Law Edmonston met and were married. Thus were the Laws and Harpers joined to create this history, a heritage that Alida Harper Fowlkes so proudly preserved for the entirety of her life. With soldiers, statesmen, judges, preachers, business men, educators, and artists included among them, Mrs. Fowlkes certainly had reason to be fond of her ancestors -- and of the artifacts they left behind. No doubt this fondness grew into her successful career as an antiquarian and restorationist.

Her Early Life and Careers

Now that her ancestry has been illustrated, Mrs. Fowlkes' childhood and earlier life can be introduced, which is an area that was never addressed in the newspaper stories about her later in her life. From this sketch, the characteristics she possessed will present themselves and complement her dedication to her family heritage. As a young girl, she was riddled with physical suffering. Colonel Harper remembered that when she was about five or six,46 she contracted typhoid fever."7 Colonel Harper explained that to treat typhoid fever, the infected person had to have his or her head shaved, which the young Alida had to endure. Then, in order to keep his sister cool,
his parents rigged a fan behind a tub of ice to blow the chilled air upon her. Fortunately, she recovered from that illness. However, she realized as her hair grew back that her health was regained only after the fever had deprived her of her newly-developing, much-coveted curly locks. From her point of view, the loss of her curly hair was infinitely more devastating than the illness itself.\textsuperscript{48}

Typhoid fever was not the end of her serious childhood ailments. According to Colonel Harper,\textsuperscript{49} Mrs. Fowlkes developed a serious limp accompanied with crippling pain, forcing her to walk with crutches. She entered the hospital in 1923 for surgery\textsuperscript{50} and was bed-ridden for approximately a year afterwards. The picture in Appendix B, page ii is of young Alida Harper during her illness, tucked snuggly in bed and surrounded by some of her favorite comrades.

Colonel Harper referred to her problem as a "tubercular hip." In modern medical terms, Mrs. Fowlkes suffered from an uncommon form of tuberculosis. A general description of the disease and treatment options follows (underlining added for emphasis):

\textit{Tuberculosis} is an infectious disease caused by the tubercle bacillus, \textit{Mycobacterium tuberculosis}. While the lungs are the organs usually invaded directly, involvement of bones and joints is secondary to tuberculosis elsewhere in the body. Therefore, when the bones are affected, a search is made for other active foci of disease. Skeletal tuberculosis is uncommon (3\% of all tuberculosis) and occurs most frequently in children. Onset of the skeletal pathology is within 2 years of the primary lesion.

\textit{Tuberculosis} of a bone or joint is usually a low-grade and slowly progressive infection.\ldots The spine is involved most commonly (Pott's disease), while the hip, the knee, and the ankle may also be affected.\ldots Local symptoms include swelling, pain and tenderness, muscle spasm, early stiffness progressing to limitation of active and passive motion,\ldots increased amounts of joint fluid, and muscle atrophy. Constitutional manifestations include fatigue, anorexia, weight loss, and intermittent low-grade fever.\ldots

The patient who experiences skeletal tuberculosis needs to eradicate the infection, experience comfort, and promote healing of the affected bones and joints through immobilization and nutrition.\ldots Secondary infection of the bone is treated with the appropriate antimicrobial

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{49} The entire discussion of her disease and suffering occurred during Col. Harper's oral interview, 11 May.

\textsuperscript{50} Hospital bill, dated from 5/27 - 6/3, 1923, in possession of Colonel Harper; total costs for her hospital stay were $49.60.
agent. Orthopedic surgery is indicated when drainage of abscesses, excision of bone, and fixation of a joint are necessary.

...In the surgical management of infected joints, the swollen tubercular synovium may be removed....

The affected joint must be immobilized to minimize pain and to promote healing. Complete bed rest, plaster casts, spinal braces, and bone fusions may be employed to promote immobilization.\footnote{Lillian Sholtis Brunner and Doris Smith Suddarth, Textbook of Medical-Surgical Nursing, 5th ed., (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1984), 1469.}

Though this is a modern definition, from what Colonel Harper described of his sister’s pain and treatment, it is closely parallel to her symptoms, diagnosis and surgery. Already mentioned was the pain she suffered. Furthermore, Colonel Harper called the surgery that was performed on his young sister the “Schaunley Procedure,” which he described as bone from the shin of her good leg being grafted and fused to her hip bone, making her hip completely immobile.\footnote{Col. Harper, Oral interview, 11 May.} No reference to this procedure by this name was found; however, Colonel Harper’s description of what was performed matches the description of treatment options listed above.

More than likely, the procedure in the ’20s was not nearly as refined as it is today, which may explain why Mrs. Fowlkes was never really relieved of her hip pain, despite the extensive surgery she underwent as a child. As a result of the bone graft and immobilization of her hip, Mrs. Fowlkes had one leg become shorter than the other, forcing her to wear elevated, orthopedic shoes; she could never sit straight in a chair, rather she had to sit forward enough so that she could keep her leg turned inward; and she was never able to drive. This childhood disease haunted her throughout her life as a constant source of embarrassment and unrelenting discomfort.\footnote{Ibid.}

In spite of these physical obstacles, Miss Alida Harper led an active life. After
some years of schooling in Savannah, the teenager Alida Harper attended "finishing school" from 1924 to 1927 at the New Sullins College in Virginia Park, Bristol, Virginia. She was not a strong academic student there, but she always earned good grades in deportment and in her art classes. From programs and other memorabilia in her scrapbooks, it is evident that she was a member of an art club called the "Wash-ta-nong Club." Several specialized dictionaries failed to provide a definition of this art type; however, some clues exist that allow speculation as to what Miss Harper and her classmates may have done as participants in this club. All three of the people interviewed about Mrs. Fowlkes commented that not only was she an accomplished artist, but that she used her skills to help pay her tuition at school. Mrs. Stroup said she painted silhouette-type figures on brooches and sold them, while Mrs. Clay mentioned that she painted a variety of things on the backs of her classmates yellow rain slickers for her fundraisers. Maybe young Alida did both, along with her friends in the club, for their less artistic peers. Also in Mrs. Fowlkes' scrapbooks, she saved several examples of a kind of watercolor painting she or her friends did on fine, crepe-like paper, on bridge tally cards, and on other assorted stationery items, usually with floral or holiday themes. Perhaps these represent examples of Wash-ta-nong work.

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54 It was not determined where she attended school in Savannah, but, because she lived here all her life, she must have attended a school in the city somewhere. According to Col. Harper, she gave some old McGuffey readers and report cards to the Massie School, so perhaps she attended there.

55 The scrapbooks from her years at Sullins College (1924-27) are currently in the possession of the Society of the Cincinnati, but they are being stored at the Georgia Historical Society while the Society's headquarters, Mrs. Fowlkes' former residence, is undergoing plumbing and electrical renovation. One of the Society's trustees of Mrs. Fowlkes' estate granted permission to the GHS to let me view the scrapbooks.

56 Within the first two scrapbooks (she has them dated), report cards were found. An undated report was found in the second scrapbook, (1925-26), that listed her deportment grade as "100" along with the comment "a good little girl."

57 Specifically mentioned in her senior year scrapbook, the third book dated from 1926-27.

58 Mrs. Stroup, Oral interview, 10 May.

59 Mrs. Clay, Oral interview, 20, May.

60 Found in all three of her school-year scrapbooks.
Lastly, as evident from her grades and award ribbons found in her scrapbook⁶¹ and according to her brother,⁶² from this early age, Mrs. Fowlkes was skilled at china painting, in addition to water colors, painting, and charcoal sketchings. Since this class was part of her curriculum, and the name of the club is distinctively Chinese, perhaps “Wash-ta-nong” has something to do china painting. Nonetheless, whatever the club entailed, it was part of her extracurricular activities at school.

After her graduation from Sullins College on May 28, 1927,⁶³,⁶⁴ Alida Harper returned home to Savannah. By November of that year Miss Alida Harper already had a full social and business calendar. On November 10 and 11, 1927, utilizing her artistic and enterprising skills, she opened a small studio, or “variety shop,” as Colonel Harper called it,⁶⁵ in her parents’ home at 202 W. Gwinnett Street. To describe the opening event, she wrote in her scrapbook, “Had two afternoon teas -- good write-ups...You couldn’t say all Savannah turned out -- but it wasn’t so worse.”⁶⁶ Later, on the last day of the same month, her parents announced her coming out into society. As the newspaper announcements she clipped tell, for months thereafter, she and her “society friends” were involved in several debutante luncheons, bridge games, evening parties and dances.⁶⁷ Finally, in the summer of 1928, following that busy winter, she attended a class at the University of Georgia.⁶⁸

Continuing her active lifestyle, sometime in 1929 or 1930, Alida Harper, at age 21 or 22, opened her variety store, the Loom and Art Shop, in a new location: upstairs,

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⁶¹ Specifically found in the third scrapbook, dated from 1926-27.
⁶³ Date corroborated with listing in the Sullins College catalog of members of senior class of 1927; catalog found in her senior year (third) scrapbook.
⁶⁶ Mementos of her post-academic activities are in the fourth and last scrapbook.
⁶⁷ Ibid.
⁶⁸ Ibid. From what she saved, i.e. some receipts for laundry and general UGA information, the class could not be determined.
in the southeast corner room of the Pink House, 23 Abercorn Street.\textsuperscript{69} There she sold mostly large woven pieces and other handmade items. The location of Mrs. Fowlkes studio soon presented this young business woman another opportunity.\textsuperscript{70}

As Colonel Harper remembered, two elderly ladies were running a tea room on the first floor of the Pink House. They served wonderful meals at one of the few restaurants in town, but they were ready to retire and planned to close the tea room. Her enterprising spirit emerging once again, Miss Alida Harper decided to buy the tea room and run it herself.\textsuperscript{71} One of the stories of his sister that Colonel Harper seems most fond of telling is the one about how she got started with the soon-to-be renown Georgian Tea Room. He relates that Mrs. Fowlkes first made a deal with the ladies, and then went to Mr. Smith, then President of Citizens and Southern National Bank to borrow $100 to put down on the tea room. Since she had no collateral (and, as Colonel Harper tells it, did not even know what collateral was), her father signed the promissory note with her. The tea room was hers.\textsuperscript{72}

She made the tea room into a successful venture with some assistance from her father, who went with her every morning on the Barnard Street bus to the Grocerteria at the old City Market to buy groceries, and her mother, who helped her decorate the place nicely.\textsuperscript{73} According to Mrs. Clay, her husband Hunter McGuire Clay also helped this budding entrepreneur get the tea room established. Apparently, Miss Alida went to cousin Hunter, who was then affiliated with the sugar refinery, and asked him to approach his superiors about arranging a benefits package for their city employees

\textsuperscript{69} This date could not be pinpointed because no city directory exists for 1929. However, in the 1924-28 directories, she is simply listed under her name (Harper, Miss Alida) at her parents residence. Then in the 1930 Savannah City Directory she is listed on page 431 at her parent's residence and as owner of the Loom and Art Shop. The shop is listed alphabetically at 23 Abercom St. in the same directory on page 520.

\textsuperscript{70} Col. Harper, Oral interview, 11 May.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} Asserted by Col. Harper, Mrs. Stroup, and Mrs. Clay in their respective oral interviews.
that would include daily lunches at the Georgian Tea Room. The executives bought the idea, and presumably this arrangement provided regular customers and encouraged the word to spread about the new Pink House tea room.  

She ran the Georgian Tea Room until ca. 1943 when she sold it to her two waitresses in order that she might pursue another career as an antiquarian.

By the young age of twenty-four and in the midst of the Great Depression, Alida Harper was already investing in businesses and making them successful, an accomplishment many of her peers and elders, male and female alike, surely could not claim at that time. In that historical context, her achievements practically speak for themselves. Still, she was just beginning what would become a long, fruitful career of investing in what other people had abandoned.

Alida Harper Fowlkes
Antiquarian & Restorationist

Alida Harper Fowlkes' first involvement in restoration is connected with her tenure as owner of the Georgian Tea Room. As Mrs. Fowlkes related to a newspaper reporter in later years, it was on her bus ride to the Grocereteria to buy groceries for the Georgian Tea Room that she discovered the home at 230 Barnard Street. And on that

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74 Mrs. Clay, Oral interview, 20 May.
75 The Savannah City Directories do not corroborate this date, for they do not show Ms. McGrath and Ms. Morris as owners of the Georgian Tea Room until the 1947-48 directory, p. 258, s.v. Georgian Tea Room. However, there are no city directories for the years 1943-46, so this probably explains the contradiction between the city directories and the newspapers. See note 62.
76 "'Pink House' Is Saved Again, Will Continue As Tearoom," Savannah Morning News, 24 Nov. 1945. This clipping, along with others about the Georgian Tea Room and the Pink House, was found in Box 61, Folder 1022, s.v. 23 Abercom - The Pink House, Walter C. Hartridge Papers, Manuscript Collection 1349, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. This particular clipping was not labeled beyond the newspaper and date.
77 See Appendix B, p. iv-v for a copy of a card for the tea room and a picture of Alida Harper with her waitresses, who later succeeded her as owners of the Georgian Tea Room.
daily bus ride, as the reporter paraphrased, "she sat on that side of the bus so she could lean out to feast her eyes on the serene and lovely place which seemed aloof from the maddening throng in which the pretty, tiny, little girl was so successfully competing as a business woman."\(^{79}\)

When this house went on the market in 1939 following the death of Henry McAlpin, Alida Harper had her chance to purchase her dream home. In another interview for the newspaper, Mrs. Fowlkes told Helena Zimmerman that she was unable to secure a FHA loan for $3,000 "because it was in the wrong neighborhood," but the banks lent her the money, and on New Year's Eve in 1939 she and her mother moved into the house.\(^{80}\) Ultimately, she secured a loan from Citizens and Southern National Bank for the balance of the $9,000 purchase price.\(^{81}\) Mrs. Fowlkes' restoration of this home was more in interior decoration than structural changes. Here she housed the treasured furniture and portraits of her ancestors.

Unlike other houses she bought and restored later, Mrs. Fowlkes never sold her home at 230 Barnard, Trust Lot 26, Jackson Ward. Instead, it stands now more of a monument to her life and her work. She specifically directed the Society of the Cincinnati to always leave certain rooms in the order she has arranged them, so as not to destroy the intentions and interpretations she painstakingly installed in her beloved


\(^{81}\) Deed Book 34K, p. 463, 2 Oct. 1939 and Deed Book 34 L, p. 336, 2 Oct. 1939, both in Records Room, Superior Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. See Appendix C, p. 1 for picture.
home. Unlike her simply engraved tombstone at Bonaventure Cemetery, Alida Harper Fowlkes creates in her residence an elaborate attempt to secure some sense of immortality, perhaps for her achievements, or for herself, or both.

The second restoration project Mrs. Fowlkes was part of involved saving the home of her tea room, the Pink House. At the end of 1939, the Pink House was threatened with destruction. Mrs. Fowlkes joined her contemporaries like Walter C. Hartridge and Miss Nina Pape to rally behind the house. The group they gathered formed the Society for the Preservation of Savannah Landmarks. Mrs. Fowlkes provided space for the first meeting on November 13, 1939 in the Georgian Tea Room, but she never was an active member in this group beyond these initial meetings. Nonetheless, she had a vested interest in saving the structure because the Georgian Tea Room would be forced to relocate or close if the Pink House were destroyed. Ultimately, the Pink House was saved by all the noise Fowlkes, Hartridge and friends made. The society successfully persuaded the owner that his land was more valuable with one of the earliest built homes in Savannah on it, rather than a parking lot.

From 1939 on, Alida Harper Fowlkes was extensively involved in restoring

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82 Will of Alida Harper Fowlkes, Estate Records, File F1739, Item X, sec. C, p. 5-8, Probate Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. She wrote, "I expect to leave on my death a letter addressed to THE SOCIETY...expressing my wishes and making recommendations as to the manner in which I would like the Society to maintain its home....," then goes on with specific instructions.

83 According to Mrs. Clay, Alida Fowlkes gave her home to the Society of the Cincinnati knowing they would respect her wishes of leaving the house as she had left it. Mrs. Clay's husband and Mrs. Fowlkes friend, Hunter McGuire Clay, was then a member of the society and suggested to Mrs. Fowlkes that she leave it to them as a headquarters. She wanted to find a beneficiary other than the Telfair, which had received houses from other estates, who would maintain the house, and Mr. Clay suggested that the Society of the Cincinnati could oblige. Consequently, not only did she leave them the house, she left them her rental properties in order to earn income for the maintenance of the residence (Will, Item X). Currently, Col. Harper is a member of the society as well, but he did not join until after her death.

84 See Appendix A, p. xiii for picture.

85 "Organize to Save Old Landmarks," Savannah Morning News, 14 Nov., 1939, sec. ?, p. ?, col. ?; clipping found in Vertical Files, s.v. Societies & Clubs - Society for the Preservation of Savannah Landmarks, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. Other articles from this file were useful as well.

86 Hiss, Transcription of taped interview of Walter C. Hartridge, p. 1-3, Box 65, Folder 1209, Walter C. Hartridge Papers, s.v. Historic Savannah Foundation, Manuscript Collection 1349, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.
homes in what was designated in 1967 as the Historic District of Savannah. However, it was from the late 1950s until the early 1970s that she was most involved in buying, restoring, and either renting or selling historic properties. In this interim she was running antique shops as well, which often were located in structures that she had saved. In fact, the first building she bought after her Barnard Street residence was the eastern portion of Lot 25, Brown Ward, which is 18 W. Hull Street.87 This three-story townhome was the location of her first antique shop, which was opened in 1947, four years after she purchased it.88,89 Subsequent locations of her antique shops were 6 E. Liberty St., 124 Oglethorpe Ave. and 326 Bull St.,90 the latter two being homes she restored. Mrs. Fowlkes kept an antique shop or two opened from 1947 until 1973 or ’74, when she retires from the antique business.91 Notably then, her restoration and antique collecting were concurrent.92

To provide her shops with antiques, she made biannual trips to England to buy goods.93 One of these trips resulted in her purchasing several street lamps from an English town that removed them to modernize their public lighting. She donated the lamps to the city, and they were installed in Orleans Square across from her home.94

87 Deed Book 380, p. 281, 31 May 1943, Records Room, Superior Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. See Appendix C, p. II for picture.
88 See Appendix C, p.iii for Alida Harper Antiques opening advertisement; original copy was in a collection of clippings Col. Harper shared with me. Most likely it is from the Savannah Morning News, and is dated 8 July 1947.
90 Located by tracing “Alida Harper Antique Shop” and, after 1948, “Alida Harper Fowlkes Antiques” in the Savannah City Directory, for the years1941-74, when she first is listed as retired.
91 Savannah City Directory (1973 & 1974), s.v. Alida harper Fowlkes, alphabetical name listing, p. 210 & 221 respectively. In the first one, there is no store listed for the first time; in the second one, she is actually listed as retired.
92 According to Mrs. Stroup, Alida Fowlkes taught herself about antiques from books and then learned more about them from her frequent visits to England.
94 SMN, 6 Aug. 1956, p. 20, col. 2; SEP, 29 Oct. 1959, p. 43, last two columns. The street lamps currently in the square do not look exactly like the ones pictured in the newspaper articles, so I was not sure if the lamps Mrs. Fowlkes donated still exist.
Including her home and antique stores, Mrs. Fowlkes' accumulated quite an impressive list of significant structures which owe their continued existence to her restoration efforts. They include, in the order in which she purchased them, as follows on the next page.

Looking at the chart on the page above, two rather significant points should be recognized. First of all, Mrs. Harper Fowlkes felt strongly about preserving neighborhoods, not just individual houses. Thus, she bought several homes all in close proximity to each other in an attempt to do this.\(^95\) Her own words best illustrate this philosophy:

> The neighborhood is just as important as the house....When one block has gone down so far, people think the structures should be torn down. The property can come back....All it takes is for one person to go into a block and begin renovating a building. It stimulates others to do the same — and they almost always do. [And she added:] Once the property is modernized, the upkeep is very low. It is a lot cheaper in the long run than buying some of the new homes.\(^96\)

In this philosophy, Mrs. Fowlkes echoes, or perhaps was the precursor to, the Historic Savannah Foundation's goals, which were to promote the rehabilitation of entire neighborhoods as well as the economic benefits of doing so.\(^97\) Consequently, Mrs. Fowlkes was on the this organization's Board of Trustees starting in 1961 and was made an Honorary Trustee in 1967, but she was not an active member. Instead, she simply did things on her own, which, in the end, supported the efforts of the Foundation. Her work in the early years, before restoration and preservation was a movement in Savannah, made Historic Savannah’s goals possible because she proved that restoration was economically viable as well as profitable, both for the city and the investor. Walter C. Hartridge, one time President of the foundation, recognizes

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\(^95\) See Appendix C, p.x for map of properties in Historic District.


\(^97\) Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>Lot/Ward</th>
<th>Date of Purchase/Sale</th>
<th>Price Bought/Sold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>326 Bull</td>
<td>Lot 22/Jackson</td>
<td>3 Dec. 1956/ 9 Sep. 1975</td>
<td>$29,700**/$141K*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 E. Macon</td>
<td>Pt. E 1/2 of Lot 21/Jasper</td>
<td>10 May 1961/15 May 1975</td>
<td>$15.5K/$42.6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. E. Macon</td>
<td>Pt. E 1/2 of Lot 21/Jasper</td>
<td>10 May 1961/1 May 1977</td>
<td>with 22/$67.5K*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122-24 W. Ogle</td>
<td>W1/2 Lot 7,Belitha Ty/H’cote</td>
<td>31 May 1961/13 Apr. 1973</td>
<td>$1.1K**/$96K*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 W. Perry</td>
<td>Lot 31/Jackson</td>
<td>31 Mar. 1964/16 Mar. 1967</td>
<td>$11,550**/$41.9K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113 W. Perry</td>
<td>Pt. E1/2 of Lot 35/Jackson</td>
<td>4 Oct. 1962/ 7**</td>
<td>$6,050*/ 7**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: * Price estimated from amount of transfer tax paid (10% of total cost)
** Researcher error; I did not look at the right warranty deed for this property.

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98 Deed Book 34 K, p. 463; Deed Book 34 L,p. 336, Records Room, Superior Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA. See Appendix C, p. I for picture.
103 Deed Book 78C, p. 55; Deed Book 102C, p. 279,Superior Ct., Chat.Co. See Appendix C, p. vi for picture.
104 Deed Book 85V, p. 509; Deed Book 93H, p. 481, Superior Ct., Chat. Co. The last deed is to condemn this house; I was not able to complete the story behind it, but I am fairly sure the house was condemned, then repurchased cheaply by the Historic Savannah Foundation and moved to 404 E. Bryan St., where it stands now, to make way for the Civic Center. There are slides with the City Preservation Officer (Beth Reiter) showing the house being moved, but they are not labeled or dated. Another interesting point is that some places this house is referred to as the Meldrim House and other places as the Eppinger House. With all these unknowns, it would prove interesting to research the history, but I didn’t have time. See Appendix C, p. vii for picture.
107 Deed Book 81Q, p. 585; Deed Book , Superior Ct., Chat. Co. See ” above. See Appendix C, p. ix for picture.
Mrs. Fowlkes for her groundbreaking efforts:

There were a number of individuals who were pioneers in this field who had been buying houses and restoring them here and there. I can name two outstanding persons who come to mind: Mrs. Lindsey P. Henderson and Mrs. Aletta (Alida) Harper Fowlkes. Both of these ladies were in the antique business, and somehow an interest in antiques in Savannah has always found a complement in the restoration of old houses.\textsuperscript{108}

She is certainly proof of that.

Closely related to the economics of preservation is the second point realized from the compilation of information above. Mrs. Fowlkes made no modest fortune on the homes she resold; usually she sold them for at least twice what she paid for them, and sometimes many times more. Consequently, Mrs. Fowlkes was not buying old houses just to restore them: she also wanted to make money. And, as the numbers prove, she was an extremely successful real estate investor. More than likely this motivation for profit was something she felt no need to publicize, for all the newspaper reports focus on her restoration work and its benefits. Nonetheless, the motivation is obvious from the figures above.

Ironically, her success built for her a reasonable estate that most people during her time had no idea she had accumulated. Colonel Harper, Mrs. Stroup, and Mrs. Clay all commented that Alida Harper Fowlkes has never been given the credit she is due for her part in encouraging restorations and stimulating the rebirth of neighborhoods because no one knew exactly what she was up to. It was taken for granted that she was a shrewd, demanding business woman,\textsuperscript{109} but the extent of her properties was just not common knowledge. Proof of this lies in the fact that Mrs. Harper owned a great deal of property outside of the Historic District for which she was

\textsuperscript{108} Hiss, Typed transcription of oral interview with Walter C. Hartridge, p. 1-2, Box 65, Folder 1209, 28 Sept. 1965, Walter C. Hartridge Papers, Manuscript Collection 1349, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.

\textsuperscript{109} Asserted by Col. Harper, Mrs. Stroup, and Mrs. Clay in their respective interviews that Mrs. Fowlkes had a reputation for being extremely demanding of the work crews she hired, sometimes making them redo projects several times until they met her high expectations.
seldom if ever recognized publicly as the owner or developer. The properties included Garmany Lane Subdivision, an area she planned to develop which is adjacent to Grimball Point Subdivision on the Isle of Hope. She also owned property at Tybee, the Landings, Lincoln Heights Subdivision, Rio Vista Subdivision, and in Beaufort, South Carolina. Notably, these properties were not small, but rather choice land that was ripe for development. Unfortunately, her involvement with this real estate was discovered in the last week of research, which had followed the lead of the newspapers and focused on only her ownership of historic buildings. Likewise, the extent of her involvement in these other real estate investments was not determined for this paper; however, Appendix C, p. xii-xv illustrates these other properties she at one time owned.\textsuperscript{110}

Another Side
Alida Harper Fowlkes as Philanthropist

There was another side to Mrs. Fowlkes, the investor, business woman. In fact, her brother and Mrs. Clay made a point of telling about her “generous nature.”

Colonel Harper mentioned an example of Mrs. Fowlkes’ philanthropy. In September of 1947, during World War II, on one of her regular trips to England, she delivered clothing to London for a friend to distribute to those in need for the upcoming winter.

Mrs. Fowlkes invited other Savannahians to join her by donating clothing.\textsuperscript{111}

Colonel Harper and Mrs. Clay mentioned several other examples of Mrs. Fowlkes’ charity: she sent clothes to an orphanage in Nepal after she and her brother

\textsuperscript{110} There is a sizable number of deeds that I was not able to review to learn the details of property purchases and sales in these subdivisions. For easier reference, refer to the list on the back of each map in Appendix C, p. xi-xiv for all deeds discovered that referred to that particular subdivision. All deeds are located at the Superior Court of Chatham County, Savannah, GA.

\textsuperscript{111} Col. Harper mentioned this story during his interview; it is corroborated in SMN, 5 Sept. 1947, sec. ?, p. ?, col. ? This clipping was found in the following: Walter C. Hartridge, “Genealogies,” Box 117, Folder 2152, s.v. William Law, Manuscript Collection 1349, Walter C. Hartridge Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.
visited there, donated money to local projects to get them started, and took in a Vietnamese family who had immigrated to this country and allowing them a "free run" at J.C. Penney to buy whatever they needed. ¹¹² Though all of these stories did not get publicity in the newspapers it can be surmised that Mrs. Fowlkes was a philanthropist - that her concern for society went beyond restoring old buildings and neighborhoods to humanity itself.

Conclusion

Alida Harper Fowlkes was a reserved woman who garnered the respect of many in this town, including Walther C. Hartridge, Mrs. Clay, Mrs. Stroup, and her brother. Though some people may not have agreed with her convictions or values or were frustrated with her expectations of perfection, it cannot be denied that she had an immense impact on the state of historic preservation in downtown Savannah. She is not unique in that sense. In the 1950s there was a great revival of preservation efforts in the United States in the post-war years that ran simultaneously to and in an effort to combat migration to suburbia and urban renewal development. Furthermore, those who were involved in these preservation movements often focused on the heritage of their own ancestors, particularly as they saw it being rapidly bulldozed for new developments. ¹¹³ Mrs. Fowlkes was part of this movement in Savannah; she was definitely concerned with preserving the heritage of people that had helped settle Savannah, people who were her ancestors’ peers. But that does not negate her achievements. At least ten historic homes in Savannah still stand today because she

bought and restored them. As William Summer Appleton and The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities did for Boston circa 1910, Alida Harper Fowlkes did for Savannah. Like Appleton, “a pioneer in preservation economics” who “encouraged leasing of...properties to maintain traditional uses in neighborhoods and to keep buildings occupied with a minimum of fuss and bother,”\textsuperscript{114} she, by her own example, was a persuasive contender for the economic benefits of restoring historic buildings. The work she and other founders of the Historic Savannah Foundation accomplished paved the way for the city’s current booming tourism industry. Whether she did it for her own profit or for the general welfare of the community, or both, she made great strides in awakening Savannah to its cultural heritage, a consciousness that seemed to be innate to her.

Alida Harper Fowlkes did all of this despite a painful physical challenge that was never relieved, this nation’s worst depression, and World War II, just to name a few of the obstacles she faced. She was determined enough to get beyond such troubles and still reach her goals. And it probably all began for her with her profound dedication to her own family heritage.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 183.
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| 49J, p. 215 | 91W, p. 201, 305 |
| 55X, p. 356 | 92B, p. 515 |
| 66B, p. 247, 332 | 93H, p. 481 |
| 77U, p. 39, 88 | 93J, p. 165, 269 |
| 78C, p. 55, 154 | 95R, p. 225 |
| 80V, p. 359 | 96X, p. 501 |
| 81Q, p. 585 | 97Y, p. 13, 83, 123 |
| 81R, p. 44 | 102B, p. 808 |
| 83D, p. 596 | 102C, p. 279 |
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A PARTIAL LIST OF FAMILY PIECES WITH THEIR DATES AND ORIGINS

The following family pieces are being kept by my Brother, WILLIAM EDWARD HARPER, and myself in memory of our parents to be kept in the house for use and never to be sold or disposed of in any way:

I. American Sheraton dining room table, Circa 1820, owned by Judge William Law.

II. Tall Porcelain white and gold chocolate pot given to my father by his cousin, Virginia Whitehead Glover - was my great grandfather William Harper's of Augusta, Circa 1815 - French.

III. Brass fender and large andirons in dining room fireplace (originally owned by the above William Harper of Augusta).

IV. Sheffield Tantalus with three glass bottles, owned by Judge William Law.


VI. American Empire Sideboard with scroll feet, Circa 1840, brought by my parents when married from house on northwest corner of State and Bull Streets.

VII. American Empire Sideboard with claw feet. Came from Judge Law's estate.

VIII. My parent's Victoria sofa, located on the second floor of my home, which may be sold.

IX. Large American Empire mahogany bureau with swinging mirror and black marble top - originally William Harper's of Augusta, Ga.

X. Low four-poster bed - American around 1845 - from Judge Law's summer home in Clarksville, Georgia.

XI. Six (6) American mahogany fiddle back dining chairs - Circa 1845 from Judge Law's estate.

XII. American mahogany large round pedestal table - Circa 1845 - From Judge Law's estate (now in large second floor guest room).

XIII. Mahogany grandfather clock - Circa 1845 - Purchased from Claudia McAlpin Whitney by me in 1939 - was always in this house.

XIV. Walnut bedside table - with deep drawer (by my bed) Circa 1875 belonged to my grandmother Edmundston (Mrs. Charles).

Alida Harper Fowlkes

Dated: October 8, 1982

Excerpted from Mrs. Fowlkes' will.