



# NEWS from the *David Davis Mansion Foundation*

Fall 2024



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## *Upcoming Fall Events*

Before we know it the grounds of the David Davis Mansion will be covered in snow and we'll be inviting visitors to celebrate the holidays with us at our much-loved holiday events. But before then, we hope you will attend one of our many fun fall programs!

### **Post-Mortem Abraham Lincoln: The Autopsy and Embalming of our Nation's 16<sup>th</sup> President**

*Thursday, October 10: 7-8:30pm*

Join Lee Eutsey as he educates, entertains, and invites participation by Abraham Lincoln enthusiasts of all ages while presenting information that most rarely consider: the people, events, and stories associated with the 16th President's body post-assassination. Researched and told from the point of view of a modern funeral director/embalmer, this is Lincoln history that has rarely been revealed.



Eutsey is a lifelong resident of Central Illinois, a graduate of Worsham College, and a licensed funeral director/embalmer. As a self-taught, self-described Lincoln postmortem historian, he regularly works with recognized Lincoln professionals in the field. His article *The Grim Harvest* was recently published by the Abraham Lincoln Association. He is currently working on his first book about this topic.

This event will take place in the David Davis Mansion barn, at the back of the property. A reception will follow.

Advanced registration is required and is open [HERE](#).

### **Profit Share Day at Bobzay Books**

*Wednesday, October 16: 10am-6pm*



Shop at Bobzay Books in downtown Bloomington on October 16 and help raise money to support the David Davis Mansion Foundation! \$1 of every \$10 spent will be donated back to the foundation to support educational programming and preservation initiatives at the mansion. Can't make it into the store but still want to participate? Purchases made online on October 16 qualify for the fundraiser, and they ship! Shop online by clicking [HERE](#).

### **Evening Behind the Scenes Tour**

*Saturday, October 26: 7-9pm*

Have you ever wondered, "What's up that staircase?" or "What do they keep behind those STAFF ONLY doors?" Have you always wanted to explore the attic or the basement of the David Davis Mansion? Would you really like to know how something specific works inside the mansion? Do you wish you could learn more about the house than is explained during a standard tour? If so, this special behind-the-scenes experience is for you.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to see the mansion like never before! Tickets for this special experience are \$25/each in advance, limited to 20 people, and may be purchased online [HERE](#).

### **Visit Dr. Marcia Young at the 2024 Local Author Fair at the Bloomington Public Library!**

*Saturday, November 9: 1:30-3:30pm*

Dr. Young's book, *The Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn*, will be available for purchase at the event, or you can buy a copy online in advance [HERE](#).

Come meet the author, have all your questions answered about this beautiful book, and have your copy signed. You will also have an opportunity to meet up to 50 other local authors and explore their books!

**Mystery at the Mansion:  
A Masquerade Ball & Murder Mystery Night**  
*Saturday, November 2: 7pm AND 8:30pm*



Back for a third year with an all-new theme and mystery!

Join us for a night of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, live music, fabulous fashions...and a game of intrigue!

Attendees are highly encouraged to wear stunning formal costumes and accessories and beautiful masks of any style. Have fun dressing from any era, as long as your mask coordinates! Don't be afraid to bring on the glitz with feathers, sequins, beads, fur, and more!

Our WhoDunIt actors and mansion staff will be dressed for the occasion, and we hope you will join us! A photo booth with fun props and accessories will be available to capture your look. Be sure to dress your best, because we'll award a prize for the Best Costume!

Enjoy an evening stroll through the mansion while sipping a drink, mingling with friends, and playing a live Clue-inspired murder mystery challenge. You'll be accompanied by live music on our 150-year-old piano throughout the night.

Using a provided game card, you'll hunt down suspects throughout the mansion and attempt to ask all the right questions to find out...WhoDunIt? Put your investigative talents to the test and see if you can be the first to solve the mystery and be declared the evening's Super Sleuth.

This is an event geared towards adults, but we absolutely welcome older, mature teenagers to attend and enjoy the fun!

Tickets sales for this event open on September 15, are \$50 each (and include food and drink) and may be purchased [HERE](#).

**Christmas Barn Sale and Christmas Open House:  
Clover Lawn Museum Shop**  
*Saturday, November 16: 9am-3pm*

Enjoy an opportunity to purchase gently used and vintage Christmas decorations and a few treasures from the David Davis Mansion which are being retired from our holiday collection!

Did you attend this event in 2021 or 2023? This time around, there is **EVEN MORE** holiday decor!

What to expect:

- Evergreen garland, wreaths, swags, and tabletop trees
- Glass, wood, fabric, and ceramic decor featuring Santa, snowmen, nutcrackers, elves, angels, reindeer, and more
- Christmas tree ornaments
- Holiday tablewear, including china, glass, linens, and candles
- Festive pillows, quilts, throws, tree skirts, and rugs

...and more!

This event will take place in the barn of the David Davis Mansion, which is at the back of the property, and will be clearly marked.

Sales are cash or check only, and all proceeds support the education and preservation mission of the David Davis Mansion Foundation.

While you're at the mansion, be sure to stop into the Clover Lawn Museum Shop, which will be holding its annual Christmas Open House. The shop will be newly decorated for the holidays, with beautiful merchandise to celebrate the season and fantastic gifts for everyone on your list. There will also be refreshments!



You can enter the gift shop from the back of the mansion, at a door which will be clearly marked.

*Read more about our upcoming Christmas events on the David Davis Mansion website [HERE](#), as well as in the next issue of our newsletter.*

# *In the History Books*

## **The 2024 Glorious Garden Festival**

The 28th annual Glorious Garden Festival attracted garden lovers of all ages and interests to the David Davis Mansion on July 12 and 13.

Nine private gardens wowed nearly 800 Garden Walk ticket holders with gorgeous mid-summer bloom, water features, pollinator “magnets”, show-stopping containers, and more. Sarah’s Garden enjoyed close to 500 visitors over the two-day festival.

The Garden Fair filled the mansion lawn with over 30 small business vendors offering plants and garden inspired art, crafts, clothing, and more, as well as refreshments.

With a focus on welcoming future gardeners to the festival, Sarah’s Garden featured Bloomington Public Library’s Story Walk to the book “My Garden” by Kevin Henkes. Several community partners offered activities on the lawn for children as live music also greeted festival goers. At the featured gardens, children of all ages eagerly sought to find the scavenger hunt items hidden among the beautiful flowers and plants at each garden.

Our sincere thanks to the local businesses who partnered in the event as Corporate Sponsors, Supporting Sponsors, and Advertisers. The David Davis Mansion Facebook page, [website](#), and Garden Resource Guide shared welcome publicity for vendors, sponsors and advertisers.

Proceeds from this event provides private support for the David Davis Mansion State Historic Site, its educational programming, and its preservation initiatives.

MANY THANKS to those who generously shared their private gardens for this year’s walk:

- Doug and Gloria Jameson
- Karen Daudelin
- Connie Dearborn
- Mike and Rena Shifflet
- John and Gina Henline
- Barb and Mike Wells
- Jeff Overright
- Todd Reeves

Learn more about what the Glorious Garden Festival funds [HERE](#).

THANKS to the amazing Glorious Garden Festival volunteers who served on the committee, welcomed people at the private gardens, shared the mansion and Sarah’s Garden with visitors, and helped on the mansion lawn during the event.

It’s not too soon to mark your calendars for next year’s Glorious Garden Festival, which will be held on July 11 and 12, 2025!



## *In the History Books:*

- The David Davis Mansion welcomed a few **field trips** (pictured to the right) from local daycares over the summer! Here's a list of who has come to visit us:
  - June 19 and 21: Little Jewels
  - July 26: Lutheran Day School
  - August 8: La Petite Academy
- On June 12 retired mansion site manager Dr. Marcia Young discussed the **history of the restoration of Sarah's Garden** with our garden volunteers. Her presentation included a brief timeline of Sarah Davis' life and her gardens, as well an overview of the surviving original plants. We are so grateful that Marcia still contributes her time and talents to the mansion in a variety of ways: as the author of our sesquicentennial book *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn*, a frequent presenter to our visitors and volunteers, as an important member of our Christmas planning and decorating committee, and more!
- **A Saturday Stroll in Sarah's Garden** welcomed many visitors to the mansion on Saturday, June 15 from 9-10:30am. Sarah's gardeners and other mansion volunteers in historical clothing walked through the garden throughout the morning answering questions while guests discovered what was in bloom and enjoyed the beautiful summer weather. Several people were inspired to buy heirloom seeds of their favorite flowers from the mansion gift shop to plant in their own personal gardens. This is the third year we have offered this event, and it has become increasingly more popular over time!
- Our summer car show series, which included the **Champagne British Car Show** on June 2, the **Antique Auto Show** on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the **Cruise-In at the Mansion** on September 14 has come to a close. We were excited to see car collectors, enthusiasts, and their families at the mansion, viewing all of the beautiful vehicles, enjoying live music and excellent food, and taking tours of the mansion and Sarah's Garden. An extra special treat was a performance of the **33<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Regiment Band Concert** after the August event!



# The Corner Sink: An Artifact Study

By: Raine Bernhard, 2024 Postgraduate Intern



Built in 1872 by the Davis family and currently maintained by the state of Illinois, the David Davis Mansion provides an excellent example of the architecture and values of the Gilded Age. Throughout the house, visitors can see nature motifs, expression of familial values, strict divisions between public and private life, and new technology such as running hot water and heating systems.

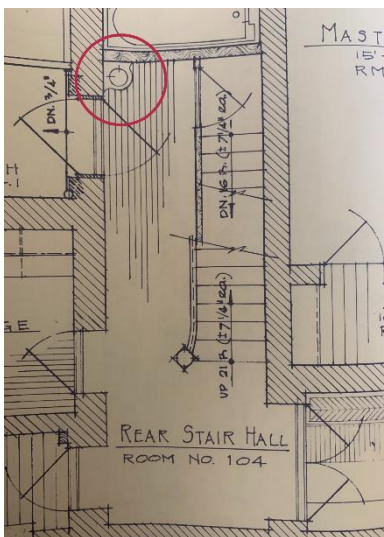
Though the mansion is asymmetrical by design, the house has several odd features, perhaps most notably a step in one of the servants' bedrooms that was not contained in the original floor plans and seems to correct for a building error.<sup>1</sup> Another unconventional feature is the sink in the hallway in the rear of the house. Though this feature may seem strange, at least one other Gilded Age home has a similar set-up (the Ramsey House in St. Paul, Minnesota).



The bowl of the sink and the artificial marble counter was made by L. Waefelaer & Company. The faucets are brass, made by Hayden, Gere, & Company based out of New York.<sup>2</sup> The plumbing in the sink is made of lead, and the outer cabinet is made from walnut. At some point during renovations of the mansion in the early 1900s, the sink became disconnected from the main plumbing line and it remains inoperable to this day.

The blueprints of the mansion originally show the sink as contained in an entirely separate room, seemingly with the sole purpose of housing the sink (the room depicted has no other features). However, this room was never constructed, as the square footage was needed to make room for the lavish master bathroom.<sup>3</sup>

The historic structures report notes that this "small sink [was] located in the Northeast corner and was used by the servants."<sup>4</sup> Since it is in the hallway behind the servant's stairs, it makes sense that servants would more often use this sink as opposed to members of the Davis family or guests. Its location right next to a door leading outside suggests that servants or hired field hands coming into the house were expected to wash their hands prior to entering.



## HANDWASHING AND HYGIENE IN THE PAST

Dating back to ancient Greece, handwashing was a part of religious and ceremonial rituals. However, the practice of handwashing for hygienic purposes only became popular after germ theory and its implications were more widely accepted by the late 19th century.

The predominant theory for much of the 1800s was called miasma theory, in which diseases were caused by poisonous vapors. The research of certain individual doctors and scientists, as well as pressing hygiene concerns during the civil war and during the rapid growth of certain cities helped sway public opinion away from miasma theory and towards germ theory: the idea that certain diseases were caused by microorganisms smaller than anyone could see without a microscope. The initial stages of this research involved making the correlation between dirtiness and disease.

On an individual level, scientists began to study the workings of hospitals in the mid-nineteenth century and discovered that handwashing was linked to better results for

From the top: An image of the corner sink, a detail, and a current floor plan showing the sink's location.

<sup>1</sup> Floorplan, David Davis Mansion.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of work by Hayden, Gere, & Co., see [this 1877 catalog](#) with examples of their products.

<sup>3</sup> David Davis Mansion, Historic Structures Report, III-16.

<sup>4</sup> David Davis Mansion, Historic Structures Report, III-9.

patients. Ignaz Semmelweis and Oliver Wendall Holmes drew conclusions from their respective hospitals in Austria and Boston. In 1847, Semmelweis noticed that the maternal mortality rates were much higher at a hospital where surgeons and students did not wash their hands between performing autopsies and delivering babies. Semmelweis attributed this to “cadaverous particles” and a bad smell, and subsequently recommended that surgeons wash their hands with a chlorinated lime solution. The mortality rates dropped.<sup>5</sup> In 1843, Holmes drew a similar conclusion, saying that doctors were “angels of death” if they did not wash their hands.<sup>6</sup> Despite the evidence, Semmelweis and Holmes faced backlash and mocking for their beliefs. The doctors at Semmelweis’s hospital pushed back and eventually stopped their handwashing and Semmelweis himself was fired.<sup>7</sup> Neither Semmelweis’s nor Holmes’s work would gain traction until Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch made their contributions to the acceptance of germ theory in the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, these early medical studies provided a basis for germ theory and understanding the importance of handwashing.



An illustration of Ignaz Semmelweis washing his hands in chlorinated lime water before operating on a patient.

On a much wider scale, the Civil War had a huge impact on the way that people spoke about and understood sanitation. About twice as many soldiers died from disease and complications from their injuries than from the fighting itself. There were few doctors at the start of the war (there were only six medical schools in the US at the time), and during the war the number of doctors grew by necessity. These doctors lacked medical expertise on the battlefield and had to adapt to the conditions, with mixed success. Medicines such as quinine, morphine, and chloroform were useful; other remedies contained poisons like arsenic or mercury. Doctors also pioneered new surgical techniques at this time, though infection during or after surgery was a constant risk.

The conditions of the soldiers’ camps made ideal environments for disease. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of immunity to disease, inadequate screening procedures for recruits, and poor diet and sleep contributed to the spread of illness. Malaria, yellow fever, typhoid, dysentery, and measles all affected union and confederate armies alike. Eventually, regulations were passed that included requirements for

Summary of Losses During the War of the Rebellion

STATES AND TERRITORIES.	Killed and Mortally Wounded.	Died of Disease.	Died as Prisoners of War.	Deaths from Accident, etc.	Deaths, All Causes Except Battle.	Total Deaths.
Alabama.....	50	228	22	5	40	345
Arkansas.....	305	1,254	8	25	121	1,713
California.....	108	344	.....	62	59	573
Colorado.....	153	120	.....	25	25	323
Connecticut.....	1,047	2,342	526	101	238	5,264
Delaware.....	2	6	.....	.....	.....	8
District of Columbia.....	383	356	75	21	47	882
Florida.....	41	150	44	10	45	290
Georgia.....	18	189	.....	.....	8	215
Illinois.....	13	.....	.....	.....	2	15
Indiana.....	9,884	21,065	1,721	1,028	1,126	34,834
Iowa.....	7,243	16,663	1,152	791	854	26,672
Kansas.....	3,540	8,498	515	227	221	13,001
Kentucky.....	757	1,538	36	104	115	2,630
Louisiana.....	2,478	6,383	860	454	599	10,774
Maine.....	214	624	15	26	56	945
Maryland.....	3,184	5,257	541	118	298	9,393
Massachusetts.....	909	1,160	647	98	168	2,982
Michigan.....	6,115	5,630	1,483	257	557	13,942
Minnesota.....	4,448	8,269	1,268	339	429	14,753
Mississippi.....	626	1,677	169	43	79	2,584
Missouri.....	3	66	.....	1	.....	78
Montana.....	3,317	9,243	225	487	613	13,886
Nebraska.....	35	159	1	23	21	239
Nevada.....	2	29	.....	1	.....	31
New Hampshire.....	1,903	2,427	294	76	152	4,882
New Jersey.....	2,473	2,413	419	134	208	5,754
New Mexico.....	73	144	.....	19	41	277
New York.....	10,085	19,836	4,710	914	1,990	46,534
North Carolina.....	43	216	49	3	49	360
Ohio.....	11,388	19,365	2,356	1,168	998	35,475
Oregon.....	11	21	.....	7	6	46
Pennsylvania.....	15,265	11,782	4,119	636	1,381	33,183
Rhode Island.....	460	648	84	69	60	1,321
Tennessee.....	744	4,086	1,150	375	422	6,777
Texas.....	12	101	4	6	21	141
Vermont.....	1,809	2,597	486	70	262	5,224
Virginia.....	10	16	13	2	1	42
Washington.....	.....	12	.....	5	.....	22
West Virginia.....	1,247	1,878	617	150	125	4,017
Wisconsin.....	3,802	7,464	604	212	219	12,301
Indian Nations.....	107	775	.....	10	126	1,018
Regular Army.....	2,283	2,552	540	197	116	5,788
Colored Troops.....	2,894	29,558	88	576	3,621	36,847
Veteran Volunteers.....	1	82	.....	14	9	106
U. S. Volunteers*.....	12	202	.....	11	18	243
U. S. Sharpshooters.....	263	247	25	6	11	552
Veteran Reserve.....	27	1,424	1	134	90	1,672
Generals and Staffs.....	85	142	.....	10	1	239
Miscellaneous—Bands, etc.....	16	200	2	1	13	232
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>110,070</b>	<b>199,720</b>	<b>21,806</b>	<b>9,058</b>	<b>15,814</b>	<b>359,528</b>

\*Ex-Confederates.

*Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (1908) by Frederick H.A. Dyer, showing causes of death for all recorded Union soldiers in the Civil War. Dyer served the Union as a drummer boy before spending some forty years compiling statistics for every Union unit. He remains the most cited Civil War statistician with his exhaustive work still appreciated by many scholars, historians, and authors. How many of these deaths could have been avoided through using hand-washing as a simple hygiene method?

<sup>5</sup> For more about Semmelweis’s work on handwashing, see [this article](#): “Historical perspective on hand hygiene in health care” from the WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Healthcare.

<sup>6</sup> There are numerous forerunners to Semmelweis and Holmes who began to draw the links between cleanliness and health, and [this article](#) gives a good overview of their contributions.

<sup>7</sup> For more about Semmelweis’s work and the resulting backlash, see [“The Doctor Who Championed Hand-Washing and Briefly Saved Lives”](#) from NPR.

<sup>8</sup> Pasteur showed that organisms in the air caused putrefaction and fermentation. Koch discovered the organisms responsible for tuberculosis and cholera. For a brief overview of these contributions, see [“Germ Theory”](#) from Britannica and [“The little-known history of cleanliness and the forgotten pioneers of handwashing”](#) by Peter Poczai and Lazlo Karvalics.

drainage, tent location, refuse burning or burying, cooking, and bathing.

These requirements would later be put into practice in rapidly growing cities in an effort to curb the spread of disease, with Massachusetts establishing the first Board of Health in 1869 and a National Board of Health founded in 1879.<sup>9</sup> Both of these governing bodies only had limited effectiveness at the time.<sup>10</sup> Despite the medical studies in support of germ theory and the Civil War placing an emphasis on sanitation, these ideas about hygiene were slow to be implemented around the United States. Miasma theory still held traction in many areas, and some doctors did not regularly use sterilization processes until the 1900s.

It is important to note that wealthy people during the Gilded Age would likely have been aware of these trends in the medical field. Throughout the nineteenth century, the number of magazines and journals printed for the public grew rapidly. Topics for these publications initially focused on personal improvement, enlightenment, and family entertainment, but expanded to all manner of information, including science and medicine. These journals and magazines provided a space for professionals to highlight new contributions, as well as share their own opinions about developments in medical research. Some articles offered specific medical recommendations geared towards doctors. Others advised the general public about how to keep a clean home.<sup>11</sup> The Davises likely had access to some of these magazines, and may have been influenced by them when designing their new home.

#### THE DAVIS'S HEALTH/UNDERSTANDING OF GERM THEORY

The Davis's attitudes towards health and hygiene are typical of the Gilded Age: a combination of an awareness of the initial stages of germ theory and remnants of early European ideas about miasma theory and humors of the body.

We can tell that the Davises were concerned about their health through their letters to one another. Much of the correspondence between Sarah and David, as well as among their friends, included sections devoted to updates about people's physical well-being: it was just as much news as any other local event. Sarah writes to her cousin that "He [David] took cold in one eye—and the lid is still swollen but he is improving," to briefly share the news of David's ailment.<sup>12</sup> Other issues take the bulk of a letter to describe the news of health (or lack thereof). One of the Judge's friends wrote to David about their mutual friend Lyman:

*"I really think Lyman is in poor health, he cannot endure much hardship takes cold as the weather changes or if he exercises a little more than usual or is out after dark he seems debilitated & weak & rather in low spirits I have had him take about 3 times a day some of Townsends Purifier of the Blood made of Roots & other ingredients—My candid opinion is that he had better close up his business in Bloomington quit store keeping come into york state & buy a Farm in a healthy location &c work some ride on horseback &c &c live plain a change of climate would I think with proper exercise & some stimulating drinks from Roots &c buy such a course he might regain his health..."<sup>13</sup>*

The author goes on to describe land for sale and the workings of his friend's farm in the same letter, but clearly had a strong opinion about Lyman's health and what he ought to be doing better. By reading these letters, we can more closely examine the Davis's attitudes towards health and well-being.

The Davises harbored popular beliefs about imbalanced humors in the body causing sickness. In 1847, Sarah wrote to David that she had "a pain in my heels just where they touch the floor—the pain goes up the back and then makes me sick at the stomach—I think it is caused by bile—you know Hannah More thought sin and bile were two great sources of evil in the world."<sup>14</sup> Sarah specifically attributes her illness to imbalanced bile, rather than any other cause.

The Davises also wrote about the correlation between the air or miasma and health. In fact, Sarah took several trips out of central Illinois when she was ill with the idea that the fresh air would help her. Her father William Perrin Walker shows

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on sanitation during the Civil War, see Robert F. Reilly's article "[Medical and surgical care during the American Civil War, 1861–1865](#)"

<sup>10</sup> See "[200 Years of American Medicine \(1776-1976\)](#)" for an overview of American medicine innovation, as well as a discussion of early public health initiatives.

<sup>11</sup> For information about the rapid growth of magazines and periodicals during the Gilded Age, see "[History of Publishing](#)" from Britannica. The sections about women's magazines and literary and scientific magazines are most relevant.

<sup>12</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1871-12-26 Bloomington IL](#).

<sup>13</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1852-09-19 Sullivan NY](#).

<sup>14</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1847-07-28 Glendale CT](#).

these beliefs in an update to David: “Sarah was evidently improved & benefitted by her Sea location & we have great hopes she will fully recover her health—though she was decidedly gaining before she left home—all my fears are, that the sea air will be too bracing for her, to bring on her cough...”<sup>15</sup>

However, the Davises also subscribed to more recently emerging ideas about medicine and germ theory. Sarah recognized the potential for contagious disease when she wrote in a letter to David, “Mary R had symptoms of measles if not the disease (...) it would be astonishing if we do not get them.”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, David wrote to Sarah about the importance of cleanliness in the home for good health: “there is nothing like white washing inside & outside for purification & health. The more chloride of lime that is thrown about the better.”<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that the Davises thought about their health on a regular basis, and it would make sense that they designed their home with amenities that took their health into consideration (i.e., indoor plumbing, sinks for handwashing, transom windows to better control climate, etc.).

#### WHO USED THE CORNER SINK

The Davises had three full time servants: a maid, a cook, and a handyman/carriage driver that all lived in the mansion and its associated buildings. For other work, domestic or agricultural, the Davises hired laborers specifically for the task at hand. This made more sense for the Davises than hiring a full permanent staff, particularly as David Davis was gone to Washington DC for large stretches of time and Sarah would leave to visit her family for months at a time.

While it’s difficult to know the personal details of many of these hired servants, Sarah’s letters to David illuminate how the hired servants were involved in the everyday functioning of the mansion. Sarah often wrote about her garden, and the instructions she gave to the many seasonal workers, including Joe, Thomas, Pat, Mike, and John, among others. Additionally, Sarah wrote about the assistance she provided to these workers, sharing that she cooked food for them to receive from the rear of the mansion (kitchen).<sup>18</sup> Presumably, the servants would wash their hands in the corner sink before going to the kitchen for food.



A view of the corner sink, showing its location, just inside an exterior door, and in close proximity to the kitchen.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The Davises built their mansion in 1872, just after the Civil War and right when miasma theory was beginning to give way to germ theory. The Davises included a sink in their own bathroom, as well as in each of their guest rooms, ensuring that their visitors had access to this amenity. They also built the sink in the back hallway for servants' use. The Davises were clearly concerned with the health of not only their immediate family, but also their wider social circle. The sinks in the mansion show the Davises attitude towards health concerns, as well as the broader movement during the Gilded Age towards personal hygiene and handwashing.



A sink in a bedroom located in the servant’s quarters (*left*) and a sink in the master bath (*right*). The David Davis Mansion has a total of seven bedrooms. The six bedrooms on the second floor each have their own sink for private use. In addition, there is a sink in the public second floor bathroom, one in the bathroom attached to the first floor master bedroom, and the corner sink mentioned in this paper, totaling nine sinks inside the mansion which were used strictly for hygiene purposes. Cleanliness was clearly a priority for this Gilded Age family.



<sup>15</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1847-09-03 Lenox MA](#).

<sup>16</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1852-05-05 Bloomington IL](#).

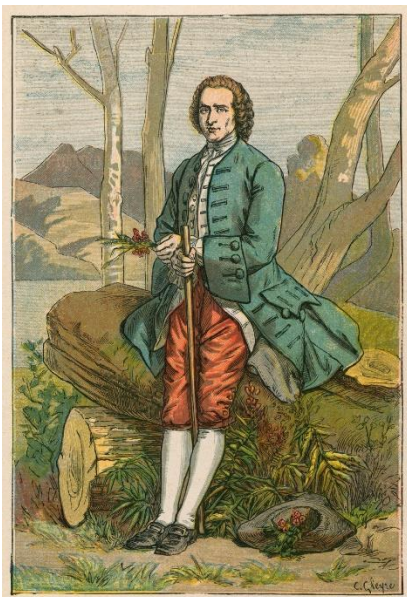
<sup>17</sup> Davis Family Papers, [1849-05-18 Paris IL](#).

<sup>18</sup> Davis Family Papers, 1872-04-14, Bloomington, IL. Print, from Red Binder in DDM visitor’s center.

## Update: An Artifact Returns Home

In the Summer 2024 newsletter we announced that an artifact, which was pictured in the background on one page of our sesquicentennial book *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn* was being donated back to the mansion by a member of the family: Diane Davis Peterson, the great-great-great granddaughter of David and Sarah Davis.

The artifact arrived at the mansion in December of 2023 and was transported to LYLC Studio in St. Louis, MO in May of 2024 to be studied by a conservator to learn more about it and assess it for repair. We heard back from the conservator in August, and the artifact will now undergo a repair procedure to make it stable and beautiful again, and ready to be put back on display.



So, let's learn a little bit more about it!

The artifact that has been returned to the mansion is a French figural mantel clock featuring a sculptural representation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau and a portrait medallion of a woman who is believed to be

Francoise-Louise de Warens, Rousseau's tutor and partner. Its markings and other clock examples of the time indicate that it was crafted in 1872 by Phillip H. Mourey, a well-known French sculptor that worked with French clockmakers.

The clock encasement is gold cast metal, sits on an alabaster base, and is enclosed under a glass dome.

We hope to have an opportunity to show it to our visitors, back in its original home, in a couple of months!

Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for an upcoming event which will include an unveiling and lecture.



## It's About Our People

The David Davis Mansion warmly welcomes new member Moni Adamson of Hesperia, California!

Sadly, we lost long time dedicated members Judith Stone and Nancy Westerfield, both of Bloomington, in the first part of the year. We are so grateful to both of them for sharing their lives with us and for their years of generously supporting the foundation.

Our interesting, diverse, and generous group of members come from far and wide, including La Mesa, CA; Berthoud, CO; Arlington, TX; Owasso and Edmond, OK; Hillsboro and Jefferson City, MO; Bonita Springs and Ponte Vedra, FL; Northampton, MA; Fishers and Indianapolis, IN; Weaverville, NC; Mexico, NY; and Batavia, Bloomington, Carlock, Champaign, Chicago, Clinton, Danvers, Decatur, Downs, Dwight, El Paso, Eureka, Gridley, Heyworth, Hudson, Lexington, LeRoy, Lindenhurst, Normal, Peoria, Springfield, Towanda, and Waynesville, IL.

Are you interested in joining the David Davis Mansion Foundation or just need to renew your membership? Visit us online [HERE](#) or pick up an envelope at the David Davis Mansion visitors center.

## Have You Taken Our Outdoor Tour?

There are currently 4 View of the Past stations placed in the following areas:

- At the mansion's entrance
- In front of Sarah's Garden
- Facing the mansion from the southeast
- Looking towards the barns and foaling shed



Each station contains a QR Code which you can scan to be directed to a page on our website which contains historic photos of that exact view, from another time. We hope you will enjoy this opportunity to see the mansion from a new perspective!

## The State of the Mansion

We've had a change of personnel at the IDNR in Springfield, so we're currently working on getting some big projects going. In the mean-time we are in the process of replacing all the boards around the garden beds. It's slow going, as we have to be very careful due to the sprinkler system, but we'll hopefully have it finished by the end of November. If anyone with carpentry skills would like to give us a hand, we are working on them Wednesday-Friday from 9am-noon, weather permitting



## Mark Your Calendars

Check our website calendar [HERE](#) and our Facebook page [HERE](#) for details on these and other events.

### Upcoming Events at the David Davis Mansion

October 10

Post-Mortem Abraham Lincoln: The Autopsy and Embalming of our Nation's 16<sup>th</sup> President\*

October 16

Profit Share Day at Bobzay Books in Bloomington

October 26

Evening Behind the Scenes Tour\*

November 2

Mystery at the Mansion\*

November 9

Visit Dr. Marcia Young at the 2024 Local Author Fair at the Bloomington Public Library

November 16

Christmas Open House: Clover Lawn Museum Shop and Christmas Barn Sale

December 1-10

Christmas Pie Sale (Online ordering)

December 4

Foundation Christmas Open House

December 14

Christmas at the Mansions

December 19-21

Christmas Pie Sale (Pick-Up)

December 20-21

A Gilded Age Christmas with Santa

\* Advanced registration required.

## A New Tree

On your next visit, be sure to take note of our new Sugar Maple, generously provided by memorial gifts given in the name of Robin VanDermay-Kirkham, long-time friend of the mansion.



## Sharing the Bounty of Sarah's Garden

Visitors to our 1872 Sarah's Garden admire the California poppy, sunflower, larkspur, zinnia, petunia, and other annuals in full summer bloom.



Many ask if seeds are available for those beauties. The answer is YES, the Mansion's Clover Lawn Gift Shop offers packages of seed harvested from Sarah's Garden for just \$3 each. A perfect gift or stocking stuffer for your favorite gardener or the grandchild interested in how plants grow.

Sarah's Garden Master Gardeners and Community Volunteers are now busy harvesting, cleaning and storing seeds before celebrating the end of gardening season with a Seed Packaging Party. That seed serves several purposes in addition to stocking the Clover Lawn Gift Shop.

Some of this season's seed is kept in "Off-Site Reserve" just in case of future crop failure - specifically in the home refrigerators of 3 volunteers.

Seed is packaged for early spring delivery to local garden centers who grow it for planting into Sarah's Garden in mid-May - for 2024, Wendell Niepagen Greenhouses and Garden Center and AB Hatchery volunteered as growers. Zinnia and larkspur seed heads were used to teach Bloomington Farmers Market visitors about Sarah's Garden and seed harvest at a late August McLean County Master Gardener booth. And "Seeds" are one of the topics included in the fall "Better Home and Garden" programs offered to area 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes at the mansion.

Thanks to our Sarah's Gardeners for their amazing work in preserving the garden, sharing it with visitors, and teaching so many about historic gardens and heirloom plants. Stop by the garden at all mansion events and any Tuesday through Friday morning this fall between 9-11 am when the gardeners are working.

**Davis Mansion Foundation**  
a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization

**President: Kathe Conley**  
**Executive Director: Sheri Brownfield**  
**Program Coordinator: Adrienne Huffman**



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Hours: Wednesday - Saturday: 9am - 3:30pm

*I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. – Abraham Lincoln*