



NEWS from the *David Davis Mansion Foundation*

Winter 2024



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Bringing The “Pinks” Back to Sarah’s Garden



August 2, 1861
Sarah Walker Davis to
her sister Francis
“Fanny” Walker Williams:

*“You spoke of sending me
some slips of your pinks –
If you think they will live
this hot weather – till they
reach me – I shall be glad
to have them.”*

September 11, 1861
Sarah Walker Davis to her son George Perrin Davis:

*“The pink slips Annt Fanny sent are now in the earth and
look fresh--I hope some of them will grow.”*

While we don’t know if the “pinks” Sarah Davis received from her sister in Massachusetts survived the 1861 Illinois winter, we do know hardy pinks appeared on the 1927-28 map of Sarah’s Garden drawn by her grandson, David Davis III. The name “pinks” is a common name of cottage pinks, dianthus, whose characteristic ragged petals resemble the edges of fabric cut with pinking shears.

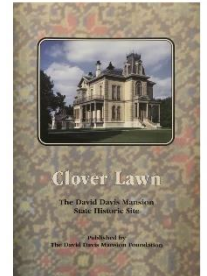
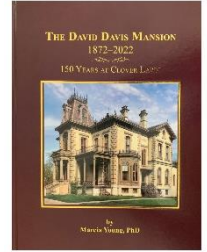
During the restoration, the beloved “pinks” were brought back into Sarah’s Garden with the 2001 purchase of an heirloom Dianthus plumarius ‘Gloriosa’ from the Shop at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Through the years, the low-growing broadleaf evergreen perennial with blue-gray foliage and silvery pink flowers with a raspberry-colored splotch flourished. The stand was expanded through layering and division propagation methods. In recent years, the plants languished in a couple of heavy snow winters; even the off-site reserve plants kept in a volunteer’s garden failed.

The “pinks” are coming back to Sarah’s Garden! While the Shop at Monticello no longer offers them, Dianthus plumarius ‘Gloriosa’ acquired from an heirloom nursery in Oregon in 2023 are establishing well in Sarah’s Garden. A few more plants are on order to arrive in spring 2025. Sarah’s Gardeners are providing the well-drained and gritty soil conditions preferred by the dianthus, taking care to not let winter snow remain on the crowns of the plants. Next spring when you visit Sarah’s Garden, be sure to look for the “pinks”.

A Holiday Sale on Mansion Books!

Until January 1st, enjoy these discounts in the Clover Lawn Museum Shop:

- **50% OFF** our 192-page hardback sesquicentennial book, *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn*. Originally \$100, you can purchase it for limited time for only \$50! This sale is available in person, or on our giftshop website by clicking [HERE](#).
- **BUY ONE, GET ONE!** Buy our 32-page paperback edition of *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn* for \$8.50, get our older, but still fantastic 32-page paperback, *Clover Lawn*, FREE. This sale is only available in person.



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

December 11
Annual Christmas Party: Members and Volunteers

December 14
Christmas at the Mansions

December 20-21
A Gilded Age Christmas...with Santa!

February 8
Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday
Celebration

April 12
Spring Festival and Egg Hunt

May 17
Family Day at the Mansion





Celebrate the Holidays with the David Davis Mansion!

Decorating Has Begun!

The decorating committee has been hard at work, making the David Davis Mansion beautiful for Christmas!

Come enjoy the spirit of the season at one of the following events:

Daily Christmas Tours

During the month of December our regular daily tours become Christmas Tours! Come visit us Wednesday-Saturday from 9am-3:30pm, with tours beginning at ten minutes past the top of each hour.

Christmas Pie Fundraiser



Unfortunately, our 3rd annual Christmas Pie Fundraiser, featuring incredibly delicious pies from our friends at Busy Corner in Goodfield has been **cancelled**.

The restaurant experienced a fire on November 13 and will be temporarily closed for repair and restoration until at least January 1st. We wish them well in their efforts to rebuild and hope we can have our Christmas Pie Fundraiser again in 2025!

Christmas Open House: Foundation Members and Volunteers Wednesday, December 11: 4:30-6pm



Join us for a special preview of the David Davis Mansion's beautiful Christmas décor and an opportunity to catch up with friends! There will be music and refreshments, and the Clover Lawn Museum Shop will also be open to use

your 20% member discount. Please **RSVP** to programming@daviddavis mansion.org by December 9 if you would like to attend.

Not a member yet? You can become one by clicking [HERE](#) today!

Christmas at the Mansions Saturday, December 14: 2-7pm

Experience a special self-guided tour of the David Davis Mansion and Ewing Manor, decorated in period Christmas finery! Take in the architecture, the historic holiday postcard settings, and hosts dressed in period costumes as you walk back in time to the late 1800s

and early 1900s. Music and other surprises will complement your tour!

Advance tickets are \$15 each, cash or check, and can be purchased from November 1 through December 12 at the following Bloomington-Normal, IL locations: AB Hatchery and Garden Center, Casey's Garden Shop and Florist, and Hy-Vee Market, or online for \$16 each by clicking [HERE](#).

Please note that advanced tickets may NOT be purchased at the David Davis Mansion or Ewing Manor.

Same day tickets will be \$20 each, cash or check, and available only at the front door of the David Davis Mansion or Ewing Manor during the hours of the event. Tickets are available only until sold out and are non-refundable.

What's New in 2024?

Ewing Manor: In celebration of the 100th anniversary of a world tour taken from September 1924 to October 1925 by the Ewing family, each room in Ewing Manor will be decorated to represent one of the 22 countries the Ewings visited. The display will feature photos that were taken, artifacts that were purchased, and the holiday traditions celebrated in these areas of the world.

David Davis Mansion: In addition to displaying much-loved Gilded Age Christmas decorations which have become community favorites, the David Davis Mansion will also feature four new must-see decorative elements: a gleaming all-gold tree in the front hall which highlights the opulence of the era, a nature themed tree and display in the dining room, an all-floral tree which is inspired by the rich botanical variety and lush color of Sarah Davis' historic 1872 heirloom garden, and an exhibit which focuses on a Christmas visit by Sarah's older sister Lucy Rockwell, both in the parlor chamber.

A Gilded Age Christmas...with Santa! Friday, Dec. 20 & Saturday, Dec. 21: 5-7pm

Another great opportunity to walk through the David Davis Mansion at night, enjoying decorations, costumed hosts, and Christmas music! This event will also feature visits with a Victorian Santa, and you are welcome to take all the photos you wish with your own camera. This would be a great chance for your kids/grandkids to tell Kris Kringle what they'd like to have for Christmas, take a nice family photo, or even just capture a magical moment with your children.

Tickets are \$10 per adult at the front door of the mansion (kids are free!) on the night of the event, cash or check only. We hope you will join us for this family friendly program!

Voices from the Past: Life with Children is Never Dull, Even in the 1840's

By: DDMF Researcher Pat Schley

On October 27, 1846, ten-month-old Mercer Davis, the 2nd surviving child and son of David and Sarah Davis, died unexpectedly just after both Sarah and their older son, George Perrin Davis, age 4, had also been seriously ill. As a result, Sarah's recovery from both her illness and the death of their beloved younger son had been slow.

In the spring of 1847, with her husband's blessing, Sarah and nearly 5-year-old George made the long journey to her childhood home in Lenox, Massachusetts.

David Davis traveled out to Lenox for a visit at Christmas in 1847. The original plan had been for Sarah and George to travel back to Illinois with him after Christmas but it was decided that Sarah should stay through the summer of 1848 in order to take the sea air again during the summer, and to be sure that she was completely cured. As a result, by the time that George and Sarah returned to Bloomington that fall they had been back East for nearly a year and a half!

Happily for us, this meant that there was much correspondence between Sarah and her husband during that time. From it, we are able to get a detailed picture of what life was like for her as she navigated through "single" motherhood to a 5 to 6-year-old rambunctious son; through misbehavior, illness, and all the myriad decisions and mixed feelings that come with parenthood.



The Walker home in Lenox, MA where Sarah grew up and where she and George were staying with her parents, in 1847-48.

Here are some of the events that occurred, in the words of Sarah Davis herself:

"George is wild and needs control...."

-- Buffalo NY, June 18, 1847 Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

One of the things that Sarah needed to do was go to the Connecticut seashore, at Guilford CT. It was believed that the sea air was very beneficial to recovery from illness. She would go with various of her sisters and/or some friends. George would stay with Sarah's parents and her older brother, George Walker, who lived with them:

"George says I must not go to the seashore- for he fears I shall be drowned ... George snores finely to night..."

-- Lenox MA, July 7, 1847 Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"[George] was very sleepy and good to night when I put him to bed. I told him to kiss the one he loved and he kissed me and said there was another he loved but he could not kiss him, and that was Father. I said to him kiss me for him then -O said he that kiss was for him, and you may have half of it -He wishes to see you and loves you dearly -"

-- Lenox MA, July 12, 1847 Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"Georgie is here with me - He looks quite well in his new plaid cotton pants - and his pretty green and white aprons- trimmed with white braid - He has a new pair of white pants which he will wear tomorrow if the air is warm - His behavior is tolerable...- except when he is at the table - He is rather noisy and impatient sometimes then-...."

-- Glen Dale CT, July 28, 1847 Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George ... declares he did not send that half kiss to you - He seemed quite mortified when I told him I had sent it..."

-- Canaan CT, August 13, 1847 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

Botts is a rather mystifying nickname they had for George at this age. Botts is by definition a disease that a horse may develop from the larva of a botfly! I have been unable to find any other more plausible explanations.

“George told Aunt Charlotte [Charlotte Lawrence Adam was married to Sarah Davis’ maternal uncle William Adam of Canaan CT] that Father would kiss Mother a hundred times if he was here – for he had not seen her in a long time – I think Botts is rather mature for his age – don’t you?”

-- Canaan CT, August 18, 1847 (AL h) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

Illinoisans were called ‘Suckers’ or ‘Succers’ because of the movement each spring of the early settlers up the Mississippi to work the lead mines at Galena – comparable to the sucker fish ascending the streams to spawn.



George Perrin Davis as a boy, around 1848-1850. He is about 8 years old here, so around two years has passed since their trip out East.

“Father writes that George is as good a boy as I can wish – but fond of mud and water, which he supposes to be “natural to all born Succers” ...”

-- Guilford CT, September 9, 1847 (AL h) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

“Georgie was glad to see me –threw his arms about me –He is a chip of the old block on both sides–affectionate and resolute in having his own way when he can...”

-- Lenox MA, September 21, 1847 (IHPA) David Davis to Sarah Walker Davis

“George ... is very roguish –yesterday painted the cat and made her jump through a pane of glass–Joe [Schermerhorn, a man of all work who worked for the Walker family for nearly 30 years.] came in to night enquiring for his coat which he left in the waggon [sic] –George had shut it up in a box for safe keeping. I fear he will get a bad name –”

-- Lenox MA, September 22, 1847 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

Calomel was a white tasteless powder which consisted of mercury chloride. If taken over time or in heavier doses, calomel induced heavy salivation, bleeding gums, mouth sores, tooth loss”, and other serious side effects as the patient succumbed to mercury poisoning. It was the go-to treatment for most everything at this time!

“I sent for Dr Robert [Worthington] Saturday evening and he gave George a dose of calomel He says “tell Father what color is that colt going to be he is to give me.” I wish you could see him now. He just asked me what lamp oil was made of. I think he has an engineering mind and with proper training will make a likely boy. I hope my dear Husband will be a little more decided with him than he has ever been – as he needs steady firm government, not severe.”

-- Lenox MA, October 18, 1847 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

“Botts cough is better, and he has been out to day in his overcoat – with his hands in his pockets – feeling as large as life... I think I can see his mind expanding daily. I would not hold him up as a prodigy for I have always thought his mental faculties were slow in developing. I think the best fruit is the longest in [growing] and I agree with you in pronouncing our boy a chip of the good old block – the block I love so dearly...”

-- Lenox MA, October 25, 1847 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

“...our dear George’s ... gums are very sore –and I fear it was caused by the Calomel which was so long in his system. One ear discharges and he complains of the other. He is very thin –... [Sarah then proceeds to give her husband a very long Christmas list of items for him to get for friends and family members, which he will bring with him to Lenox when he comes to visit for the holiday. One of the items was this]: Georgie would like a knife of all things, as he likes to whittle –dont [sic] get one with sharp point.”

-- Lenox MA, November 28, 1847 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

“I am so nervous that I could cry my eyes out –and believe I shall have a good cry to night [sic]. I think my health would improve as fast in the quiet of my own home as here feeling such a constant horrification about the noise of George.”

-- Lenox MA, February 20, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"Botts was quite delighted with some sleds at Mr Cooks Store."

-- Lenox MA, February 22, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George is very pleasant now and is quite a comfort to me. I let him ride to Stockbridge with George and Fanny – He told me that it was dull at Aunt Fanny's ... He brought me two Almonds which he saved from some he was eating. He and Willie [cousin William Walker Rockwell, Sarah's sister Lucy's boy who was 3 years older than George] agree and disagree by turns –Botts is a good natured tease –....."

-- Lenox MA, March 10, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George ...has a new suit of clothes which fit him nicely –He is like his Father in wishing for a loose fit –and I think will never make a dandy –"

-- Canaan CT, March 28, 1848 (AL 2) Sarah Walker Davis to William Perrin Walker

"I was terribly lonely after they [her sister, Cornelia Walker Scranton & her family] went and had a hearty cry... –It is useless and worse than useless, to talk of the misery of a long separation like ours –At times it makes me wretched & I feel like flying to your embrace in spite of sea air, bathing & every other restorative. I am so accustomed to your sympathy to your tender care and affection, that I droop like a plant without its usual supply of rain. I mean spiritually, not bodily, (for I am looking both fat and hearty). ...this climate is much better suited to my constitution than that of any of the Western or Southern States –& I regret that it is so dearest –for your interests seem to be in Illinois, the State of our adoption, and our home there is to us both very pleasant –... I took up the Western Whig [a newspaper] a few nights since, and he asked me if I saw any news from his Father in it... believe that the warmth of my love is like the blackness of the ink –no halfway."

-- Lenox MA, May 1848 (AL 15) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"[M]other proposes to have Nelly Rockwell come down and go to school a few days with George to get him in the habit of going –... I had to whip [please remember that at this time this word was used for a spanking, not a literal whipping] our son twice yesterday although it was Sunday –He served Willie a dirty trick and hurt him beside –I whipped him soundly for it and in less than half an hour he kicked and carried on so because Mother had set the table in the kitchen for the children, that I used the same remedy again ... His Father I hope will feel willing to aid me when I am once more at home. Visiting with a child is not improving to them...Fanny slept with George and me one night in the nursery and ... the [bed] clothes would not cover us fully –...I would kiss you good night if you were here tho George says, "There is no use in saying good night to one you sleep with."

-- Lenox MA, May 1, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George goes to school with Nelly Rockwell but whether he will live to go alone remains to be seen. He looks quite well in his new straw hat – (a hat new last August) ... I fear he pushes down the children who go to school –But trust he will improve."

-- Lenox MA, May 19, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"Botts & I slept till after the family had taken breakfast, but he was very cheerful and took his teaspoon of elixir pro [Elixir Pro was a useful family medicine of the time for digestive disorders.] without making a wry face for the small consideration of one penny, which he has exchanged before this for a sugar cigar... Did I tell you that I had taken him to Church twice lately. The first time he dropped asleep, and fell off the seat but I got him up without any



Right: The Church on the Hill where Sarah and George attended, and where he fell asleep, snored, and fell off the seat! Above: A view from the church cemetery, c. 1880's, and what Sarah would have seen when she came out of church during visits home.



loud noise, the second time he fell asleep and snored somewhat to the amusement of some little children who sat near. He is very anxious to get to Bloomington and talks of his dog and his Colt Printer very often. I think he will learn to read in the course of the Summer. He seems interested in his spelling book..."

-- Lenox MA, June 1, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George continues to like his School"

-- Lenox MA, June 9, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George is asleep and snoring He is much more gentle since he goes to school, and is quite polite --This morning -- I asked him if he would have a cup of coffe [sic] --said he "if you please Mother dont ask me every morning --for I always want it when it is on the table --"

-- Lenox MA, June 29, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"Our son has had a very stiff neck for three days. He talked all night in his sleep. He has been greatly exercised about going home and has fears about crossing the Kankakee, wishes me to promise him to go some other way. I told him we could cross in a ferry boat."

-- Lenox MA, July 7, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"I have been confined with George for two weeks nearly. The stiff neck I wrote you of last week proved to be a swelling of the glands of the neck --occasioned by a diseased system. His head has been turned on one side and is rather crooked yet. He has had plasters and liniment, beside being sweated with hot bags of hops. One dose of calomel and "Elixir Pro" and now he takes Quinine. He is much better and if he is well next week, I intend to take him with me to the Point [the Connecticut seashore] provided the Dr thinks best. I regret taking him from school, but shall consult health first..."

-- Lenox MA, July 20, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

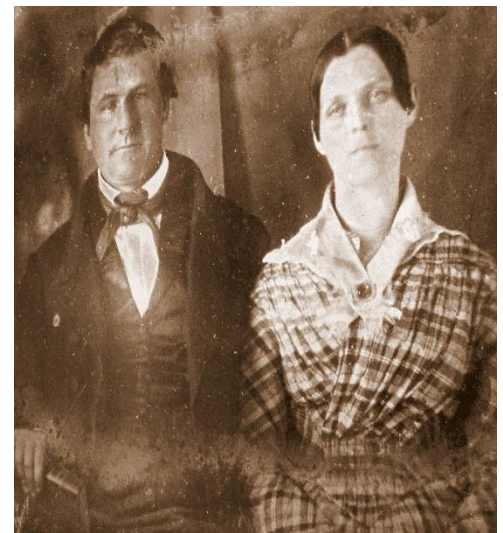
"I shall keep rather quiet to day. I was rather tired lifting Georgie for his neck was so sore that he required very careful nursing. The glands softened after being sweated and rubbed --and we gave him Quinine to bring him up. His neck is quite well and I hope the sea air will restore his color and strength. I think I shall send him home with Fanny in a couple of weeks if she goes --and remain here in time to reach Lenox the 26th... I hear George asking questions in the back yard. He is your own boy, and in some things he is like you."

-- Guilford CT, July 29, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

"George loves you dearly. He is asleep and his Mother will soon be."

-- Lenox MA, August 25, 1848 (IHPA) Sarah Walker Davis to David Davis

A short time after this letter, Sarah and George left Lenox for home in Bloomington. They had been in Lenox for nearly 1½ years. It was about 5 years until Sarah traveled to Lenox again. In the spring of 1853, Sarah traveled back to Lenox, this time with 11-year-old George and 9-month-old Sallie in tow. She went to introduce Sallie to her family and also to send George to school in Lee, MA, about 4 miles from Lenox. He would attend Mr. Hyde's School for Boys, run by Alexander Hyde, who was married to the sister of Sarah's brother's late wife.



David and Sarah, c. 1839-43, around the time that George was born. Sarah likely looked much like she does in this picture when they returned to Lenox.

[i] Likely Fanny was visiting their sister, Cornelia Walker [Mrs. Joseph Hand] Scranton, who lived in Scranton PA

[ii] Lucy Forbes Walker [Mrs. Julius] Rockwell, oldest sister of Sarah Davis.

To read more of the Davis Family Correspondence, click [HERE](#).

'Tis the Season for Giving

Step Back in Time and Help Us Preserve History! Join us in our mission to protect and celebrate the rich history of the David Davis Mansion. Your support can make a lasting impact!

Why This Cause Matters:

The David Davis Mansion is more than just a historical site; it is a living testament to the architectural and cultural heritage of the 19th century. It tells the stories of Supreme Court Justice David Davis, his family, and his close friend Abraham Lincoln. However, preserving this history requires ongoing effort and resources.

What We Do:

We engage our community and visitors from across the country and around the world through special events like our upcoming Christmas at the Mansions tours, where visitors experience the magic of the season with holiday decorations, costumed guides, and period music.

We fund preservation and restoration efforts at the David Davis Mansion and its outbuildings, we fund lawn and arboreal care and the care and maintenance of Sarah's Heirloom Garden.

How We've Helped So Far:

This year, we have successfully hosted numerous events that have attracted history enthusiasts and supported our restoration projects. With you by our side, we have been able to maintain the integrity of this glorious old place.

How Your Gift Helps:

Your contribution will directly support every project we undertake. The new year will see us mount, among other projects, a massive fund raiser for reconstruction of the walkways through Sarah's Heirloom Garden, ensuring that this historical and botanical gem continues to flourish for future generations.

Suggested Financial Levels of Support:

- **\$20:** Provides ink for one month for our researcher's printer
- **\$50:** Supports our educational programs for visitors
- **\$100:** Supports research and helps care for rare, heirloom plants in Sarah's Garden
- **\$200:** Purchases towel holders for the Visitors Center
- **\$250:** Supports an education program for a school tour
- **\$500:** Purchases new blinds for the Visitors Center lobby
- **\$750:** Funds research, transcription, and digitization of Davis Family letters
- **\$1000:** Funds the Lincoln state-wide tourism initiative
- **\$1500:** Purchases new "old" Christmas lights for the trees in the Mansion
- **\$2000:** Provides support for development of new programs

*Please realize ANY amount will help us continue our mission and is so very welcome!
Consider making a recurring donation of any amount to provide ongoing support.*

How Can You Help Other Than Financially:

- **Volunteer:** Join our team of dedicated volunteers and/or docents for tours, events, and preservation projects.
- **Spread the Word:** Did you know that historical sites like the David Davis Mansion contribute significantly to local tourism and education? Supporting this site helps preserve cultural heritage and boosts our community integrity and pride.

Why Give Now?

NOW is the time to GIVE and receive benefits of the deduction on your U.S. income taxes!

U.S. Tax Deduction Deadline: December 31, 2024, 11:59pm

Charitable contributions must be claimed as itemized deductions on Schedule A of U.S. Form 1040. The limit on charitable cash contributions is currently 60% of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income for tax year 2024.

How to Give:

Donate Online: Click [HERE](#).

Donate by Check:

- Make your check payable to DDMF (David Davis Mansion Foundation)
- Put a note on your check, telling us what it's for
- Place it in an envelope, stamp it, and mail it to:

*David Davis Mansion Foundation
1000 Monroe Drive
Bloomington, IL 61701*

Donate Through Your Bank Account:

To initiate a donation or recurring donation from your bank:

- Your bank must be a U.S. Bank
- To: Account Name: David Davis Mansion Foundation
- Our Address: 1000 Monroe Drive, Bloomington, IL 61701
- Acct. Type: Your Checking Account TO Our Checking Account
- Our Acct. Number: 63401194
- Our Routing Number: 071102568
- Our Bank Name: Busey Bank
- Our Bank Address: 1111 S. Veterans Pkwy, Bloomington, IL 61701

Donate Stock, Stock Certificates, or Mutual Funds:

- Contribute to the David Davis Mansion Foundation Endowment Fund by clicking [HERE](#).
- Contact: Greg Meyer OR Erik Rankin at Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, (309) 662-4477
- Be aware that it takes approximately 15 business days to process any of these, so please realize you need to act sooner, rather than later, if you wish this for 2024 tax purposes.

Other Ways to Give

THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS



Please consider directing your Choice Dollars to the Davis Mansion Foundation. You may direct your dollars online by logging in [HERE](#) or by calling 1-800-THRIVENT and saying "choice dollars." Also, if you have unused Action Teams, we've got ideas!

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS



Be sure you have your Kroger Plus card registered with David Davis Mansion Foundation as your charitable organization. When you shop, use your Kroger Plus card and Kroger sends us a percentage of all your purchases! If you don't have a card, pick one up at Kroger today!

To register your card:

- Click [HERE](#) to sign-in or create your digital account.
- Make sure your Kroger Loyalty Card information is updated in the "My Account" tab.
- Click the "Community Rewards" tab.
- Locate our organization and click "Enroll."

Thank you for your support!

MATCHING GRANTS

Many companies will match eligible donations to qualifying non-profit organizations such as the David Davis Mansion Foundation, such as **Caterpillar** and **G.E.** Be sure to check with your company's HR Department to determine if they have a matching gift program.



It's About Our People

Welcome to New Members:

Joe Staley of Normal, IL, Moni Adamson of Hesperia, CA and Catherine Weichel of Greeley, CO. We look forward to getting acquainted!

Those We Are Missing:

Sadly, we note the loss of Parker Kemp, David Davis Mansion Foundation member, former banker, Illinois State University trustee, and community philanthropist, who passed in August of 2024. We are so thankful for his friendship and for his long-time support.

In the History Books

- 21 visitors had a great time on the **Behind the Scenes Tour** on Saturday, October 26. This is the first time we've offered the tour in the evening, and it definitely added something special! Jeff reported that they made it all the way to the Pink Chintz Room before anyone asked if the mansion was haunted. For the record, it is not. Everyone seemed very pleased and highly recommends that everyone take it. We'll offer another daytime tour in the spring as well as a nighttime tour next fall. Keep an eye on the website for dates and times.
- We are happy to report that this year's Masquerade Ball themed Murder Mystery Night, **Mystery at the Mansion**, co-sponsored with local theater troupe WhoDunIt, was a wonderful time for the third year running! On Saturday, November 2nd we welcomed over 120 people into the mansion for an evening of live music on our antique piano, great food and drink, and a fun, clue-inspired mystery game. All of our attendees wore stunning evening clothes from a variety of time periods accessorized with beautiful masks featuring feathers, sequins, gems, and more. The ambience of the event was elevated by the decorations, which included Venetian masks from the private collection of David Davis Mansion board member and volunteer Ron Frazier, as well as handmade Mardi Gras masks donated to the event by Southwestern textile artist Carol Alvarado. The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive and everyone had a wonderful time. We hope to offer this program again in 2025, so stay tuned for more information!
- Our **Christmas Barn Sale**, held on Saturday, November 14, was extremely popular this year. Hundreds of people rushed the barn to shop our extensive selection of holiday decorations, some of which were donated by mansion supporters, and others which were retired from the mansion's own Christmas collection. Almost everyone who attended brought something fun home with them and the David Davis Mansion brought in an excellent profit which will be used for various education and preservation projects throughout the year.
- The **Christmas Open House in the Clover Lawn Museum Shop**, which also took place on Saturday, November 18 brought in another huge crowd. Visitors took home a wide variety of new Christmas merchandise, including ornaments, books, candy, and other holiday decorations, as well as gifts for friends and family. As usual, the peppermint pigs, chocolate roaches, and glass pickle ornaments were very popular! Didn't have a chance to stop by? You can visit the gift shop during regular business hours, Wednesday-Saturday from 9am-3:30pm or visit the shop online by clicking [HERE](#).



How to Volunteer at the David Davis Mansion

Volunteering at the mansion is not only fun, but it's an essential role that keeps tours running smoothly on a daily basis. Not interested in or available to volunteer during regular operating hours? Join a committee to help with mansion events and projects!

Mansion volunteers often make lots of new friends and enjoy attending in a private *Christmas Open House* each year.

Welcome guests at the Visitor's Center:

- Wednesday-Saturday
- (9am-1pm or 1pm-3:30pm)
- Greet guests
- Start the introductory movie
- Answer the phone and visitor questions

Be a docent (tour guide):

- Wednesday-Saturday
- (9am-1pm or 1pm-3:30pm)
- Learn about the mansion and how to give tours
- Lead visitors through the mansion and tell them all about it!

Join a committee:

- Membership
- Development
- Education
- Christmas at the Mansions Tour
- Glorious Garden Festival
- Christmas Planning and Decorating

How to Sign Up:

Click [HERE](#) to fill out an online volunteer interest form and we'll contact you to help you get started.

Don't worry! We'll teach you everything you need to know to take on the volunteer role of your choice.

The only requirement is that you are available to help at the mansion **once per month**.



The David Davis Mansion Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

**President: Kathe Conley
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Sophonria Vandeventer Funk's



This recipe was published in this year's Christmas at the Mansion's booklet.

Gingerbread has been part of American history for over 200 years. It likely traveled here with early European settlers, who were familiar with hard gingerbread cookies shaped like animals, kings and queens at Medieval fairs in England, France, Holland and Germany, and gingerbread houses, which were probably inspired by the witch's cottage in Hansel and Gretel. Other early renditions of gingerbread in America were like this one: soft, baked in a pan, and unshaped...more like a bread than a cookie.

This recipe was contributed to the Guild Cookbook, which was published in 1889, by Sophronia Funk, the wife of A.B. Funk. They lived at the corner of Gridley and Grove streets in Bloomington, not far from the David Davis Mansion. We know that Davis' 2nd wife, Addie Burr, knew the Funks well. She wrote in her social diary about attending several events, including parties and teas, at the Funk home between 1883 and 1885.



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup lard
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup sour milk
- 1 tbsp soda (in boiling water)
- 1 tbsp ginger
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 4 cups flour

Addie Burr (bottom) at approximately 42. Sophronia Funk (top) at a similar age. McLean County Museum of History

This recipe can be found in "Managing Clover Lawn, From Ingredients to Enjoyment: A Guide to the Kitchen of Sarah Davis and the Life That Filled It" by Sarah Vales. Currently out of print, we hope to have it available again soon.

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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