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Samuel Pugh Hamilton, Informally "The Lord of Lafayette Square."

Samuel Pugh Hamilton was first the affectionate family man; secondly, an astute businessman; thirdly, efficient politician; and last, but not least, accomplished host. One historian noted in the files at the Georgia Historic Society that he did not know how Mr. Hamilton found the time to do all that he did.

Samuel was born July 2, 1837

Died June 22, 1899

Married Emma Sprigg(?) of Charleston, SC and after her death (before 1866), he married his brother William's widow -- Sarah Virginia Stillings of Washington DC on June 10, 1866.

Samuel P. Hamilton & Emma Sprigg had 2 children --

Fanny Hamilton born in 1853 and William S. Hamilton born in 1856.

Samuel married Emma while he was stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, while in the U.S. Navy. In 1859, Samuel was transferred to Savannah to which he moved his family there. Some time after 1861 his wife, Emma, passed away and possibly his daughter Fanny at the same time, perhaps due to yellow fever.

On January 7, 1861, Samuel resigned his naval officer commission to take a position on the Confederate staff of Colonel Lawton in the Georgia Battalion at Ft. Pulaski. Here he continued to serve until the end of the Civil War.

In 1862 Samuel started "Hamilton's Fine Watched and Jewelry" on the corner of Congress, Whitaker & St. Julian streets. He bought the business of Wilmont Richmon. The jewelry business was moved to 125 Broughton & Bull streets in 1879. Samuel sold his jewelry business by 1889 so that he could devote his time to the Brush Electric Light & Power Company.

After the death of his wife, Emma, Samuel P. Hamilton married his brother William F. Hamilton's widow, Sarah Virginia Stillings of Washington DC. Samuel & Sarah had 4 children -- Frank Pugh Hamilton, born between 1866 and 1872 (unknown death date); Fenton Hamilton, born 1872 (died 8 months after his birth); Virginia Lee Hamilton, born 1874 (died 1898); Lillian Hamilton born October 22, 1875 (died March 12, 1928 who married James L. Staten of Valdosta, GA)

Sarah V. Hamilton brought to the marriage 2 children -- Charles E. Hamilton and Harvey Hamilton, the children of William Frank Hamilton (brother to Samuel Pugh Hamilton).

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On December 21, 1867, S. P. Hamilton was knighted into the Knights Templar. He became a Grand Commander of the Knights Templar in 1875. Samuel was involved with the Masons through the Solomon's Lodge #1. He held the position of Master of the Solomon's Lodge for three years (1871-1873) and again for two more years (1876-1877). Mr. Hamilton continued to be involved with these organizations until his death in 1899. Other organizations he was deeply involved with were the Savannah Benevolent Association, the Savannah Port Society and Union Society.

Samuel P. Hamilton's political career started in 1869 when he was elected to the Savannah City Council. Mr. Hamilton was elected Alderman in 1877-1879, 1881-1889, and 1897-1898. He did not seek reelection in 1899 due to health reasons. During his terms of office he on several occasions was acting mayor of Savannah.

One of Samuel P. Hamilton's passions was serving on the Grand Jury. His first call to Jury duty was on November 12, 1872, and again March 28, 1872. He served on many occasions after that as either a member or Foreman.

Samuel Pugh Hamilton was a man who knew good business deals when he saw them. In 1877 he became involved with the Atlantic Paper Mill Company as a Trustee for the company.

Samuel Pugh Hamilton was always a busy man, and the 1880s were no exception. While he reared a large family; served as Alderman; ran his jewelry store; was Grand Recorder and Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Solomon's Lodge, Masons; he was involved with Savannah Cotton Mills, the Savannah and Tybee Railroads, the Tybee Beach Company, and was an optician. During this time, he was elected as President and Treasurer to both the Savannah Ice Manufactures and the Artesian Ice & Storage Company. He gave to the Savannah Benevolent Association and attended St. John's Episcopal Church. He was not a member of the St. John's Episcopal Church as he didn't align himself to one church.

The 1880s also had him involved with a new fangled invention called electricity. To which he sold his jewelry business to devote the majority of his free time to this new industry and President of the Brush Electric & Power Company.

Mr. Hamilton was instrumental in the establishment of the first artesian wells for Savannah now known as the "old water works of Savannah." In 1886, he had the first wells dropped and tested for water quality. In November 1886 the wells were approved by the council of Savannah. On February 11, 1887, Savannah City Council commended Samuel Pugh Hamilton for his work on the new clear and pure water supply for Savannah.

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In 1897, he was the President of Home Building Company and President of the Merchant's National Bank

S. P. Hamilton was a part of the Brush Electric Light and Power Company almost from its inception. He was the driving force to light the streets of Savannah with electric lights. In 1883, the first street light was lighted in Lafayette Square. It was reported that the light shone for several blocks. Brush Electric Light & Power competed with Savannah Power for city contracts to light the streets and buildings. In 1889, Brush Electric Light & Power Company was awarded the contract to light the streets of Savannah and Mr. Hamilton was quoted in the paper saying "Savannah will be one of the best lighted cities in the South." The Brush Company installed 200 arc lights on the Streets of Savannah that year.

Samuel Pugh Hamilton gave up business, social and political connections in 1899 due to suffering a paralytic stroke. To recuperate Mr. Hamilton decided to visit some of the fashionable spas in the North with his wife. The first leg of the trip was to visit his daughter, Lillian, in Valdosta. While staying at his son-in-law's father's home, he suffered a massive hemorrhage and passed away on June 22, 1899, without recovering consciousness. He is buried at Bonaventure Cemetery.

Additional Hamilton Family Genealogy

Samuel Pugh Hamilton son of:

Harvey Hamilton

Born May 21, 1796 in Fauquier, VA

Died January 2, 1837

Married on Jun 12, 1820 to: Lucinda Owens

Born February 7, 1800 in Fauquier, VA died September 11, 1861

Harvey & Lucinda had 7 children:

Owen Hamilton

Born November 17, 1821

Married Lorenza Catherine Palmer on September 3, 1855

Died February 9, 1884 who

John T. Hamilton:

Born January 31, 1825

Died September 3, 1878

Emily Hamilton:

Born February 8, 1827

Married John W. Thomas on May 22, 1851

Died February 25, 1908

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William Franklin Hamilton
Born June 27, 1830
Married Sarah Virginia Stillings
Died December 25, 1861

James Harvey Hamilton
Born January 21, 1933
Died August 30, 1838

Edward Hamilton
Born March 10, 1835
Died September 4, 1839

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