

For Immediate Release

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### **Hamilton-Turner Inn: Historically, the Talk of the Town**

[SAVANNAH – October 12, 2004] With an irreverent legacy – that of a rascalion’s party house – new owners of the Hamilton-Turner Inn recently discovered a high society pedigree for their elegant Mid Victorian manor.

Built on Lafayette Square in historic Savannah Georgia for Samuel Pugh Hamilton’s family of eight, the sumptuous 4-story mansion (ca. 1873) has rebuffed two major Savannah fires, stands stalwart to its fame as the first Savannah building with electricity, and honors its merciful salvation by the Historic Savannah Foundation.

“The mansion of Samuel Hamilton is an architectural work of art. Architect and engineer professionals appreciate the genius of the 19<sup>th</sup> century craftsmanship and extraordinary Mid Victorian and Second French Empire architecture. Guests are in awe of the grand scale and uncommon details,” shares Jane Sales.

Perhaps an embellished folk tale, one version of the mansion’s story of electricity is that of the citizenry of Savannah gathering in Lafayette Square taking bets, confident that the building would explore when the newly installed electricity (ca. 1883) was activated. Notwithstanding, the single room parlor salon was lit, nothing exploded, and the Hamilton initiative became a “Savannah First.” To put this event in timeline perspective, Thomas Edison had invented and then first demonstrated on December 20, 1879.

From historical researcher, Felicity Joy Beall, the genealogy of Samuel Hamilton, his post-Civil War mansion and highlights of its talk-of-the-town history were brought to light. The affluent Mr. Hamilton was found to be a true renaissance man -- an extraordinary master of high society, community, industry and government. Strikingly handsome, Hamilton was an affectionate family man who commissioned the legendary \$100,000 gentleman’s mansion (ca. Christmas 1873). At a cost of about \$50,000, the house was generously furnished for the enjoyment of Hamilton’s wife, six children, affluent Savannah citizens and visiting dignitaries.

News accounts report the Hamilton family hosted with graceful ease the ‘Savannah 400,’ the January First debutante parties, and elaborate baccarat and billiards games. Because Savannah was not burned or bombed by Union General Sherman, post-war Savannah enjoyed an era insistent on maintaining genteel refinement. Men were fined \$5.00 for using obscene language in the presence of ladies, and disrespectful loafers

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Architecturally Notable Park Mansion, Savannah Family-friendly historic hotel, Luxury Inn & Romantic Bed and Breakfast  
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were fined \$1.00, plus a night in jail, for sitting on the railing of the city's squares. Within thirty days after the war's end, supplies to Savannah were flowing in and its port was open for trade.

Following years of the mansion's deterioration, the Savannah Historic Foundation successfully negotiated with the Catholic Diocese of Savannah to purchase the "Victorian Lady." With the spared destruction of the architectural masterpiece, again, the Savannah newspaper reports kept the property in the forefront of talk in the increasingly preservation conscious historic Savannah.

Today the historic bed and breakfast is the graceful showplace of much of the Hamilton-era craftsmanship. With high regard for the extraordinary architecture, out-of-town architects and engineers often choose the inn's accommodations. The luxury inn also serves as an upscale home away from home for Savannah's visitors -- honeymooning couples, international journalists, vacationing families with children, executives, brides, wheelchair assisted travelers, and most recently hurricane nomads from Florida.

While the Hamilton-Turner Inn is not one of the Clinton presidency's 600 original "Save America's Treasures" earmarked projects, the former international shipping executive Rob Sales and his wife Jane embrace the spirit of preservation. "Generations – past, present and future – are inspired by the architectural superiority and resilience of the stately Hamilton mansion. Tourists and guests are in awe of the architectural details, such as the 12 foot doors, curved on top to blend into the wall frame. Certainly, Jane and I are grateful to the people and organizations that embraced the cause of this home during its 130 year life," Rob Sales shares.

Today, the new 21<sup>st</sup> century renaissance couple of Lafayette Place releases the research on the Hamilton-Turner Inn mansion -- to the enjoyment of parents whose children may confuse the building with Disneyland Haunted Mansion, historic and architecture preservationists, and to a public who loves true life ... the kind that reads like an inspiring novel.

Yet again, we expect there will be talk in the town ... perhaps over breakfast ... and on tour carriages and trolleys.

The Where. The enchanting garden squares of Savannah delight the senses, drawing millions annually. The Hamilton-Turner inn's Abercorn Street garden is the city's manicured Lafayette Square, one of the city's 22 surviving lush botanical green spaces. The affluent Lafayette Square neighbors included Savannah's most wealthy citizen, Andrew Low; and, in 1886 newlyweds William and Juliette Low (founder of Girl Scouts). The Catholic Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, on the south side of the square, was completed the year as the Hamilton mansion.

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The Who. Samuel Pugh Hamilton, informally called "The Lord of Lafayette Square," was the affluent social host, father of six, Savannah Alderman and temporary mayor, prominent jeweler, president of Brush Electric & Power, Grand Jury Foreman, and businessman extraordinaire.

The What and How. The notable Mid Victorian and Second French Empire Period architecture of the Hamilton-Turner Inn continue to draw respectful regard of university students, engineers, architects and the appreciative inn guest. In its "Best Places to Live" feature, the Robb Report named Savannah Georgia as the city with the most exceptional architecture. With newspaper reports detailing construction and progress, the post-Civil War family manor was the talk of the town -- with its talking tubes to communicate between four floors, a tin roof which saved the mansion from the fire of 1898, and roof skylights that perhaps have been inaccurately considered to be a twentieth century innovation.

Hamilton-TurnerInn.com History Web Links:

[Hamilton House: High Society Savannah Mansion](#)

[Hamilton House: Original Architecture Details](#)

[Samuel P. Hamilton: Southern Gentleman Extraordinaire](#)

[Historic Lafayette Square: Quietly Dignified, Affluent Park Setting](#)

## About the Hamilton-Turner Inn.

The architecturally notable mansion (ca. 1873) of post-Civil War businessman extraordinaire and former naval officer, Samuel Pugh Hamilton, maintains a high society status and remains *historically the talk of the town*<sup>(sm)</sup>. Notoriously known as the party mansion of John Berendt's colossal best selling novel, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," today the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mid Victorian gentleman's manor reflects meticulous renovations and affluent furnishings as a family-friendly, luxury bed and breakfast inn, wedding mansion and center of social life in historic Savannah Georgia.

The park mansion's Second French Empire architectural craftsmanship permeates 17 guestroom accommodations, formal parlors and carriage house. Peaceful butterfly gardens, culinary trained chefs, and fashionable dining – personalized breakfast, afternoon tea, and evening hors d'oeuvres – are included in a larger-than-life-style of leisure. The invitation to 'arrive for quiet comfort and inviting pleasures' is extended to the discerning traveler, destination wedding, honeymoon couple, journalist, dignitary; and, more uniquely, upscale lodging to families with young children, and guests requiring wheelchair accommodation. With a coveted park side setting in the quiet dignity of Lafayette Square, Hamilton-Turner Inn is the refined answer to where to stay in Savannah. [www.Hamilton-TurnerInn.com](http://www.Hamilton-TurnerInn.com)

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