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**John David Mongin (1763-1833)**

Cheryl L. Hackett

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JOHN DAVID MONGIN

1763-1833

Cheryl L. Hackett  
History 300

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE MONGIN FAMILY IN EUROPE

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 brought about the persecution of protestants in France. By 1725 the persecution of the Huguenots became intolerable and so a thirty five year old watchmaker named David John Mongin (grandfather of John David Mongin) and his brother Francis left France. Their departure was not a moment too soon as can be shown by the following account from the family bible.

"A faithful servant of the family having informed them that a number of Roman Catholics were on their way to the Chateau to pilfer, burn, and murder. Those Huguenots who refused to embrace the Roman Catholic religion were compelled to flee the country or be slaughtered or burned at the stake. Collecting what valuables he and his brother could carry and all available money in the house together with old pieces of silver, they made their way by night to the sea shore, they hired a fishing boat and landed on the coast of England in 1725 from thence he proceeded with his brother and resided several years in London. His father was tortured severely to make him renounce his religion, that he died from tortures." <sup>1</sup>

Applying the family trade of watchmaking in England, David and his brother Francis settled in London. On September 4, 1726, David John Mongin was married to Miss Persille Dair.

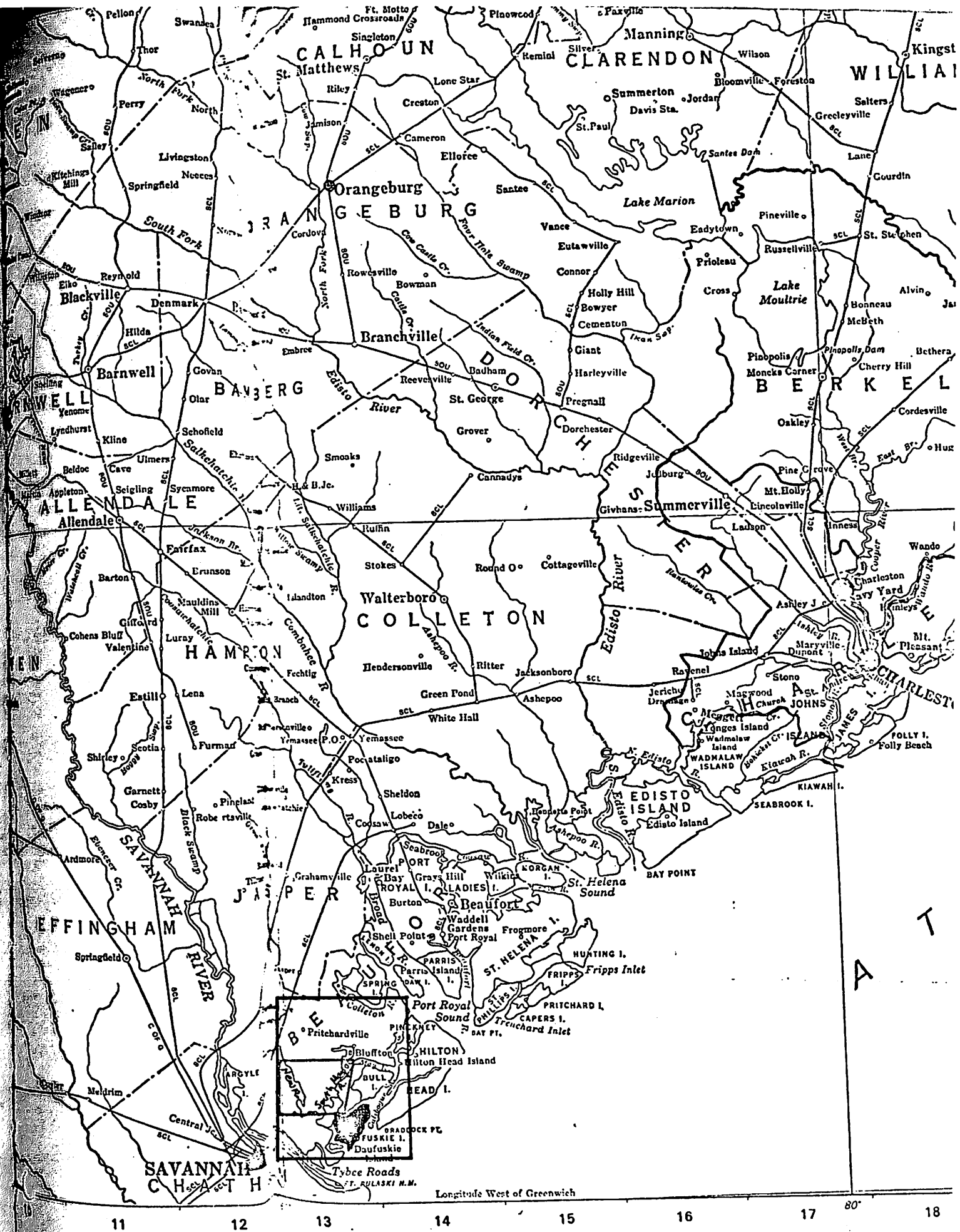
A document certified by the Surveyor General of the Province of South Carolina on February 17, 1735, reflects that David and Francis received, in the name of King George II and the governor of the Province of South Carolina, a land grant in the new world consisting of:

" . . . a tract of land in the township of Purrysburg in Granville ← County in the province of South Carolina, containing in the whole Six hundred fifty acres cutting and bounding to the East on Day's Creek called New River, to the West North and South on vacant land." <sup>2</sup>

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1. The Mongin Family Genealogy File, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

2. Ibid. Refer to Figure 1 for location of granted land.



Area of concentration for Mongin landholdings in S.C. —  
 Figure 1. Approximate location of Land Grant to JDM Sr.  
 Daufuskie Island owned later by John David Mongin

The grant required that on the 25th of March of each year for a period of ten years a rental fee of 300 shillings silver or 400 shillings proclamation money be paid for each 100 acres granted. After completing the required payments David and Francis then had three years in which to either clear and cultivate one acre for each 500 acres granted, or build a dwelling and keep five head of cattle for each 500 acres granted. A final provision required that all white pines found on the property and one-tenth of any gold and silver mined be turned over. The failure to follow and meet these requirements would result in the withdrawal of the grant.

The required rent was paid yearly as the David Mongin family grew. Plans were made to travel to the new world. Although David and Persille had six children, only David John<sup>3</sup> (father of John David) born March 4, 1739, and Mary Jane, born August 3, 1741, reached adulthood. In late August of 1747, after the death of Persille on August 6th, David Mongin Sr., his two children and his young brother Francis departed from Liverpool, England to sail to the new world.

#### THE NEW WORLD

The Mongin family arrived in New Jersey (exact location unknown) on November 10, 1747. They remained in the Princeton, New Jersey area for several weeks before claiming their land while David Mongin Sr. courted Miss Elizabeth Edwards, the seventeen year old daughter of Jonathan Edwards who would later become the president of Princeton College.

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3. The accounts found in articles of the family file, newspapers, and other historical sources continuously interchange the names David John Mongin and John David Mongin even when referring to the same person. By paying strictest attention to the dates accompanying references to John David and David John - and the fact that the Mongin emigrant seems always to be referred to as "Sr." - David's son from his marriage to Persille Dair will be referred to as David John Mongin Jr. John David could be said to have added more to the confusion by naming his only son David John Mongin, who shall be referred to (correctly or not) as David John Mongin II.

Elizabeth Edwards became the second wife of David Mongin Sr. on December 23, 1747, at Princeton, New Jersey. After the wedding the Mongin family moved to South Carolina where they settled on the South May River not far from the city of Charleston. They named their homestead "Walnut Grove." David Mongin Sr. continued his watchmaking trade by placing advertisements in local papers proclaiming his abilities in "watchmaking in all its branches."<sup>3</sup>

David and Elizabeth had four children: William Edwards, born January 6, 1750; Mary Jane, born May 8, 1753; Thomas Jones, born August 10, 1755; and John Andrew, born October 15, 1758.

After Elizabeth Edwards died at the age of 27 on December 8, 1759, David Mongin Sr. married a third time to a Mrs. Burgoyne of Charleston, South Carolina. There were no children from the marriage.

David Mongin Sr. died in Charleston, South Carolina on November 23, 1770 at the age of 80. He was interned in Huguenot Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina.

#### DAVID JOHN MONGIN Jr.

Very little can be found about David John Mongin Jr. in the Savannah area. A short reference in a handout describing the John David Mongin home in the historical district of Savannah claims David John Jr. did not follow his father's trade of watchmaking and instead became a planter of sea-island cotton and perhaps rice in South Carolina.

David John Mongin Jr. was married to Sarah Grimpie of Charleston, South Carolina in 1762. They had five children: John David, born 1763; Catherine, born 1765; William David, born 1768; Margaret, born 1771; and Richard, born 1774.

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3. Georgia Gazette, May 9, 1765, page 4, column 2.

David John Jr. received a land grant from King George III. Under the same conditions as those outlined for his father's land grant, the grant was given July 28, 1775.

"One Thousand Acres Situate in Saint Peters Parish Granville County bounding North Eastward and North Westward on William Godfreys Land and all other sides on Lands Supposed to belonging to Fermys and Charles Wright Esquire."<sup>4</sup>

Regretably, due to full time employment and a full college schedule, I was unable to travel to Beaufort County and Daufauskie Island, South Carolina, to delve further into the affairs of the Mongin family. There is no doubt that any documents or information obtained from these sources would prove invaluable and that this paper shall suffer from its omission.

Understandably, due to its proximity, the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia has limited holdings pertaining to South Carolina. My attempt at obtaining information regarding the wills of David John Sr., David John Jr., and John David (if one was filed in South Carolina) was thwarted when I read that a fire shortly after the Civil War destroyed the records.<sup>5</sup> To what extent the fire destroyed other Beaufort County records I do not know. I strongly urge any who may desire to conduct further research into the Mongin family begin their quest in South Carolina.

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4. Reproduced copy of the original land grant given to me by Mr. Franklin D. Mongin, heir of David John Jr. from a family file in his possession.

5. Elizabeth L. Porcher, comp., Index to County Wills of South Carolina (Columbia: Universtiy of South Carolina, 1939), ii.



JOHN DAVID MONGIN

John David Mongin was born in 1763 at the family plantation on the South May River, South Carolina, the son of David John Mongin Jr., and Sarah Grimpie Mongin. The eldest of five children, John David had two sisters and two brothers.

John and his brothers became planters like their father. I was unable to trace the fate of John's brother William David, but there was mention in the family bible of his brother Richard. It appears Richard Mongin was murdered by one of the plantation slaves while overseeing work being done in a section of the plantation known as "#8". The entry is undated, however it does state that Richard was too young at the time of his death to have been married.

Having exhausted all sources available at the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, I have been unable to verify the claim found in at least two obituaries that John David was a revolutionary soldier. His uncle was a continental officer during the war and in 1776 Captain William Edwards Mongin commanded a group of continental recruits in a skirmish on Daufuskie Island, South Carolina.<sup>6</sup> If John David was a soldier, it may have been at the insistence and influence of his uncle for he certainly would have been quite young, having only been born in 1763.

Sarah Watts was the daughter of Robert Watts a shipbuilder from Bloody Point, Daufuskie Island, South Carolina. Because of the death of her father or some other reason, Sarah was made a ward of John's uncle Captain Mongin who was also of Daufuskie Island. John and Sarah Watts were married in 1790.

John David's father died in 1791, the same year John and Sarah had a son at the May River Plantation. They named their son David John Mongin (II).

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6. M.S. Nichols, History of Daufuskie Island, 1899, Mongin Family Geneaology File, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

There were no natural children from the marriage, however, it clearly states in the will of John Mongin that at some point John and Sarah adopted a daughter.

"To ex'ors \$10,000 to be invested in Bank Stock and also two slaves Charlotte and Eve, to be held until their (...), in trust for the use of my adopted daughter Mary Ann Naylor, (now called Mary Ann Naylor Mongin)."

The unavailability of South Carolina documents, especially the wills of both David John Mongins make it difficult to accurately determine if John David owned any property before his marriage to Sarah Watts. The will of Robert Watts, also unavailable, would have helped to describe the extent of Sarah's inheritance although it seems certain that John and Sarah acquired their first parcel of Daufuskie Island property through the inheritance. John later added to the amount of Daufuskie Island property by purchasing land from his own money and by purchasing from the heirs of CPT Mongin the property he had owned after his death in 1799.

John David was quite successful as a planter of sea-island cotton and rice. In fact, in the short account of his life that accompanies the description of his now restored home in Savannah, the author writes, "... a monotonous routine was not to Mongin's liking. His plantation he entrusted to the care of an overseer, and, moving to Savannah, he set himself up as a merchant below the bluff."<sup>8</sup>

The move to Savannah, Georgia began on August 29, 1797 when for \$700.00, John David purchased an empty lot on Warren Ward and immediately began construction on a home. A picture of the restored home is shown in Figure 2.

<sup>7</sup>. The will of John David Mongin found at the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia.

<sup>8</sup>. Walter C. Hartridge, John David Mongin's Capital Dwelling House on Warren Square, undated, (handout about the home).



Figure 2. The restored home of John David Mongin.

Now called the Capital Dwelling House, John David Mongin's home is only one of five or six left in Savannah that date back to the eighteenth century. The home was moved to a different lot on Warren Square in 1964 and restored to its present condition.

There are many gaps and many questions surrounding John Mongin's merchant days as a resident of Savannah. Most tax records at the turn of the century are either missing, incomplete, or illegible. To further complicate research, Savannah newspapers of the day, unless reporting large fires, meteorological mayhem, or plagues, reported little of the local news and instead carried foreign, national, and some out of state news. Fortunately, the largest portion of each paper contained advertisements. From these advertisements one can attempt to piece together the affairs of local merchants.

The following advertisement appearing in a Savannah Newspaper on November 27, 1798 proclaims the formation of a partnership.

"The subscribers,  
By leave to inform their Friends  
That they have commenced the  
FACTORAGE BUSINESS,  
on Alger's Wharf - under the firm of  
Whittendel & Mongin  
Where they have in their power to supply  
their friends with all kinds of Groceries, as  
well as all other supplies, on the lowest terms,  
at the shortest notice.

John T. Wittendel 9  
John D. Mongin "

In addition to the factorage partnership an advertisement appearing in August of 1799 offered seven different parcels of land for sale totalling 3,325 acres.<sup>10</sup> According to the ad most of the land was surveyed and granted 28 years previously. There is no clue if the land belonged to either partner or if they were merely acting as land brokers for others.

The last and only other advertisement I was able to find concerning the partnership of Whittendel & Mongin was published on December 30, 1799.

9. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, November 27, 1798, page 2, column 1.

10. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, August 23, 1799, page 3, column 4.

A small ad in the Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser proclaimed simply, "The partnership of Whittendel & Mongin is dissolved by mutual agreement."<sup>11</sup>

It is at this point that the embers suddenly grow cold. I am disappointed at my inability to obtain more information concerning the period 1797-1804 for I feel there must be enough information hidden or overlooked somewhere to paint a much more complete and beautiful picture of John David Mongin's "Savannah Days".

In 1804 a hurricane struck the city of Savannah causing tremendous damage to the Savannah port and surrounding islands. The local papers reported that Savannah plantation owners claimed losses in crops and the deaths of several slaves due to the storm. Although Daufuskie Island was not mentioned in the Savannah accounts, its proximity to Savannah would suggest that the island also suffered.

1804 was the same year the Mongin home was placed for sale. The December advertisement described the home on Warren Ward as being "built of the best materials, finished in a very neat style, and with the whole of the outhouse's in a complete state of repair."<sup>12</sup> The home was purchased in 1805 by Edward Swarbreck for \$6000.00. Although not verified, the John Mongin family probably moved to the plantation on Daufuskie Island after the sale.

The next reference to the John Mongin family dates to 1810. The official census of 1810 was destroyed when the nations capital was burned by the British in the War of 1812. Fortunately the following advertisement proves just as helpful in locating the family.

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11. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, January 3, 1800, page 3, column 3.

12 Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, December 12, 1804, page 2, column 1.

"Taken up

At the subscribers plantation, on Daufuskie Island,  
(South Carolina) a quantity of Boards, drifted up.  
Any person claiming the same, are requested to prove  
their property, and apply to  
21 July 1819

John D. Mongin "13

John's wife Sarah died in 1816 and was interned at the plantation on Daufuskie Island.

Although the 1820 census and the 1830 census shows John Mongin as a resident of the St. Luke District, Beaufort County, South Carolina,<sup>14</sup> John Mongin made his biggest impact on Savannah beginning in 1820 when he began purchasing wharf lots. The first wharf lots purchased were referred to as Wharf Lots 1 and 2, east of Bull. On July 13, 1820, John purchased the majority of Wharf Lot 2 from Peleg Tallman for \$21,000. He purchased the remaining portion from the US Marshall for \$4,350 on August 1, 1820. He purchased Wharf Lot 1 in its entirety on January 12, 1821 from Samuel Howard and his wife. The 1821 Tax Digest showed that the assessed value of Wharf Lots 1 and 2 and the buildings on them at \$55,000. (Refer to Appendix A for a map of the Wharf Lots)

"1820 ..... to John Mongin, planter of Daufuskie  
Island, South Carolina, Lot 2 for \$25,350.

1821 ..... Sam Howard to Mongin, Lot 1 for \$35,000.

John Mongin owned property in Savannah (other than the home and lot he sold) before he began purchasing wharf lots. The 1816 Tax Digest shows that he owned Lot 5 in the Second Tything on Anson Ward (now Oglethorpe Square). The 1820 Tax Digest also reflects the Anson Ward Lot in addition to Lot 14 in Franklin Square.

13. The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, July 21, 1810. page 3, column 4.

14. Ronald Vern Jackson, comp., South Carolina Census Index, 1820, 1830, Accelerated Indexing System, Inc.

15. Unpublished Ward Book, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

I have not been able to determine if John David purchased the Franklin Lot before the great fire of 1820. He was listed as one of the hundreds that suffered a loss as the result of the fire which destroyed all but a few buildings bounded East and West by Montgomery and Abercorn Streets and North and South by Bay and Broughton Streets.<sup>16</sup> The assessed value of Lot 14 and its buildings in 1820 was \$4,500. In 1821 the value jumped to \$17,000 which would lead one to believe he either purchased the lot after the fire and built upon it, or he rebuilt after having suffered a loss on the buildings of the lot.

Fires continually changed the complexion of the wharf areas. A fire at Smith's Wharf (Lot #3) which was later determined to be an act of arson threatened to consume the Mongin Buildings on Wharf 1 and 2.

"The two buildings in which the fire originated were entirely destroyed - before the alarm was given the flames were too far advanced to preserve them - Mongin's buildings, which are only divided by a space of about 6 or 8 feet were preserved!"<sup>17</sup>

A fire on the wharf January 20, 1824 eventually lead to John's purchase of Wharf Lots 7 and 8, East of Bull (West of Drayton). The destruction of the waterfront was extensive. The fire started at the steamboat wharf on Montgomery to at least Drayton Street and beyond apparently afflicting damage on Mongins buidling on Wharf Lots 1 and 2.

"Had the stores in which the fire originated been of stone Mongin's buildings would have been with (...) ease and the eastern part of the city would have been comparatively secure from the danger which was experienced from the burning weatherboards and shingles which were caused by the wind in that direction to the most distant parts."<sup>18</sup>

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16. Georgian, January 17, 1820, page 2, column 1.

17. Georgian, August 5, 1823, page 2, column 1.

18. Georgian, January 22, 1824, page 2, column 1.

In 1824, John Mongin purchased Wharf Lot 7 whose buildings had been burned to the ground. I can find no record of what he paid for the lot but the Tax Digest of 1824 shows the assessed value of the wharf to be \$25,000. He purchased Wharf Lot 8, also leveled, from three different sources from November 4, 1825 through June 16, 1826 for a total of \$10,000. I was unable to locate the assessed value of Wharf Lot 8.

John's son David John Mongin II died in 1823 at the age of thirty two. He had married Sarah Irwin at Daufuskie Island in 1812 and they had six children, four of whom died at an early age. The two surviving children were William Henry and Mary Lavania. It was to these two grandchildren that John David would later give the majority of the estate.

John David married a second time to Ann Harrison in 1832 at Daufuskie Island. There were no children from the marriage.

John David Mongin died on the 14th of December 1833.

"After a painful illness of fourteen days which he bore with the utmost patience and resignation, John David Mongin, one of the last revolutionary worthies; aged 71 years 11 months."<sup>19</sup>

There is no South Carolina will available for John David as it was consumed in the same fire as the rest in Beaufort County. The will on file at the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia, reflects that John Mongin was a planter from the state of South Carolina and covers only those monies and properties he had in Georgia. There is little doubt that John David owned most if not all of Daufuskie Island<sup>20</sup> but there is no available information about any other properties or monies in the state of South Carolina.

19. The Georgian, December 2, 1833, page 3, column 1. (There is a great discrepancy in John David's age. The family Bible showed him to be 70 years old, his grave at Bonaventure Cemetary, Savannah, Georgia reflects him to be 73 years old. Having been born after the marriage of David John Jr. to Sarah Grimpie in 1762, he must have been 70 years or at the most 71 years old.)

20. Interview with Albert H. Stoddard, February 20, 1983, Savannah, Georgia.



The Georgia will provides \$4,000. cash to four of his nephews and one of his wife's nephews. It grants to his wife for life any one of his dwelling houses in South Carolina and the furniture she may select, as well as seven negroes and \$12,000. annually. The provision made for his adopted daughter was mentioned earlier in the paper. There was also a provision that \$5,000. be given to the executors to be invested for use by his niece Mary, the wife of George Turknett.

"One half of remainder of my estate unto my grandson William Henry Mongin, son of my deceased son David John Mongin, for his natural life, at his death to his children, and if he dies without lawful issue to my Executors or the survivors of them for the use of my granddaughter Mary L. Mongin (his sister), and after her death to her children . . . The other equal half to Executors in trust for my granddaughter, Mary L. Mongin for life if she have no issue to her brother W.H.M.,  
"21  
. . .

The final request was that his grandchildren be educated and supported from the income of his estate. The will was executed on September 12, 1833.

Mary L. Mongin was married to John Stoddard at the American Consulate in Paris, France in January of 1836. They eventually had five children. William Henry had also been married but had no children before he died September 1, 1851. Because William Henry had had no children and Mary L. Mongin and married John Stoddard, the entire John Mongin estate (at least as is covered by the Georgia will) eventually went to Mary and John Stoddard, remaining in the Stoddard name even today.

William Patterson was the executor of John David Mongin's will and was required to conduct an inventory of his holdings. There was also a need to inventory the holdings of John Mongin during the period of the trusts that had been set up for those named in the will.

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21. The will of John David Mongin found at the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia.

John Mongin's holdings at his death were quite extensive in Georgia alone. In cash, bonds, stocks, notes, and mortgages alone the estate was valued at \$189,225.92 at his death. Property, in addition to Wharf Lots 1, 2, 7, and 8, included 1040 acres on the Great Ogeechee River, 1000 acres in Jefferson County, Georgia, and 500 acres in Bryant County Georgia. The 148 slaves at the Mifflin Plantation on the Ogeechee River were valued at \$37,000, and furniture from a house John supposedly rented in Savannah was valued at approximately \$1,500.

At the turn of the twentieth century the Stoddard family had the John David Mongin family vault moved from the family plot on Daufuskie Island to the Bonaventure Cemetary in Savannah, Georgia. The vault at Bonaventure Cemetary is very close to the river sitting on a bluff, the reason being that the weight of the vault, (after having been floated down the river by barge) precluded its being moved much further from the water.<sup>23</sup> A picture of the family vault is shown in Figure 3.

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23. Interview with Albert H. Stoddard, February 20, 1983, Savannah, Georgia.

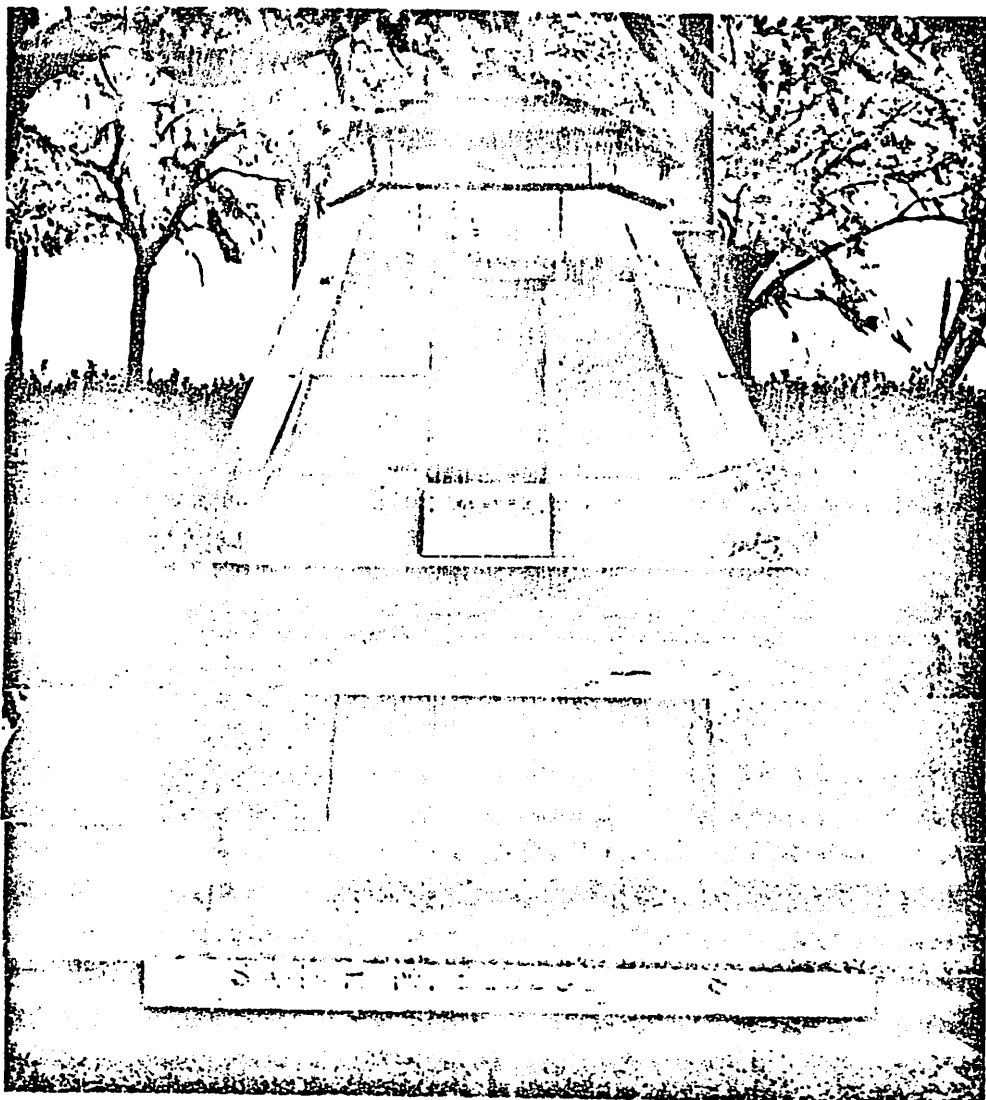


Figure 3. The John David Mongin Family Vault.

(Carved on Vault)

In Memory Of John D. Mongin  
Who died Nov 14, 1833  
Aged 73 Years

-----  
MONGIN --- STODDARD

(on marble tablet at foot of vault)

Mrs. Sarah Mongin, 1816  
David John Mongin, 1823  
Mrs. Sarah Blodgett, 1833  
Edmund W. Mongin, 1813  
David J. Mongin, Jr., 1815  
Jane J. Mongin, 1821  
Sarah Mongin, 1822  
Benjamin Blodgett, 1827  
Joseph Blodgett, 1831  
Sarah M. Blodgett, 1840

## RELATIVES RESIDING IN SAVANNAH

A newspaper clipping in the Mongin Family Genealogy File at the Georgia Historical Society allowed me to contact Mr. Franklin D. Mongin who is currently employed with the Savannah Bank & Trust Company in Savannah, Georgia. Mr. Mongin explained that he felt he was one of the few relatives left with the Mongin surname (he did mention a brother also living in Savannah) and that the name may soon disappear. It seems that there have been few children born in the family with the Mongin surname, most being girls. Of course, when the girls marry they change their names and become difficult to locate. Some of the boys who did marry had no children. Mr. Mongin did mention that he was one of six children and that the Mongin name seemed safe, however it appears that it is again on the verge of extinction.

There are several Mongins listed in the Savannah Telephone Directory. That and an article about Franklin D. Mongin in 1964 led me to find Mr. Mongin. When I asked him about the other Mongins in the phone book he replied that most were black and probably decedents of slaves that had worked at the family plantations. It was not unusual for slaves to adopt the surname of their master, especially when they were freed.

Mr. Mongin was able to provide a copy of a land grant to David John Mongin Jr. from King George III which I had not come across in my research and proved quite helpful. He admitted that his father had not been too interested in the family history and thus information was not passed down to him as it might have been. Mr. Mongin finally suggested that I contact Mr. Albert Stoddard who was much more knowledgeable of the family history, especially information about the family in South Carolina.

Mr. Albert Stoddard is also employed with the Savannah Bank and Trust Company in Savannah, Georgia, and was very helpful in clearing up some of the mystery surrounding the Mongin - Stoddard families. Being a historian by trade or by hobby, it was Mr. Stoddard that assured me that John David Mongin owned most if not all of Daufauskie Island at one time, gave me a clue as to the reference made to John David Mongin's possible revolutionary soldier status, and was able to provide a date of death for David John Jr. which I could not find in any of the family or South Carolina documents.

He also described how the John Mongin family vault was moved from Daufuskie Island to Bonaventure Cemetary. When I first saw the vault I felt certain that it was much older than the stone of the graves surrounding it and felt perhaps it had been at Daufauskie Island and moved in its entirety to Savannah. Mr. Stoddard explained that at the turn of the twentieth century, the Stoddard family had the vault shipped by barge down the river from Daufuskie Island to Bonaventure Cemetary where it now sits. When I asked why it was located so close to the river he said, "It was too heavy to move much further".

I would like to thank both Mr. Mongin and Mr. Stoddard for they were extremely helpful to me as I attempted to put this paper together. In addition to obtaining information that I probably wouldn't have found anywhere else, just knowing that relatives still reside in the area (and knowing that I promised them both a copy of this paper) tends to keep an author "honest". Admitting that gaps exist, rather than inventing or attempting educated guesses in an effort to present the illusion of a complete history of John David Mongin's life, allows the next person interested in carrying the paper further a fair chance. This paper, hopefully, has been of interest to the families concerned; perhaps even to the point that one might be willing to try to fill in some of the gaps.

APPENDIX A.

(Early Maps Of Savannah)

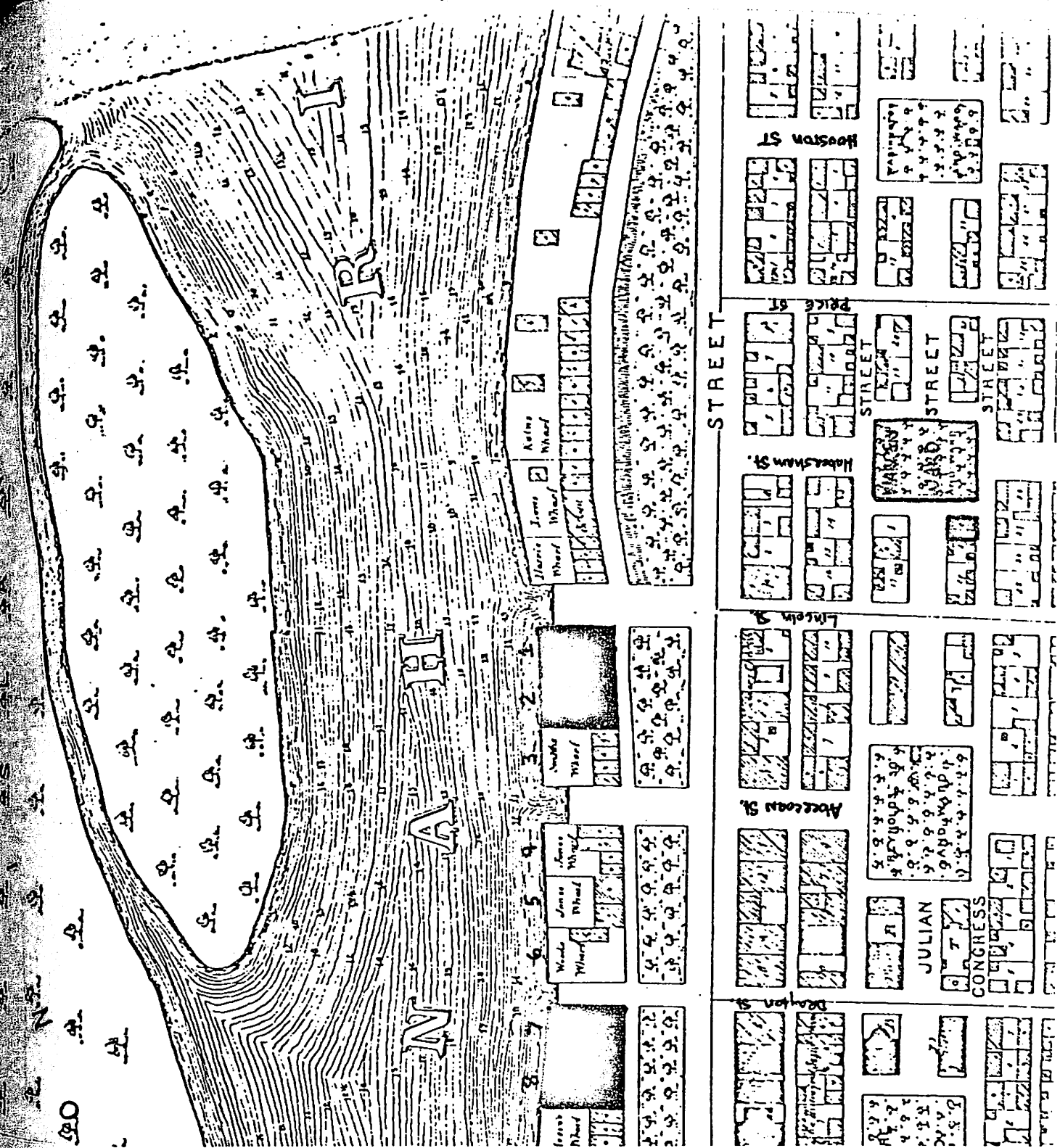




Figure A-1.

Wharf Lots 1, 2, 7, & 8. 

Original Location of Mongin Home 

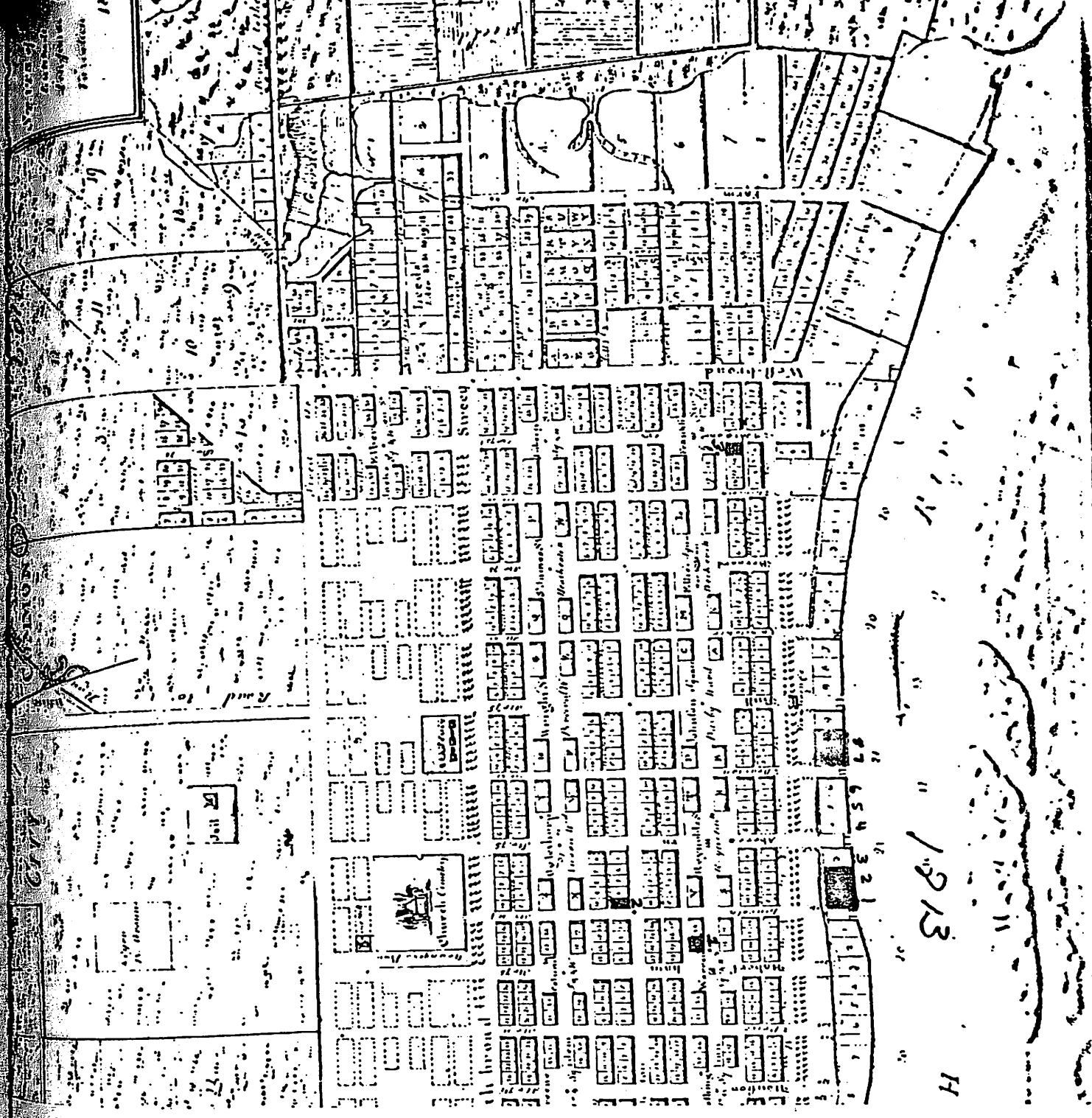


Figure A-2.

Wharf Lots 1, 2, 7, & 8.

Original Location of Mongin Home  1.

Property on Anson Ward (Oglethorpe Square)  2.

Lot on Franklin Square  3.



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