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John Joseph McDonough

Dorea E. Eager

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JOHN JOSEPH MCDONOUGH

Rich man, poor man, businessman, son; Husband, father, politician.

> By Dorea E. Eager History 300 Dr. Roger Warlick

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John Joseph McDonough was born in 1849 and died in 1926, but in between those years he was very busy and productive. He started working at his father's lumber mill, continued by being involved in six major businesses of his own, plus director to a few more, and ended up with a single lumber and machine business. He also seems to have ended up with only one son to carry on his name, but not any of his businesses. At the same time he was actively involved in Savannah government (1887-1895)he was also very active in real estate. John J. made a very good mayor of Savannah. He was known for enforcement of the Sunday Laws, improving the police force, facilitating the switch to an artesian well water supply, promoting railroad development, deepening the Savannah harbor to 26 feet, and trying to improve the city's sanitation problems. He was also known for promoting the development of Tybee Beach, seeing as how he had bought a lot of property there for the railroads to use.

John J. McDonough was not born in Savannah, but was Savannah bred. He was actually born in Augusta, Georgia on August 3, 1849, the second son of John and Mary McDonough. His father was at the time a 30-year-old machinist from Ireland and his mother was a 27-year old from Pennsylvania.

Even though John J. was partly educated in the public schools of Atlanta and completed his education at St. Francis Xavier college in New York, by 1866 John was back in Savannah working at his father's lumber yard -- and three years later was the superintendant of the mill.²

At the age of 20 he was married to Ella M. Cullen, November 11, 1869 in St. John's Cathedral by Rev. W. J. Hamilton. Three weeks later his oldest brother and youngest sister were married from their father's house. The family residence in 1870 was 88 Price.

On March 1, 1870 John McDonough associated his sons, Henry and John J. into his lumber business, forming McDonough and Sons. They lived at 86 Price St., assumed to be an addition to the rear of 88 Price St.

John J.'s active business life seems to have had its start when his father sold lots 12 and 13 (lot 12 was 88 Price) for \$6,000 to John J.'s wife all and July 7, 1876. He had had a business with brother-in-law George Haslam in1873 called Haslam and McDonough, but was dissolved in 1874.

By 1879 he had formed J.J. McDonough and Company, lumber manufacturers and dealers. In January 1880 J. J. bought lots 14 - 20 in Bartow Ward from his father for \$3,000, including the lumber mill. 8 - Herdid other things besides build his own business.

In March of 1879, John J. was elected a director of Savannah Building and Loan Association and in October, 1880 he presented Bishop Gross with a pulpit valued at \$1600 to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perperual Help, while in 1881 he was on a committee to build St. Mary's Home for Girls, the new Catholic orphanage.

The year 1882 was a very busy one for John J. Not only did he enter the political arena, but his brother and two brothers-in-law were admitted to his lumber firm and the White Manufacturing Co. elected him as vice-president and a director. In 1883 John J. was elected to membership in the Hibernian Society, an organization for the relief of indigent and exiled Irishmen, In on the Board of Directors of the new Savannah Times Publishing Company, on the finance committee of the Builders Protective Association, and on the Board of Trustees to the Savannah Military Academy. 12

John J., in 1884, was elected to the Board of Directors for a year of the Savannah Savings and Loan Company and was a subscriber of stock in the Savannah and Tybee Railway Co., was also elected a director of it in 1886. By n.w., J. J. Chonough and Co. is McDanagh, and Co. On April 4, 1987 the first passenger train went over the Savannah and Tybec Railway, consisting of engine "J. J. McDonough, No. 13" and a new passenger coach with John J. in it. 14 That year J. J. was also elected president of Pierce Patent Stone and Building Co. president and director of the newly incorporated Tybee Beach Co. — which owned all of Tybee laterly owned by D. 3. Purse and the Ocean House, a new member of the Georgia Historical Society, and was reelected as director of Savannah and Tybee Railway Co. 15

The next year he was re-elected again as a director and was elected vice-president of the Railway Co. In 1889 he was elected a director of the new Merchants' and Mechanics' Loan and Building Assoc., to the Board of the new Savannah Electrical Co., but was now only vice-president of Tybee Beach Co. 16

Things were not looking good for the Savannah and Tybee Railway. It was sold December 10,1889, but by February the company applied for a new charter by the Secretary of State under the name of Pavannah and Atlantic Railway Co. with J. J. as a director. The company became official by the end of February but by the end of July was transferred to the Central Railroad, yet J. J. was elected to the board anyway. Before the end of the year John J. was again president ofTybee Beach Co. 17

In 1896, after his political terms of office, John J. became Director of the Mills and Land Dept., Southern Pine Co. of Georgia. Then in 1897 he became president of the Georgia Car Manfg Co. as well. By 1898, J. J. was president of the Savannah Locomotive and Supply Co., president of Ga. Car Manfg Co. and still with Southern Pine Co. 18

Aside from these doings, John J. also bought several interesting items and massive amounts of property. First the items. In 1884 he bought a steam yacht called the Pioneer for \$1600,9 it and its boilers somehow being used in his lumber mill.

Then in 1939, ... J. and Co. paid \$9800 for two First Class passenger cars, one combo baggage and passenger car and four excursion cars, and he also bought a steam locomotive named The Fulton for \$1900.20 In 1889, for some reason, he acquired four barber shap chairs.21 By July 1891 the mortgage had been released on nine locomotive engines he had purchased in 1887.22

There is enormous amounts of property that John J. by himself, or with partners, sold and bought. For brevity's sake the real estate will be entered chronologically within wards and very sketchy.

The first property John J. bought after 1876 was lot 70 White Ward in 1879 from two sister-in-laws (one-half each) for \$2.00. Then in January 1886 he sold the eastern half of the lot for \$2,175 and in January 1887 bought it back for \$2500.²³

June, 1881, John J. bought lots 21 and 22 in Troup Ward for \$3500. He made improvemnts on them, building houses between 1882 and 1884 that still stand (eight of them), were known as McDonough Row and are located between 410 and 424 E. Charleton. In May, 1884, John J. sold the property to Ella for \$10, ""in consideration of the natural love and affection he bears towards his wife." 25

John J. also bought in 1882, lots 3 and 4 section 10 in Cuthbert Ward, which contain four apartment houses built by J. E. Tussey and are in the Historical Landmark Survey. 26

There was a lot of buying and selling by John J. on Tybee Island. It started in 1885 when he paid \$6000 for lot 23 fronting "The Strand" and lots 16, 17, and 18 Ward One on Screven Isle. In April, 1887, with several others, J. J. received land on Tybee for \$25,000. What they actually got was islands south of Big Tybee totalling 350 acres and marshes, plus a narrow tract on Great Tybee. 27

The purchase of the island areas carried with them interest in the Savannah and Tybee Railway Co. and the new owners were to improve it by drainage and opening new roads, and either rebuild Ocean House (hotel) or erect a new one. 28

In June, 1887, John J. and others paid Savannah and Tybee Railway Co. \$130,000 for common capital stock, giving the railway a wharf on the Savannah River

plus land ... which he railway is built on Tybee Island. There was also stock in four open cars, two passenger cars, one flat car, two open excursion cars, and right-of-way of the railway and present tramway. 29

Somehow, J. J. in July, 1887, got away with selling land on Tybee to the Tybee Beach Co. for only \$100.30 Lot 23 was lost by J. J. and Co. when they couldn't repay a loan made in 1888 to build a retaurant on Tybee, this was July, 1889.31

Yet, in May, 1892, J. J. bought for \$375 lots 58, 59, and 60 on the Island of Great Tybee. 32 Most of the lots that John J. bought were in the area of what is now the northern end of Butler.

In July, 1891, John J. sold to Reppard, Snedaker and Co. the lumber and stock on his yards east of the Savannah, Florida and Western Railway for \$24,000. 33 During the years 1892 and 1893, J. J. bought lot 31 TroupWard for a final price of \$1600. 34

Now, in May of 1893 McDonough and Co. released title to 71 lots of land and timber privileges in the 7th District of Worth County, but in August 1895 the company bought 9700 acres in the 4th and 12th Districts of Pierce, Clinch, and Appling Counties, plus a lease on some Wheaton St. property -- a 10-year lease for \$308,125.35

By 1900 the McDonough family was living at 330 Price St. and had been for several years. John J. was 51, Ella was 48, and John J. Jr. was 24.

John J.'s life in politics began September 30, 1882 when he was endorsed for the Geergia Legislature on the Democratic ticket. "Mr. J. J. McDonough is the representative of the true greatness of labor, a man to whom all classes of our community can point with pride, and in whose person the dignity of the working man is well represented." 36

Thus was the start of a two year term in the House of Representatives of Georgia. In 1884 on July 22, John Ji was elected a delegate from Chatham to the Gubernatorial Convention of the Democratic party. Then there was nothing till 1887 (January 18) when he was elected Alderman.

At the inauguration of the city government John J. was on the standing committees of: River and Harbor, Assessments, Streets and Lanes. Several months later he is made Vice-Chairman of the Council and at a special meeting in August, he is put on the Committee on Water to find solution to the shoaling of the quarantine station. 38

In 1889, in May he was elected as a Gordon delegate to the First District Congressional Convention, from Chatham, and in August he was elected as a delegate to the Gubernatorial Convention. 39

By the time January rolled around again, J. J. was nominated for Alderman by the Democratic Club, on the 15th he was put on the municipal ticket as Alderman, as presented by seven political clubs, and on the 18th was on the new Board of Alderman. 40

Two years later John J. was again running, but this time on January 18, 1891 (two days before the election), he was running for the mayoralty. It was a big surprise as several weeks ago he had declined the offer. 41

The next day The Morning News printed what McDonough had published on a card,

his platform;

"If elected I shall devote my best energies to the preservation of the public health and the enforcement of a rigid quarantine; to the administration of the city's affairs with economy, and so that every citizen shall be made to bear his just share

of the public burden, but be not made to endure more than his share; and to demand that every employee of the city shall discharge his full duty, and be protected in so doing. I shall endeavor to see that morality is preserved, and law and order enforced. If elected, I shall assume the office with a full sense of responsibility, and will discharge my duty with, I trust, fairness, impartiality and independence, balancing as best I can, the welfare of the city, mainaining it high commercial credit, and encouraging every enterprise that tends to her prosperity."

Late January 19th, McDonough is put on the Conservative Citizen's ticket. It seemed to be that the reason he was running against Mayor Schwarz was taht McDonough received proof that some of Schwarz' friends were going to defeat John J. and his friends, after being promised by the Mayor that they would keep their positions. 42 McDonough won the election by 84 votes out of a possible 2,674 registered voters. 43

The Morning News of the 21st gave some interesting items about John J.'s business life. By 1880 John J. had bought out his father's interest in McDonough and Sons and in 1877 he had purchased his father's interestin the foundry works of McDonough and Ballantyne, was a member of the cotton exchange and board of trade, and was interested in the South Bound Railroad and was a stockholder of the Savannah Construction Co.

His inautral address was printed the next day, proclaimed as the first one submitted in more than eight years. Basically it included: the proper execution of the city's ordinances; cracking down on the Sunday Laws; enforcing sanitation and police responsibilities; conducting the city's affairs upon business practices; reducing taxation to lowest point consistent with the city's progress; holding civil servants accountable.

John J. started out with a bang. That first Sunday, the Sunday Laws were strictly enforced and the next week used the veto power conferred to him by the last legislature to veto an ordinance allowing the sale of cigars and papers to hotel guests on Sundays (was overruled).

During a meeting on July 21, it was decided to try to secure appropriations at the next Congress session to improve the Savannah River and harbor, from which grew plans to educate Georgia and the whole southeast coast that with Savannah's growth came theirs. 45

McDonough reported his accoplishments for the year 1892 in which there was a balance from the preceeding year of about \$39,900, the scarlet fever epidemic was not of a severe type, and that the introduction of the Gamewell system (apprehended felons are taken to jail in a wagon while the police stays on his beat) seemed to be taking.

In 1893 John J. was re-elected with a majority of 623 votes out of about 4,300, even with snow covering the ground, that many voted.

47
His inaugural addresson January 23 was printed the next day in The Morning News:

"....Municipal government is a business matter, pure and simple, and to inject into it political partisanship and bigotry, is to prove it false to the sacredobligations, which we have this day assumed. I expect this city government to place itself upon a higher plane....We are but the agents of the people, and let us be guided in our official conduct by honest convictions and manly adherence to duty, preferring these recognized virtues to methods of expediency and time serving make-shifts."

For both years 1893 and 1894, John J. McDonough came into a new year with money in the treasury — the first about \$19,265 and the second about \$10,600. Also in the year of 1893, there was an awful storm that did a lot of damage to the city, but the new water works were finished.

On the retirement of Mayor McDonough after four years of service, the Council, on January 16, 1895, adopted a resolution setting forth that

for two terms he had: "presided over that body with dignity, fairness and impartiality and was entitled to the thanks of each and every member of the Board for the faithful and impartial manner in which he had discharged his duty as presiding officer and as the chief magistrate of the city."

Thus ends John J.'s political life to all intent and purposes.

Life for John J. after 1900 takes a downturn. The new century starts out all right. John J. is the auditor at Ga. Car and Manfg Co. Even in 1902 J. J. is involved with most of his main businesses. But by 1915 all he has is J. J. McDonough -- foundry, machine and lumber shops. 50

In 1901 John J. and Ella are paid by the Town of Tyberfor lot 50 on the Strand and the eastern part of lot 49, also on the sea front. Then in 1903, in the settlement of Thomas Ballantyne's will about the partnership, \$9000 in payment for the undivided interest of Ballantyne. Landwise it covered lots 9, 10, 11, 12, 54, 55, 56 in the Crawford Ward. 52

Also in 1903 John J. bought for \$12,000 the 3.97 acres known as the McDonough Mill Tract fronting Wheaton St. 53 The year 1904 saw the Southern Pins Co. selling to John J. the planning mill plant and outfit on Wheaton for \$23,000, with J. J. assuming the payments and duties of So. Pine, and also receiving the Brunswick Mill. 54

Then disaster. Bankruptcy was filed against John J. as an individual and against McDonough and Co. on August 17, 1904, a week after John J. had sold lots 58, 59, and 60 on Tybee Island. 55 On March 22, 1905 he was adjudged bankrupt. June 7, 1905, John J. sold lots 3 and 4 in Cuthbert Ward; plus by an order passed in open court, on June29, McDonough And Ballantyne Foundry and McDonough Mill Tract as well as lots 9, 10, 11, 12 Crawford Ward were sold to Savannah Loco Works and Supply Co. for \$25,000. By the end of October lots 68 and 69 of White Ward were sold too. 56

As an aside, lots 68 and 69 in White Ward are found between 220 and 228 E. Henry St. and number 224 is rehabilitated as a Savannah Landmark project. The Crawford Ward lots 54, 55, 56 are in the 500 block of E. Liberty and had first been bought by J. J. and Ballantyne in 1884. Lots 9, 10, 11, 12 in Crawford Ward were at the time of purchase in 1903 sections facing McDonough St. and were not paved areas. 58

Not all of John J.'s problems were over. Back in the third week of June J.'A. had more bankruptcy problems. Under an indenture by the United States of America he was paid \$2250 for 20 acres on the Tilton tract on Tybee. ⁵⁹ On February 15, 1906 he lost for good the Crawford Ward lots to a bank for \$14, 475. ⁶⁰ The lots in Bartow Ward had been sold after the bankruptcy for \$9,500. ⁶¹

Ella was supposed to inherit lots 21 and 22 in Troup Ward, but sold them (Ward!)

January, 1909 for \$23,000. In 1912 and 1913 John J. sold lots 12 and 13 on

Tybee for a total of \$210.63 Apparently in 1914 he got a break because he took out a 5 year lease on the 3.97 acres on Wheaton St., next to the Savannah Planning Mill Co.64

Yet on July 4, 1916, the Sheriff of Chatham County seized and sold lot 12 Ward 2 on Tybee for \$118.45, as that was what John J. owed in back taxes for 1914 and 1915.65

John J. lost more than property. In 1910 and 1912 he lost 6 locomotives and 200 shares of capital stock of Savannah Loco Works and Supply Co. to banks. 66 Then on June 6, 1921 John J. lost his engines, machine shop, foundry and land on Tybee for failure to make good four promissary notes totaling \$31,600.67

By the time John J. becomes Harbor Master and Port Warden in January, 1925 he and Ella are living at 115 E. Liberty. 68 After serving his office for a year and a half, John J. fell sick. Several months after poor health John J. McDonough's time ran out.

On November, 27 beneath an old picture ran his obituary. "His term of office was carried out by him in a bold and fearless manner and was a great asset to the city....continued through his second term of office with even a greater success than his first term." The article went on to say he was survived by his wife, Ella, son John Jr. and four grandchildren. "He was a life member of St. Mary's Home, a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards and of the Hibernian Society ... had many friends and was widely known." The flag of the city was flown at half mast until after the funeral services.

- 1 Georgia Census Index, 1850, p. 151.
- ²Savannah Morning News, city news, January 21, 1891, p. 8.
- 3Chatham County Record of Marriage Licenses, 1866-1873, p. 33.
- ⁴Savannah Newspaper Bigest, 1869, p. 125.
- 5 Bartow Ward Book, Georgia Historical Society.
- 6_{Ibid}.
- 7Newspaper Digest, 1874, p. 342.
- 8 Bartow,
- 9 Newspaper Digest, 1879, p. 62, 1880, p. 86, 1881, p. 125.
- 10 Ibid. 1882, pp 67,431.
- Constitution of the Hibernian Society of the City of Savannah, F. McManus Jr. and Co., Philadelphia, 1887, p. 14.
 - 12_{Newspaper Digest}, 1883, pp 575, 582, 790.
 - ¹³<u>Ibid</u>, 1884, p. 369, 1886, p. 441.
 - ¹⁴<u>Ibid</u>, 1887, p. 638.
 - 15_{Ibid}, pp 70, 668, 419.
 - ¹⁶<u>Ibid</u>, 1888, p. 516, 1889, pp 77, 315, 468.
 - ¹⁷<u>Tbid</u>, 1890, pp 440, 442, 448, 457.
 - 18 Savannah City Directory, 1896, p. 317, 1897, p. 345, 1898, p. 410.
 - 19 Index to Deeds, XII, Book 5I, Folio 559, Chatham County Superior Court.
 - 20 Deeds, XIII, Book 6L, Folio 239, Book 6H, Folio 364.
 - 21 Ibid, Book 6P, Folio 196.
 - 22 Teid, XIV Grantees, Book 6Z, Folio 186.
 - 23 Thid, XI, Book 4X, Folios 82, 90, XIII, Book 6B, Folio 274, Book 6K, Folio 356.
 - 24 Troup Ward Book, Georgia Historical Society.
 - 25 Deeds, XIV Grantees, Book 6Y, Folio 318.
 - 26 Ibid, XII, Book 5D, Folios271, 273 and Cuthbert Ward Book, Ga. Historical Society.
 - 27 Toid, XIII, Book 6P, Folio 258, Book 6C, Folio 297.
 - 28 Hemanaper Digest, 1887, p. 666.

- ~ Deeds, XIII, Book 63, Folio 351.
- 30 Thid, Book 65, Folio 94
- 31 Thid, Book 6J, Folios 110, 342, Book 6N, Folio 200.
- 32 <u>Thid</u>, XIV Grantees, Book 7C 366.
- 33 Ibid. XV Grantors, Book 7Q, Folio 366.
- 34 Toid, XIV Grantors, Book 7F, Folios 294, 296.
- 35 Thid, Book 7G, Folio 80, XV Grantors, Book 7N, Folio 452.
- 36Savannah Morning News, city news, September 30, 1882, p. 2.
- 37 Newspaper Digest, 1884, p. 543.
- 38<u>Toid</u>, 1887, pp 118, 131, 134.
- ³⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 1888, pp 133, 136.
- ⁴⁰<u>Tbid</u>, 1889, pp 312, 663, 133.
- 41 Savannah Morning News, city news, January 18, 1891, p.8.
- ⁴²Ibid, January 20, 1891, p. 8.
- 43 <u>Tbid</u>, January 21, 1891, p. 8.
- 44 <u>Ibid</u>, January 27, 1891, p. 8.
- 45<u>Toid</u>, July 22, 1891, p. 8.
- 46Annual Reports of John J. McDonough for year ending Dec. 31, 1892, The Morning News Print, Savannah, 1893, pp 3, 5, 9.
 - 47 Savannah Morning News, city news, November 11, 1893, p. 58.
- Annual Reports of John J. McDonough for year ending Dec 31, 1893,
 Braid and Hutton Printers and Bookbinders, Savannah, 1894, pp 4, 10, 14.

 Annual Reports for year ending Dec. 31, 1894, Braid and Hutton, Printers and Publishers, Savannah, 1895, p. 3.
- Thomas Gamble, History of the City Government of Savannah, Ga., 1790-1901, Savannah, 1900, p. 441.
 - 50 Savannah Sity Directory, 1915.
 - 51 Deeds, XVI Grantees, Book 8J, Folios 115, 109, 204.
 - 52 <u>Ibid</u>, Book 8R, Folio 431.
 - 53 Ibid, Folio 429.
 - 54 Ibid, XVII Grantees, Book 8T, Folio 387.
 - 55 Told, Grantors, Book 94, Folio 310, Book 8W, Folio 187.

- Dold, Book 9A, Folios 309, 307, Book 9C, Folios 11, 333.
- 57 White Ward Book, Ga. Historical Society.
- 58 Crawford Ward Book, Ga. Historical Society.
- 59 Deeds, XVII Grantors, Book 9E, Folio 33.
- 60 Ibid, Folio 221.
- 61 Bartow Ward Book.
- 62 Deeds, XVIII Grantors, Book 9W, Folio 20.
- 63General Index to Real Estate, Grantor M-N, 1911-1926, Chatham County Superior Court, Book 11A, Folior 228, Book 11S, Folio 110.
 - 64 General Index, Grantee M-N, 1911-1926, Book 12 A, Folio 341.
 - 65 General Index Grantor, Book 131, Folio 112.
- 66 Deeds, XVII, Book 10F, Folio 265, General Index Grantor, Book 10W, 75. Folio 130.
 - 67 General Index Grantor, Book 16F, Folio 188.
 - 68 Savannah City Directory, 1925.
 - 69 Savannah Morning News, obituary, November, 27, 1926, p. 16.

Genealogy Chart of John J. McDonwugh

Father-Mother m. about 1842 Mary E. Brown John McDonough D 11/21/84 p 6/8/25 Elizabeth b. 1844 Henry A. b. 1846 Henry A. John Joseph William C. Francis C b 1846 b 9 3/1879 b. 1889 b. 1880 m Cathernetheyers m Ellen Cullen m Historina B4/14/1881 12/1/1869 11/20/1869 B 7/17/1912 B 1/20/1915 D14/26/1936 Clara habout 1851 m GeorgeHaslan m Gcorge Offerman 12/1/1869 · B 12/27/1833 -Ellen p 1/26/1937 Willie B 415/1877 3415,101105 Jehn Jr. Maria b. 9/91/896 218 M. Loretta Hanky B. 9/5 1953 Loretta B. 3/22/1958 Maria Compiled from the Catholic Cometery Records, Savannah John J III h 1/26/1901 m Meta Thompson 1929 Newspaper Notices, Georgia Throad Two Centeries, and Georgia Consus 1850 81880 John J babout 1930

Cometery Holdings

These are the occupants of John J. McDonough's plots:

John J. --- August 3, 1849

November 26, 1926

Ellen --- August 15, 1853 January 26; 1937

John Jr. —September 29, 1876 September 5, 1953

Sgt. Ga Infantry Spanish-American War

Loretta Hanley --- September 9, 1882

March 22, 1958

Willie ---April 5, 1877 age 3 years, 10 months "Transplanted from earth to bloom in heaven"

Section Magistrate Division Lot 357, 358, 359, 360 Catholic Cemetery 1720 Wheaton St.

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This is to certify that this is a true and correct copy of the certificate filed with the Vital Records Service, Georgia Department of Human Resources. This certified copy is issued under the authority of Chapter 31-10, Vital Records, Code of Georgia.

State Vital Records Registrar and Custodian Director, Vital Records Service County australian Benery D. Wale

Issued By B. Wae

Date FEB 0 1 1984

(Void without original signature and impressed seal)

- Chatham County Record of Marriage Licenses, 1866-1873, Georgia Historical Society.
- Constitution of the Hibernian Society of the City of Savannah, F. McManus Jr. and Co., Philadelphia, 1887,
- Gamble, Thomas, History of the City Government of Savannah, 1790-1901, Savannah, 1900.
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