

# Island Leaders Rest In Zion

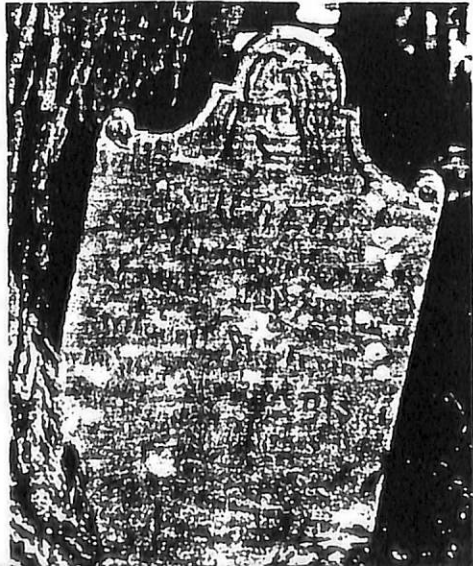
By Robert E. H. Peeples  
Photographed by Gary Forcier

"We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion," sang the Gospel hymn writer, recalling the sacred hill in Jerusalem with its royal residence of King David and his successors. Eighteenth century Hilton Head Islanders, longing for a period of peace after the violence of the Revolutionary War years (1775-1783), looked at the lovely grove of live oaks, cedars and magnolias at the head of Broad Creek and called it Zion. There Captain Jack Stoney and Isaac Fripp, for the good of their souls, built a chapel of brick and wood in 1787. They were joined by other Islanders, one of whom lost his wife Lydia in 1795.

James Davant was born on Edisto Island in 1744. His father, John, brought him to Hilton Head in 1758 when he began planting indigo on Point Comfort Plantation. With 14-year-old James came his brothers Isaac 16, and Charles 8, and a sister Mary 10. And when their father died in 1768, the three brothers continued the indigo planting operation with the help of their 12 slaves.

The British government's subsidy on indigo guaranteed its profitability. The next year James married Lydia Page; they raised six of their eight children.

Mary Irvine's marker obviously is older than the tree which grows around it. Mary died in 1821 at the age of 59.



James served in the local militia 1779-1782 and was a concerned member of The Bloody Legion which avenged the death of his brother Charles who was ambushed by Daufuskie Island Tories.

By 1790 James and Lydia had the help of 20 slaves and had added extensively to their landholdings. Their eighth child was born in 1793 and Lydia died in 1795. James buried her in the churchyard of Zion Chapel of Ease. Two years later he found solace and help in raising his young daughter in the widow of Charles White of Savannah.

The 1801 will of James Davant confirms his position of leadership. He left for daughter Mary Kicklighter five slaves and Marshlands Plantation, for daughter Elizabeth Fickling five slaves and part of Point Comfort Plantation, for daughter Rebecca (who later would marry Rev. Philip Mathews, the Island's first resident minister from 1813 to his death in 1828, for whom Matthews Drive is named) five slaves and Sand Hill Plantation, for son John four slaves, livestock and Point Comfort Plantation, for daughter Lydia Webb five slaves and Possum Point Plantation, and for son James, Jr., four slaves, livestock, Folly Field Plantation, and his exotic gold watch made in London by George Priorl. Instead of the usual numerals it had only "12" at the top, then J-A-M-E-S-D-A-V-A-N-T in the 1 through 11 spaces. James Davant was buried in Zion in 1805 beside Lydia. Several of their children and grandchildren are buried around them and an epitaph for his martyred brother Charles (1750-1781) has been erected.

One of the builders of Zion Chapel, Captain Jack Stoney (1748-1821) also rests there. Born in Knockshegowna, Tipperary, Ireland, he arrived in Charles Town in 1774 with his wife Elizabeth Caulfield and their son James, born in April 1772. At "Hobcaw Billy" Pritchard's shipyard on Wando River he commissioned a ship

Adjacent 850-acre Muddy Creek Plantation was bought in 1792 by William's Uncle William Baynard (1772-1802), the sudden death of whose first wife, the beautiful Sarah Black Baynard, resulted in the accusation of her handsome and spirited personal maid, Eliza, of poisoning her mistress. Variations on the story abound: a dish of deviled crabs gone bad, possibly poisoned wine, missing jewels, even jealousy over the young husband's attentions. Eliza tried to escape, was quickly apprehended and hanged on a venerable live oak at Big Gate, intersection of current Mathews Drive and Marshland Road. Innocent or guilty, her ghost was wont to revisit the scene of her death, the tree known as Eliza Tree as long as it stood.

By 1820 young William Edings Baynard had inherited Spanish Wells and had bought Muddy Creek from his uncle's estate. His wide fields of Sea Island cotton added quickly to his wealth. He acquired splendid Buckingham Plantation on the nearby mainland. But not until he was 29 did he marry the 16-year-old Catherine Adelaide Scott, daughter of deceased Island planter Joseph Adams Scott (1781-1826) only the planters and their families but of Grasslawn Plantation and niece of the son, Squire Pope.

Home was still Edisto Island for the Baynards but their husky slaves could row the plantation boats through protected inland waterways to the Spanish Wells dock on Calibogue Sound in only a few hours. Baynard was a highly successful planter, following both the advice and example of his greatly-admired elder brother, Ephraim Mikell Baynard, for whom he named his first son in 1830. Three additional children had arrived by 1840 when local tradition tells that William Edings Baynard won the deed to 1,000-acre Braddock's

Point Plantation from Col. John Joseph Stoney in a poker game.

It is impossible to verify Beaufort District Mesne Conveyance Office records for 1785-1865 since Sherman's army burned them in 1865 in Gillisonville Court House. But after 1840 the Baynards lived graciously in the tabby mansion built by Captain Jack Stoney, now known as the Baynard Ruins.

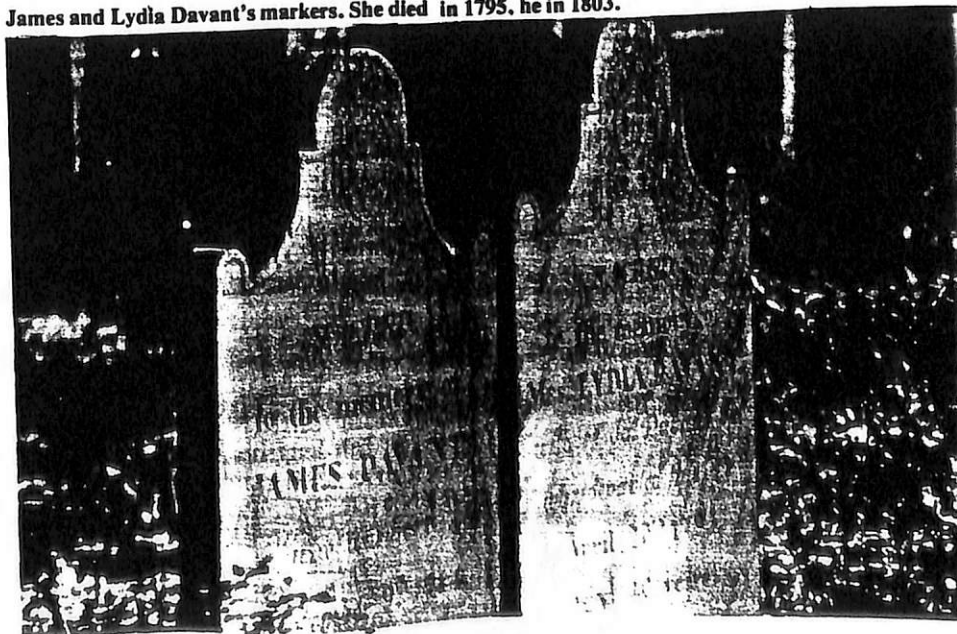
The Baynard Mausoleum was erected during this flourishing era and the handsome Davenport House was bought to serve as the family's Savannah town house. In 1843 William Edings Baynard, Jr. was born and grew up to be "a good-looking man" as reported by a cousin in the spring of 1864 when on furlough in Lawtonville from Captain George Cuthbert's company. He was killed on Ogeechee River that fall in a skirmish with Union troops and never made it to Zion to join his father and mother.

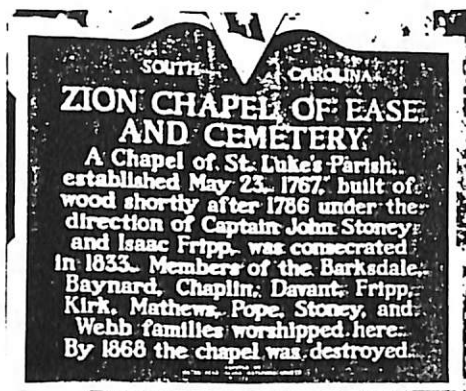
For William Edings Baynard died in his prime, only 49, and was funeralized in Zion Chapel-of-Ease by Rev. Alsop Woodward, Rector of the parish. Four months later his posthumous daughter Anna was born and baptized in Zion. This youngest child of Braddock's Point Plantation was only five in 1854 when her mother, Catherine Adelaide, herself only 42, was laid to rest behind the carved marble doors of the Baynard Mausoleum.

The site of Zion Chapel-of-Ease and Cemetery is owned by the Hilton Head Island Historical Society which periodically has the grounds cleaned. The Society welcomes gifts for the fund it has established for the preservation and beautification of historic Zion, as well as volunteers willing to devote time and energy in caring for this haven of quiet and rest.

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion." (Psalm 87:2) □

James and Lydia Davant's markers. She died in 1795, he in 1803.



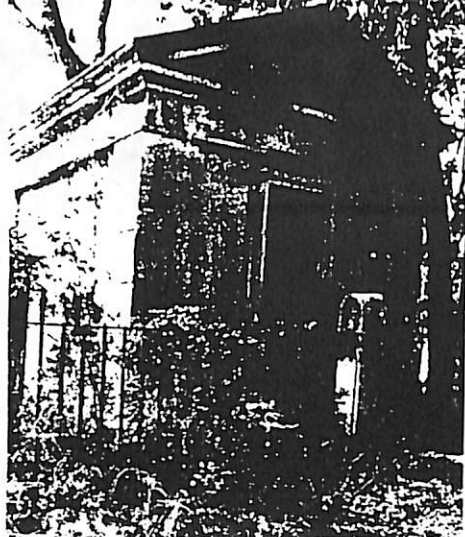


Plaque at Zion.

The vast Stoney properties were all, except for 1,820-acre Calibogia Plantation and its 156 slaves, inherited by Captain James' only son: Dr. George Mosse Stoney who richly endowed his eight children, by two wives, before his 1854 death in his since-demolished baronial Bay Street Beaufort town house. It was the heiress of Calibogia Plantation, Martha Sarah, whose first husband also rests in Zion.

### *'He Built For His Bride A Handsome Residence.'*

The epitaph of Thomas Henry Barksdale (1795-1832) stands beside that of his father-in-law. Thomas was born on Hilton Head, son of planter George Barksdale of Christ Church Parish who settled here after marrying an Ashe heiress. The 1790 census showed him with 33 slaves. By early 1795 George had a second wife, Ann Agnes, born on Hilton Head in 1776, daughter of Lewis and Sarah (Parmenter) Bona. Their son, Thomas Henry was not only handsome and cultivated, he was successful. On his 2,600-acre Scull Creek Plantation, stretching from Elliott's Myrtle Bank to Stoney's Fairfield, he built for his bride a handsome residence featuring two stories above a tabby basement, beautifully furnished and landscaped, a double avenue of *Magnolia Grandiflora* leading to its Skull Creek landing.



The Baynard Mausoleum.

When Island planter Isaac Baldwin (1752-1826) and his wife Martha both died in 1826 and were laid to rest in Zion, Thomas Henry Barksdale bought their 290-acre Baldwin Plantation. But his marriage to Martha Sarah was childless and when only 36, he died in 1832, leaving Martha Sarah to appeal to her uncle, Col. Alexander Lawton, for help in settling his estate. Squire William Pope bought 1,000 acres, including Scull Creek House which he renamed Cotton Hope Plantation. William Seabrook, Esq. of Edisto Island's elegant Mansion House, bought the remaining 1,600 acres, since known as Seabrook Plantation. One man's success quickly becomes another man's challenge.

Also at rest in Zion beside the Baldwins are their daughter Mary Elizabeth (1793-1851) and her husband, James Kirk (1780-1850) of Cherry Hill Plantation, together with several of their 15 children. The latest Kirk epitaph to be erected was to their son, Dr. James Kirk (1825-1858), well-known Island physician.

No one entering Zion can avert his interest from the imposing gabled mausoleum with its protecting iron fence fixed in granite posts. Above its gaping door, once elegantly fitted with a pair of full-length white marble doors, are raised letters: WM. E. BAYNARD. William Edings Baynard was born on Edisto Island in 1800, third of the four sons of Thomas Baynard (1763-1805) who had bought 600-acre Spanish Wells Plantation in 1790.

the outbreak of the Revolution Captain Jack secured a Letter of Marque from His Excellency, John Rutledge, President of South Carolina, to operate the *Saucy Jack* as a privateer against all enemies of the Province.

He watched the British ships-of-the-line escorting heavily laden merchantmen along the Carolina coast toward St. Augustine where forces were being readied for the December 1778 attack on Savannah. Again and again the *Saucy Jack* was able to cut a lagging merchantman from these southbound fleets, quickly disappearing with its prize up Calibogue Sound into Broad Creek whence its cargo was transferred under cover of darkness to Beaufort or Charles Town. He knew well the splendid interconnecting system of backwaterways by which prizes could be speedily spirited away while British gunboats searched in vain.

By 1784 Captain Jack Stoney began investing his wartime winnings in prime Hilton Head Island indigo lands establishing himself first at Otterburn (later called Otter Hole) Plantation. He also bought Braddock's Point and Calibogia Plantations, now included in Sea Pines. By 1790 his establishment included 82 slaves and his family had increased by a son John in 1780 and a daughter Elizabeth Mary in 1784. In 1793 he built for his residence the impressive Braddock's Point House (now called Baynard Ruins) and Otterburn became the seat of his son, Captain James Stoney on the occasion of his marriage to Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. George Mosse. The young couple spent their winters at Otterburn, their summers in their Beaufort town house. They had 15 children but raised only two: Dr. George Mosse Stoney (1795-1854) and Martha Sarah Stone (1807-1880).

---

## ***He Invested His Wartime Winnings In Hilton Head Lands.***

---

Captain Jack continued expanding his Island holdings, adding Fairfield and in 1805 Honey Horn Plantations. By then Sea Island cotton had replaced indigo as the Island's money crop. In 1821, in his 74th year, while shooting birds with his old friend, Captain William Pope of Fish Haul Plantation he tripped and his gun discharged killing him instantly. He was buried where he fell on a promontory overlooking Port Royal Sound. His elder son, Captain James Stoney who had inherited 5,400 acres on Hilton Head, died at Otterburn and was buried beside him. Later their remains were reburied in Zion