

PRESS KIT

# Drayton Hall Stories: A PLACE AND ITS PEOPLE



George W. McDaniel

# THE FIRST BOOK OF ITS KIND IN THE NATION!



This groundbreaking book, features over 50 interviews with descendants (White and Black), historians, preservationists, educators, donors, architects, tourism leaders, and more.

Like pieces of a mosaic, each interview combines with others to create a new picture of this one place, a historic Charleston icon.

Stories reveal never-before-shared family moments, major decisions in preservation and site stewardship, and pioneering efforts to transform a former plantation into a site for understanding and racial conciliation.

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## MEET THE AUTHOR

George W. McDaniel, PhD, is the President of McDaniel Consulting, LLC, a strategy firm that helps organizations build bridges to its broader constituents. For more than 25 years, he served as the Executive Director of Drayton Hall, a historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Charleston, SC.



A native of Atlanta, he earned a BA from Sewanee, an MAT from Brown University, and a PhD from Duke. Interspersed through those years were travels to many places – Europe, Africa, Vietnam – where he saw peace and war and learned by experience about cultural differences and commonalities. Beginning with the Smithsonian Institution, he has built a career in education and history museums, earning awards at local, state, and national levels.

"Sometimes we become so focused on sharing facts & details... that we miss the magic of the story. This book conveys Drayton Hall's magic – and that is what visitors remember and why they come back."  
– Helen Hill, CEO,  
Explore Charleston,  
Convention & Visitors  
Bureau

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## ADVANCE PRAISE



“McDaniel has meticulously uncovered the many personal connections and stories that help bring this amazing place to life.”  
—Paul Edmondson, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation

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“Their stories illustrate the power of place in America’s history.” —John E. Fleming, Ph.D., Past Chair, American Association for State and Local History

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“Filled with revealing insights...pertinent to understanding the full story of historic places.”  
—Spencer Crew, PhD, former Interim Director, National Museum of African American History & Culture, The Smithsonian Institution

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“George McDaniel continues to inspire with his broad vision for historic preservation.”  
—Carol B. Cadou, Executive Director, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America & National Headquarters, Dumbarton House



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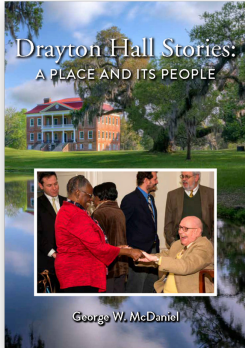
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For Immediate Release

The First Book of its Kind in the Nation!

**DRAYTON HALL STORIES:  
A Place and Its People**

CHARLESTON, SC — May 11, 2022 — This groundbreaking book features over 50 interviews with descendants (White and Black), historians, preservationists, educators, architects, donors, tourism leaders, and more. Like pieces of a mosaic, each interview combines with others to create a new picture of this one place, a historic national icon. Stories reveal never-before-shared family moments, major decisions in preservation and site stewardship, and pioneering efforts to transform a former plantation into a site for understanding and racial conciliation. Readers will come to see Drayton Hall's people not as stereotypes, but as the real people they were — and are.



Drayton Hall Stories - ISBN 978-1-929647-67-5 retails for \$39.95. Please contact (843) 478-1324 for a review copy.

Maps, photographs, lines of descent, a how-to guide, and related website, all provide blueprints for readers who wish to engage in similar projects to build community.

[Click here for the complete PRESS KIT with high-res images.](#)

George W. McDaniel, PhD, is the President of McDaniel Consulting, LLC, a strategy firm that helps organizations build bridges to its broader constituents. For more than 25 years, he served as the Executive Director of Drayton Hall, a historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Charleston, SC. A native of Atlanta, he earned a BA from Sewanee, a MAT from Brown University, and PhD from Duke. Interspersed through those years were travels to many places — Europe, Africa, Vietnam — where he saw peace and war and learned by experience about cultural differences and commonalities. Beginning with the Smithsonian Institution, he has built a career in education and history museums, earning awards at local, state, and national levels.

The author is available for speaking engagements and workshops.  
Visit [www.mcdanielconsulting.net](http://www.mcdanielconsulting.net) or contact [gmcdaniel4444@gmail.com](mailto:gmcdaniel4444@gmail.com)

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## Tip Sheet: Suggested Questions

### ASK THE AUTHOR

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What motivated you to write this book?  
Why now?

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Your interviewees include not only family descendants, both White and Black, but also friends, donors, and professionals across many different disciplines.  
Why?

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Explain in what ways you believe your book can be used as a blueprint for others who wish to engage with their communities.

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Why is oral history so important to your work as a historian and preservationist?

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This book is a first in that it not only tells a site's recent history, but tells it through those who actually lived it – an entirely new approach. What then are your three most desired outcomes?

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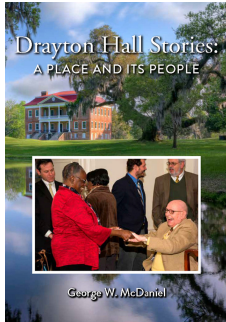
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Places evoke different memories. What is one of your most vivid and perhaps most surprising during the 26 years that you served as Executive Director of Drayton Hall?

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## High-Res Images

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Landscape by © Tony Sweet.  
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Snapped Photography



Author George W. McDaniel  
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Photography



Memorial Arch at the African  
American Cemetery at Drayton  
Hall. Photo Credit: Dan Stewart



Drayton Hall's ancient live oak figures prominently in the lives of the descendants and others.  
Photo credit: Copyright Tony Sweet

## Excerpt from Family Interviews



### Rebecca Campbell and Charlie Drayton: “Drayton Hall Could Help Bridge the Racial Divide” 2015 – Drayton Hall

#### Participants:

**George McDaniel:** Executive Director of Drayton Hall.

**Toni Carrier:** Wood Family Fellow, Drayton Hall; Director of the Center for Family History, International African American Museum, Charleston, SC.

**Robin Foster:** Family history research assistant, Drayton Hall; genealogist, owner and co-founder of Genealogy Just Ask.

**Jay Millard:** Videographer.

**George:** How are each of you connected to Drayton Hall?

**Charlie:** I’m just lucky enough to have been born into this family and still a part of it.

**Rebecca:** I’m a descendant of Drayton Hall through the Bowens family – Catherine Bowens and Caesar Bowens. My connections go way back.

**George:** What does Drayton Hall mean to you?

**Charlie:** It means just about everything. When I was growing up, I didn’t realize it was so wonderful. It wasn’t until later that I fully appreciated it. Transferring ownership of Drayton Hall in 1974 [to the National Trust for Historic Preservation] was traumatic because it’d been in the family for so long.

**Rebecca:** Drayton Hall means family. My ancestors are buried here. To me, Drayton Hall means Richmond Bowens, Willis Johnson, Catherine Bowens, and Caesar Bowens. I feel their spirits as I walk the grounds.

**Charlie:** Of those who Rebecca mentioned, I don’t recall Caesar Bowens [who died before Charlie was born], but I remember Richmond well and considered him a dear friend. We grew up together.

**Toni Carrier:** What were your fondest experiences at Drayton Hall?

**Charlie:** Things that stand out are my two daughters having their parties and wedding receptions here. My Aunt Charley was not in favor of it, but she



let us use the house. Fireplaces were open, and we had firemen here for protection, and no smoking, of course. With so many memories, it's hard to pull out one in particular.

**Rebecca:** My fondest experience is visiting the cemetery. Whenever there's an event there, that's when family members – north, south, east, and west – come to Drayton Hall. The dedication of the [Memorial]arch, for example, was great, and we could socialize.

**Robin Foster:** How has knowing each other enriched your lives?

**Rebecca:** Charlie has enriched my life. In the 1970s Richmond got interested family members together and said, "Look, let's come to Drayton Hall. We need to get involved because the legacy is there. Our ancestors were from Drayton Hall. We need to move on. I'll teach you. Come on." My sister Catherine and I followed him. Richmond introduced us to Charlie. He said, "I'm older, but Charlie and I played together." So we met you, Charlie, and then Anne, your children, and grandchildren. It's like we have become a part of the Drayton family because every time we see each other, we just hug and love. There was no hatred. No going back hundreds of years to what happened!

**Charlie:** No question about it, and I hope it remains that way forever.

**Rebecca:** No question! Thank you.

**Robin Foster:** How might museums connect descendants of former slaves and slave owners?

**Rebecca:** The main answer is to find a key person. Here it was Richmond Bowens. Thanks to him, we got to know a lot of the Drayton people. Richmond was wonderful in every respect. I distinctly remember when he was working at the gate. Our people would ask him, "What are you doing here at a plantation? Why are you doing this?" He'd say, "I'm a Bowens, and this is my home. I love it here." Some of us were surprised. Later when he gave talks at the gift shop, people were amazed at what he said about what did and did not go on here.

**George:** As descendants of slaveholders and of the enslaved, what would you like to say as take-away messages to visitors?

**Rebecca:** I would say that my ancestors did live here. They were born here, and I am a descendant. I'm also a part of Drayton Hall.

**Charlie:** Definitely you are!

**Rebecca:** Definitely! Because my ancestors were born and lived here and now because of my relationship with the Drayton family, I feel a part of Drayton Hall.

**Charlie:** I would like to say to you Rebecca, that you are my good friend and that you are just as much a part of Drayton Hall as I am, and my family is. I'd like people to know that we are all from Drayton Hall. Not just me, not just you, but all the people who were born here, who had any connection to Drayton Hall. We all belong to Drayton Hall.

## Excerpt from the Preface

### The Back Story

It is in that tradition that these stories are told. It is also in that more democratic and teachable spirit that I as a historian have tried to get out of the way and let the storyteller speak. Sometimes one may wish the interviewee would say more or “look the real past and future more clearly in the eye,” but it is their story, not mine or yours. The hope is that one day, if we keep trying, they or their descendants will build upon this new foundation.

The cover photograph of Charlie Drayton and Catherine Braxton illustrates that hope. Charlie Drayton, the last owner of Drayton Hall, is the descendant of slave owners and enslaved, and Catherine Braxton, a descendant of the enslaved. His grandfather “owned” her great grandparents, including the enslaved Catherine for whom she is named. For reasons we may guess but not know, they greeted each other with heartfelt gladness. They did not pose. As Larry Goodwyn [my professor at Duke] used to say, “we’ve been round the barn too many times” to believe that the wall of racism is down, but that wall does have cracks, which lets the light through, and in that light, at least for the moment, is where Charlie and Catherine were. If they can find light, why can’t we? With many cracks, that wall will topple. If historic sites, especially in the South, could create more cracks and transform the challenges of their “tangled heritage” into opportunities, why could they not lead the way in toppling that wall?

To hasten progress toward that end, Drayton Hall’s archives contain all of the interviews and transcriptions. For this book, each interview had to be trimmed from sometimes 12,000 words to an average of 3,000. Questions were left in place as a guide for a quick read. To living interviewees, I sent my edits and asked them to read them, make changes, and give their approval. If they are to continue to share their stories, they have to trust. My purpose was not to embarrass them and their family or to display my ideological purity, so if readers think of questions that should be asked, please proceed. Since a book format does limit the number of photographs, the reader is encouraged to visit my website, [www.mcdanielconsulting.net](http://www.mcdanielconsulting.net), for more photographs of each interviewee and of the places and people described.

This book deliberately seeks to reveal personal feelings. Too often, a historic site or museum sees a person only as a donor, board member, consultant, or tourism leader and neglects that they too have personal feelings. As donors,

for example, they are not “moneybags,” as one donor phrased a stereotype of herself. By featuring people across the spectrum and by my interview questions, it is my hope that we see how all of us blend the professional and the personal. Since social identity shapes perceptions, this book features a mix of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, profession, and connection to the site. I make no claim that this mix is exhaustive. Indeed, it is my hope that its limits will serve as inspiration for more efforts to be made in documenting the recent history of Drayton Hall and other historic places.

Prompting and enabling me to interview such a range of people has been my love of stories and my lived experiences, different from those of most historians. When I went to college at Sewanee, Father William Ralston and Andrew Lytle inspired me to teach. During my junior year in Paris, new fields of study like art and architecture opened before me, and upon graduation, I had the pleasure of incorporating them into my teaching at Atlanta’s Lovett School. Serving in the Peace Corps in a rural, rather isolated village in Togo, West Africa, I spoke French all the time, as did most villagers, and gained a new appreciation for hard reality, traditional medicine and religion, and life without electricity, running water, telephones, or other modern amenities like wire screens or window glass. Double-crossed by my draft board, I was drafted out of the Peace Corps and fought with the First Infantry Division between Saigon and Cambodia. I saw enough combat to see what war does to people and got blown up twice, once when a friend, who was walking point ahead of me, stepped on a booby-trapped mortar round. I can still touch the shrapnel in my chin.

Upon return, I went to Brown University for a Master of Arts in Teaching (History), for which I taught at Providence’s Hope High School and learned from John Glasheen and my students that new ways of teaching history had to be created. Going for my PhD in history from Duke University, I participated in its oral history program. Thanks to professors like Larry Goodwyn, Sydney Nathans, and Peter H. Wood and to friends like Aylene Cook, I found new ways of doing history and practicing historic preservation, and I began using historic buildings, objects, landscapes, music, art, and oral histories as resources. A fellowship with the Smithsonian Institution and work with the Maryland Historical Trust led me to forge a career with museums and historic sites. Through public history I could implement effective ways to engage both young and old. I found that no book conveyed the recent history of historic sites from multiple points of view, even though my lived experiences had taught me the need for such. Those experiences have shown how we benefit by seeing life from both the top down and the bottom up and are influenced by things seen and unseen. Such experiences have shaped the formation of Drayton Hall Stories. – George W. McDaniel

*"That's what this book is about— this striving towards a more perfect union."*

*— Adam Parker, The Post & Courier,  
from his interview with author George McDaniel  
April 16, 2022*

## **DRAYTON & BOWENS FAMILY DESCENDANTS**

Charles (Charlie) H. Drayton III was a 7th-generation descendant and the last family owner of the estate. He was the 6th Charles; the 1st Charles, born in 1744, was the son of John Drayton, who founded Drayton Hall. At the time this book went to press, there were three more: Charlie's son, grandson, and great grandson.



Richmond Bowens was born at Drayton Hall in 1908. His enslaved ancestors came from Barbados in the 1670s with the Draytons. In his later years, Richmond returned as Drayton Hall's gatekeeper and frontline ambassador, then as an oral historian on family and community life.

*Lifelong friends, both are interred at Drayton Hall.*

*"Illuminating! I plan to use it in the course I teach on historic houses."*

*— Kenneth C. Turino, Historic New England  
History News - May 2022*

*"Credit George McDaniel for being a part of the healing process of a nation divided."*

*— Charles W. Waring III  
The Charleston Mercury  
May 2022*