

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK
Inez Davis and the King of Siam, Late 1920's
by Dr. William Randall
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Among interesting people in the history of Harvey are some ladies, who, as time flies by may be forgotten. As we approach a new year I'd like to remind you of one of these ladies - Inez Davis. I remember her as the person at the Davis Store - (Presently Black's). Inez, her sister Mary Jane Grobe and her brother Willard maintained the Davis Store for many years. Inez was born June 24, 1889, the daughter of Richard and Margaret (Hunter) Davis. She attended Teachers College but became a private tutor. Her story as reported by Charlotte Harper appears here.

HARVEY WOMAN TUTORED SIAM'S ROYAL CHILDREN
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When Miss Inez Davis went to see "The King and I" which played in Fredericton a couple of weeks ago, she was, in a way, re-living a part of her life. Miss Davis, who lives in Harvey Station was a tutor to the royal children of the Kingdom of Siam in the late twenties.

"It brought back such beautiful memories and all of it was so wonderful!" she said in an interview, seated on a Victorian chair in her rambling two-storey home on Main Street, Harvey Station. Miss Davis first heard that the position to tutor the late Crown Prince Mahidol's three young children was available when she was in the services of Professor F.B. Sayre and his wife, Jessie, a daughter of the late President Woodrow Wilson.

The Prince was a student of Medicine at Harvard University at that time, where Professor Sayre was a member of the law Faculty.

Late one summer evening while Miss Davis was in Boston tutoring 12-year-old Eleanor Sayre, Mrs. Sayre asked if she would like to accompany the Crown Prince and his family on a round-the-globe-cruise enroute to Siam. Apprehensive at first, Miss Davis met with Prince Mahidol at the Sayre home and agreed to join them - a decision that led to one of the most fulfilling and exotic experiences of her lifetime, she says.

Miss Davis set sail from Boston on the ocean liner "Raffles", with Prince and Princess Mahidol, and their three children, Ananda, Kalyani, and Phuniphon. The group called on nine ports and made an extensive European tour including six months in England, and two months in Switzerland.

For the duration of the voyage Miss Davis shared the finest of royal suites with the members of the household in palatial hotels throughout the continent. "I was treated just like one of the family. The children were so clever!... before the year was up and we had reached Siam, they had learned to speak English quite fluently." This was in addition to German, and French and their native language. "

"We took almost a full year getting to Siam during which time we traveled half way around the world and I became quite comfortable and familiar with the family". Miss Davis caught her first glimpses of such exotic places as India, Singapore and the Suez Canal before finally arriving in Bangkok several months after setting sail.

The Royal Palace in Bangkok, which is ornately decorated, and splashed with gold figurines, is reserved for the Reigning Monarch, who was at that time King Prajadhipok, Rama-VI, elder brother of Prince Mahidol.

Miss Davis shared a more modest palace some distance from the city with the Prince and her young charges. Four hours a day were spent in lessons with the two eldest children, Ananda and Kalyani. Phumiphon, the youngest, who is the ruling king of Siam (Thailand) today, was too young to comprehend anything of the lessons, and was tended by a Siamese nurse within the household. Prince Ananda ascended the throne as Rama VIII at age 11, when Uncle Projadhipok

abdicated because of prolonged controversy with his parliament over government reforms. The young boy king had been reigning only a few years when in June 1946, on what was to be a short visit to Siam from his European School, it was announced he had been found mysteriously shot to death in the royal palace. It is reported that the gun found by his head was his own.

"That child was too full of energy and life - and a real desire to live" replied Miss Davis when asked her evaluation of the situation. "He would never even have considered suicide." Reports from the Palace since 1946 have suggested foul play was involved.