

History on the Rocks: Gadsby's Historic Ice Well

Someday my Ice will come™

Coming back to work from the Happiest Place on Earth has been quite the adjustment. Not wearing my princess crown all day has been a challenge. However, don't think that the ice well was far from my mind. It came to me through the little things; a Mickey ice cream bar and the constant struggle for a simple cup of ice.

First the ice cream bar. This was my son's first trip to Disney, second for my daughter. Both enjoyed meeting their favorite characters and princesses, riding the rides and of course eating a Mickey ice cream bar.



Enjoying the Mickey ice cream bar

On a hot Florida day, it was a real (messy) treat. And the opportunity to purchase said ice cream bar was all over the four parks we visited. I'm sure the ease of this would have surprised the animatronic George Washington I saw at the Hall of Presidents. Ice cream was a luxury in the 18th century. It dazzled a crowd; it was a unique treat and the sign of a top notch establishment or household. Now it is a dime a dozen. You can eat Mickey's ear off practically anywhere you want. It certainly put into perspective how far we have come. Second the cup of ice. My husband prefers drinking his cold beverages in a cup filled with ice. This was especially critical last week as a few of the days were pretty darn hot. And you would think this would have been an easy task in ultimate customer service land but no. It became an epic quest

to find ice + cup since most of the carts had ice, but no cups. (Might I say they were large their bottles from the outside.) Maybe it was the heat-induced vision that brought me back to the ice well but my husbs appreciated and savored his iced beverage all the more, knowing it was such a rare commodity. I bet our 18th century counterparts felt the same way.

All this reaffirmed to me our efforts to raise money to restore the ice well. This commercial feature put the City Tavern and Hotel at the top of its industry. John Gadsby utilized it to the Nth degree, maximizing every opportunity to use the ice well for his financial and professional benefit. Walt Disney would have been proud.

P.S. On a positive note that I teased via Facebook a few weeks ago, the fundraising thermometer just got a little redder thanks to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Certified Local Government. The CLG program, created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (amended in 1980) establishes a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and each state's State Historic Preservation Office, which in the case of Virginia is the Department of Historic Resources. We received a \$25,000 grant to put toward the Ice Well Restoration Project. Huzzah!



*The princesses about to start signing,
"Someday my Ice will come..."*