

74 Church Street Summary History

1778-1779	Joseph Kershaw or Nathaniel Russell built house.
1779-1853	rental house owned by Nathaniel Russell, then his heirs.
1853	bought & sold by Henry Bischoff.
1853-1899	residence of owners Christopher (d. 1895) and Olivia Nelson.
1899-1922	seven owners. Rental/investment property.
1922-1957	Mrs. Mary Webb (d. 1930) and her son A. H. Webb (d. 1957, unmarried) Through 1934, 74 Church is single residence.
1936-1951	74 Church is duplex.
1957-1958	Jeanne F. W. Igleheart Mrs. Igleheart owned 28 Longitude Lane. She revised the boundary between the two parcels to create a driveway from Church Street to her residence, then sold 74 Church Street.
1959-1961	Virginia and Louis Y. Dawson.

Sources:

Louis Nelson. "74 Church Street," draft report, 1993. Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

Sarah Fick. Additional historical research.

Assumptions and Interpretation

74 Church was likely built with a piazza at south (and east) elevations, but there is no documentation. We cannot be certain that the ca. 1778 house was not replaced *in situ* at some point during the Russell-Dehon ownership.

There is photographic documentation that the piazza was two tiers. Maps show that it wrapped from main south elevation to the rear.

The rear (east) piazza was enclosed, at least its north bay(s), in the late 19th century. The second floor 2/2 window in the rear principal room was probably added at that time, to replace light lost by the piazza enclosure. The first floor window in the rear room is a later opening with modern 9/9 sash, date unknown.

A narrow rear wing, date unknown, is first shown on 1929 Sanborn.

The back stair within the piazza enclosure is modern, evidently 1959. In the stair closet are remnants of an earlier stair, part of the late 19th century remodeling.

Date of the rear stair landing window opening is unknown. It was likely cut at the same time the south wing was added to the rear piazza enclosure; perhaps ca. 1935, when A. H. Webb created a rental apartment.

The southward extension of the "sixth bay" - the enclosed east piazza - is not shown on the 1944 and 1951 Sanborns. Although Sanborn maps are unreliable as to rear wings and additions, it might be that the south wing and north stair window were added after 1951.

1959 Louis Y. Dawson remodeled 74 Church Street.

Exterior: removed the south piazza and the south extension of the east piazza. Behind

the sixth bay, made a new wing that extends north of the plane of the original house and piazza. With the upper south piazza gone, he reworked the entry opening as a window. Interior: added bathroom at front stair landing. Piazza entry became bathroom window. Added second bathroom at rear stair landing.

Documents

1788	Petrie's <i>Ichnography of Charleston</i> (aka "Phoenix Map") depicts two wood-frame houses on Church Street: one at the corner of Longitude Lane, one a bit to the north - likely 74 Church Street. This map does not show the building with enough detail to be useful.
1852	Bridgens & Allen Map does not show useful detail.
7/1852	E. B. White plat shows a narrow house with piazza at south and east elevations. The rearmost piazza bay appears to have been enclosed. This plat showing ten lots on Longitude Lane between East Bay and Church streets, the property of Dr. Theodore Dehon, the Rev. Paul Trapier and wife, and Rev. William Dehon (Plat Book A, p. 92) remained the legal property reference until 1958.
1882	City Engineer's Block Plat indicates part of the rear piazza had been enclosed, creating the appearance of an L-shaped plan.
1884	Sanborn Map shows the east end of 74 Church only vaguely.
1888	Sanborn Map seems to show the back piazza fully enclosed.
1902	Sanborn Maps were completely redrawn for this edition, which again shows an open piazza at the rear of 74 Church [this cannot be accurate].
1929	Sanborn shows the piazza wrapping around the east end of the house to a rear addition, narrower than the main house.
1944	no change shown on Sanborn
1951	no change shown on Sanborn
1958	Plat shows the house with rear piazza fully enclosed, extending as a wing south to the front edge of the main piazza. Rear addition significantly narrower than the main house, with a shallow entry porch.

74 Church Street Narrative History

The fire of January, 1778, destroyed much of this section of town. Whatever stood on the site of today's 74 Church Street was almost certainly lost in the fire.

On March 11, 1778, John Harrison sold part of Town Lot 64 to Joseph Kershaw, Esq., of Camden, for £700 current money of the state. The lot was 35' on Church Street X 195' deep, bounded south on a narrow parcel owned now or formerly by Charles Pinckney.¹ On April 14, Kershaw paid John Gibbes £14,100 current money of SC for a long parcel, part of Town Lot 5, adjoining the east end of the Harrison lot. The Gibbes lot abutted Longitude Lane and extended to East Bay Street.²

In September, 1779, Nathaniel Russell paid Joseph Kershaw £100,000 current money of SC for both these parcels. They were described as (1) "a town lot on the Bay, bounding east on a street running parallel to Cooper River commonly called Bay Street, north on the other part of Town Lot 5, ... south on an alley or passageway running from Bay Street to New Church Street, known as Longitude Lane," and west on the Harrison lot belonging to Kershaw; and (2) "lot at east side of New Church Street, part of Lot 64, 195' on lane by 35' on Church Street, widening to 37' at east end," bounding east on the other property, south on [now or formerly] Charles Pinckney.³ Then in August, 1784, Nathaniel Russell paid £300 sterling for the strip at the corner of Church and Longitude, 16' X 195'. The sellers were James and Elizabeth Neilson; I did not research when they had acquired this former Pinckney parcel.⁴

Edmund Petrie's *Ichnography of Charleston* (aka "Phoenix Map") was made from a survey taken in August 1788. It depicts two wood-frame houses on Church Street: one at the corner of Longitude Lane, one a bit to the north - likely 74 Church Street.

When was 74 Church Street built, and by whom? By Kershaw or by Russell, soon after the fire [and before the British siege began early in 1780]. Dozens of businessmen, factors, traders, and import-export agents, had been burned out; there was a ready market for rental houses close to the Cooper River. During its early history, the front room of 74 Church Street might well have been used as an office or trading firm.

Nathaniel Russell kept 74 Church Street as an income property until his death in 1820. His will directed that rents on several houses, interest on bonds, etc., be used to support his widow and two daughters during their lives. After Mrs. Russell's death, the estate was to be divided equally between daughters Sarah and Alicia, and again held in trust for their children.⁵

¹ Deed Book X4, p. 172

² Deed Book X4, p. 145

³ Deed Book C6, p. 493

⁴ Deed Book O5, p. 331

⁵ Will of Nathaniel Russell, written May 26, 1819, proved April 17, 1820. Book 34, p. 265.

In July 1852, architect/ surveyor E. B. White made a plat of the ten lots on Longitude Lane between East Bay and Church streets, the property of Dr. Theodore Dehon, the Rev. Paul Trapier and wife, and Rev. William Dehon.⁶ Theodore Dehon, Episcopal bishop, was Nathaniel Russell's son-in-law; he lived with his wife Sarah at 51 Meeting Street. William Dehon was their son, and Paul Trapier was the husband of their daughter Sarah Russell Dehon. They were preparing to sell the Longitude Lane property, which was done in several conveyances.

74 Church Street, #10 on the 1852 White plat, had 45'4" frontage on Church Street and 45'8" on Longitude Lane. The lot narrowed just past the house, with two outbuildings along the north property line - behind a separate dwelling (Lot 9) facing the lane. White depicted 74 Church Street as a narrow house with piazza at south and east elevations. The rearmost piazza bay appears to have been enclosed, but the plat does not indicate whether there might have been an exterior stair. On July 21, 1853, the Dehon family sold the house and parcel to Henry Bischoff.⁷

The 1852 White plat and verbal boundary description given in the 1853 deed were recited in at least ten subsequent conveyances between 1855 and 1958. With no updates to the plat, we must rely on map of varying accuracy to research alterations to building and grounds. The 1882 City Engineer's Block Plat indicates that most of the rear piazza had been enclosed as living space. The 1884 Sanborn Map shows the east end of 74 Church only vaguely; the 1888 Sanborn seems to show the back piazza fully enclosed. The Sanborn Maps were completely redrawn for the 1902 edition, which again shows an open piazza at the rear of 74 Church [this map cannot be accurate]. The 1929, 1944, and 1951 Sanborns show a rear addition, narrower than the main house, and the piazza wrapping around part of the east end of the house. The back stair, at the north end of the original rear piazza, was probably not installed before construction of the first rear addition, shown on the 1929 map.

Alfred and Mary Webb bought 74 Church Street in 1922. Mrs. Webb died in 1930; all their children were at least 18 and they deeded the house to their father. The 1934 City Directory shows A. H. Webb (maybe Jr.) at 74 Church; the 1936 Directory shows A. H. Webb, homeowner, in a duplex also occupied by J. W. Calmese. The Webbs might have added the back stair before 1930, but it seems much more likely that it was added in 1935 by A. H. Webb, Jr.

A new plat made in 1958, when 28 Longitude Lane was subdivided from 74 Church, shows the house with rear piazza fully enclosed: a solid wall at the end of the south piazza. The rear addition was still significantly narrower than the main house, and had a shallow porch.

Virginia W. Dawson bought 74 Church Street in 1958. Her husband, Louis Y. Dawson, was a building contractor, and remodeled the residence. He removed the entire south piazza, including the enclosed bay at the east end, and rebuilt/enlarged the rear

⁶ Three lots facing Tradd Street were property of Mrs. Sarah Dehon. Plat Book A, p. 92.

⁷ Deed Book A13, p. 253; mortgage at B13, p. 493.

addition. Both upstairs bathrooms date to this remodeling.

Windows, chimney breast reveals, and stairs all prove earlier remodelings, but much remains unknown. The 2/2 sash window in the upstairs principal room was probably installed late 19th century, to replace light lost when the rear piazza was enclosed. Its sill is much lighter than any others in the house. The north stair landing window is contemporary with the stair itself. The dining room window might have been added at that time, or in 1959. Its sill seems to match those at the Dawson addition.

74 Church Street
Miscellaneous Information

city directories

1859 Christopher Nelson, 62 Church Street
1860 Christopher Nelson, 56 Church Street
1898 Mrs. Olive Nelson, 74 Church Street
1927-28 Mary, widow of William Webb; A. H. Webb
1942 A. H. Webb owner/resident; George R. Hudson, married, PO clerk
1948 A. H. Webb; Eugene V. Delong
1950-51 A. H. Webb; S. M. Collins
1955 A. H. Webb (not married)
1958 74 Church Vacant

deeds

Henry Bischoff to Nelson, \$3050. Book I13, p. 445
2/14/1899 Quitclaim, First Baptist Church to Olivia Nelson. Christopher Nelson's will left the house to her for life, with remainder interest to First Baptist Church and to the Charleston Bible Society. These organizations relinquish their interest. C23, p. 337
1931 Estate Mary E. Webb to Alfred H. Webb, Title. Ref. Book T30, p. 237, Clark to A. H. Webb 1922. Mary Webb died 11/1930. The four children (adults) vest her ½ right into A. H. Webb, their father. [this can't be right. I must have miscopied the deed. A. H. Webb was the brother.] E35, p. 590
9/3/1957 Heirs of A. H. Webb to Jeanne F. W. Igleheart, \$15,000. A. H. Webb died 4/1957, heirs his two sisters (Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Jackson) and the children of his late brother John.
1959 Igleheart to Dawson, \$11,500. bounding south on grantor. X64, p. 388

Other conveyances of the Russell lots shown on 1852 plat

Lot 9, Deed Book B13, p. 491
Lot 3 and Lot 5 to Bischoff. Book A13, p. 291, 293

[findAgrave.com](http://findagrave.com)

William Webb, 1846-1902. His wife Mary E. Gibbon, 1850-11/1930