

THE JAMES VERREE' HOUSE

*Built before 1774; extensive wing added in 1982
60 Church Street
James Verree, possible builder*

James Verree', a French Huguenot carpenter, bought the tract from which this lot derived in 1754 and probably constructed the house a decade or more later. He also built the two houses immediately to the south but may have constructed this dwelling for himself. Verree' moved to Burlington, New Jersey and sold the house by deeds of lease and release in 1771 to Stephen Duvall. The outstanding feature of the house is the west, first floor room. This space is fully panelled in mahogany with fretwork inlay in a lighter wood. It has been pointed out by Historic Charleston Foundation curator, Tom Savage, that the style of the inlay is very similar to the great Holmes family bookcase made in Charleston in the 1770s (today shown in the Heyward-Washington House). Savage has noted the style of the inlay as that of a cabinetmaker trained in the German style of the period and theorized that it could be the work of Martin A Pfeninger, Sr. (working 1772-1782), a member of the German Friendly Society, who had advertised in the South Carolina Gazette on April 13, 1773, that he performed: "Cabinet-Making, in all its branches, Also, Inlaid-work in any Taste."

Duvall was a bar pilot who assisted ships in entering and clearing Charleston harbor. As an officer in the South Carolina Navy in the Revolution, he died of fever in the dungeon under the Exchange building in 1780. A room by room inventory survives of Duvall's possessions, taken at his death. His finest furnishings including mahogany dining table, sideboard, china table, desk, case clock, and tea table, as well as one dozen mahogany chairs and extensive silver, china, and glass were located in the mahogany room, described as the "Front Room below." He also had seven slaves, including two men, Fortune and Sampson, trained as pilots.

The property was sold to settle the estate of Duvall's wife in 1821.