

New England Men Left Mark On Radcliffeboro

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Second in a series of articles on the dwelling houses of Radcliffeboro. The third will appear next Monday.)

By W.H.J. THOMAS

It is possible to come up with a good many arguments concerning the sameness in plan and detail of Charleston dwellings constructed during periods when the city was dominated by contrasting fashions. But it is just as easy to offer arguments supporting the notion that the city possesses a great variety of designs coming to us from apparently every source but Charleston.

This is most evident in neighborhoods that are little changed since their start. In such a neighborhood we find a house of the same period, which does, in fact, have a surprising degree of independence despite that certain "Charleston look."

Anyone wishing to add to a period of architecture, in all its many aspects, may frequently do so while retaining on a single street. This is certainly the case in the area of Radcliffeboro where we find many fine houses of the early 18th cen-

Lawrence A. Edmondson house at 85 Warren Street marked New England taste of the builders, with the only real Charleston tendency appearing in the two-story

plazas that stand to the south side of both. Mills, the builder of 15 Thomas St., was from Massachusetts and married the daughter of another

Massachusetts native. It was in 1839 that Mills bought this property from a Mrs. Deane Markley, paying \$8,500. The property extended 17 1/2 feet

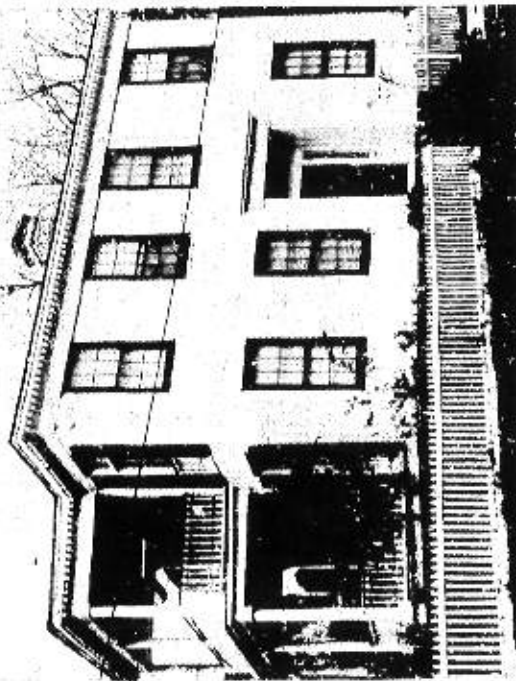
Immediately after the purchase he sold off more than half the property to his wife's brother-in-law, Lawrence Edmondson. Both men then set about building identical houses.

Anyone visiting the small town of New England has seen very similar houses. The recessed doorways, the ship-lap siding, the broad cornice would seem more at home in Massachusetts than in Charleston. The feature of the ionic pilasters at the corners of the two houses also will be seen frequently in New England dwellings of the early 18th century.

Ironically enough, 15 Thomas, in better condition than its Warren Street twin, has lost a number of its features while 85 Warren remains together but soiled. The pilaster at the northeast corner has now disappeared, the columns on the second story of the piazza probably were fluted and had ionic capitals, and the capitals at the entranceway are also gone.

Inside 15 Thomas St. we find an unusual room plan which may also have New England origins. The late Samuel G. Stoney described this plan in an article as follows:

"Charlestonians were then



SAMUEL MILLS HOUSE AT 15 THOMAS ST.
Dwelling has many features found in New England houses. (Staff Photo by Evans)

deriving from the two usual styles of planning, the regular single and double houses. Mills used a modified form of the latter. Instead, however, of the normal wide hall containing the stair and running down the center, with two rooms on each side, Mills put narrow compartments east and west through his house and a stairway between the rooms to the north.

"Four necessary chimneys were run besides the narrow

Do You Know Your Charleston?

compartments. In the attic, they are brought together on arches so that there were only two chimney stacks coming through the roof. The recessed entrance, also an unusual feature here, sets into one of these narrow compartments acting as a hall, this leads to the stairs and the inner rooms. The stair is actually hand-come, spiraling gracefully in a semi-circular enclosure.

Mr. Stoney's description also states that after the late of their period, the ample parlor and dining room have good marble mantels. They are connected with a big landing

door, and like the bedrooms above them have long French doors letting on to the piazza. Also in the style of the period, the architect would frame the openings have square corner decorations. The doors have the then usual long panels.

We find that Mills sold the house as early as 1852 to a Mrs. Susan S. Wilson, widow of a wealthy Westmoreland planter. She also shortly after, leaving the house to her daughter Joanna, who married her own first cousin, Isaac Ripon Wilson. Mrs. Wilson sold the house in 1852 to Simon A. Robinson.

Robinson died during the Civil War and in his will, dated 1863, left the house to his mother for her lifetime and then to his daughter, Eliza Jackson Godfrey Robinson. She lived there until her death in 1892, leaving it to Mrs. Elizabeth P. Dufosse.

Dr. and Mrs. Horatio Hughes purchased the dwelling in 1863 and restored it to its present condition, making only a slight alteration in the piazza which were in poor condition. Dr. and Mrs. Hughes recently purchased another house on Trade Street and are planning to offer 15 Thomas for sale.

THOMAS ST. HOUSE BUILT IN 1890S

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

Sarah A. Bateman built the Queen Anne style house at 5 Thomas St. in the 1890s, apparently as a rental unit.

Mrs. Bateman, widow of Charles D. Bateman, lived in the Regency style house at the northwest corner of Vanderhorst and Thomas streets, known as 64 Vanderhorst.

She built 5 Thomas St. literally in the back yard of the Vanderhorst Street house.

The Thomas Street house does not appear on the Sanborn Insurance Map of 1888, which was corrected in 1894, so it is certain the house dates after 1894.

The ward book (tax list) of 1894-98 notes that the owner was "Building House on Thomas St." The 1898-1902 Ward Book lists a "new house" on the site.

Mrs. Bateman built the house, apparently, for income purposes. The city directory of 1899, for example, lists James Lawton, an employee of the Farmer's Milling Co., as living at 5 Thomas.

The house is in the Queen Anne style, popular in the 1890s, with gable ends faced with wood shingles, an octagonal tower with a conical roof and a piazza with "gingerbread" trim.

The house is compactly built, two stories and an attic of frame, faced with German siding, beveled at the top, in the fashion of the 1890s.

The house consists of a rectangular block with a gable roof, a gabled extension on one side of the front portion and the tower and piazza on the other.

The upper portion of the front extension overhangs at the corners, the overhang accentuated on the outer corner by brackets and a pendant.

Three stories tall, the lower has square, oval and arched windows, some with frosted glass, on the lower levels and grouped square windows with stained glass borders at the upper level.

The piazza, which follows the configuration of the tower, has an arched entrance, Victorian turned columns, an openwork frieze and railings with turned balusters.

Above the piazza, a French window opens onto a small terrace. On the rear of the house are two small porches with square posts, chamfered at the corners, and "gingerbread" trim.

In the interior, all rooms are irregularly shaped.

The floor plan includes, on the left side, an entrance hall, with the staircase rising dramatically up the tower, curving with its configuration.

Newel posts are of the robustly turned Victorian type, while balusters are simply turned.

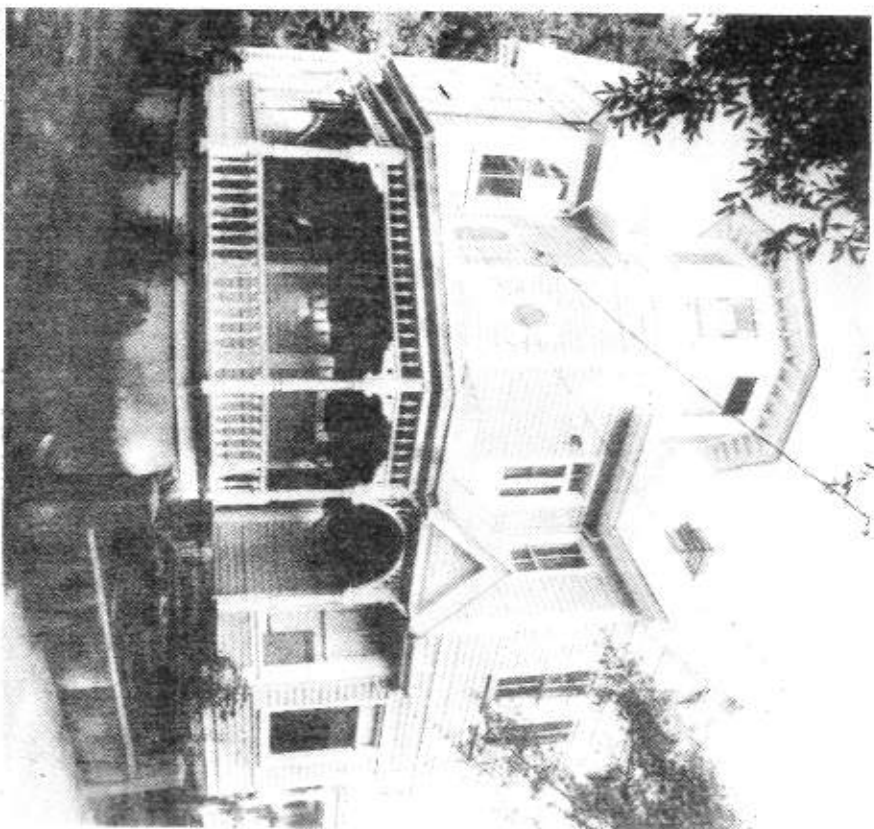
To the right of the entrance hall are a double parlor (or parlor-dining room) with corner fireplaces and a wide connecting doorway.

Door and window surrounds are grooved, with cornerblocks featuring "doughnut" motifs. There are panels below the front windows. The woodwork is the same throughout the house.

The front parlor retains a pressed tin ceiling with a central medallion. The room to the rear of it retains the central medallion and part of the tin ceiling.

The rear parlor or dining room has an oak mantel with oak-veneered columns and a mirrored overmantel.

To the rear of the entrance hall is a bathroom with "tongue-and-groove" wainscoting, and to the left of the bath is a small room which perhaps



(Staff Photo by Bill Murren)

Queen Anne-Style House

was a kitchen. It has a corner fireplace and "tongue-and-groove" wainscoting.

On the second level are three bedrooms and a bathroom. Two of the bedrooms have identical mantels, with small brackets on either side of the shelf and a double scroll design

in the center of the frieze. In the attic, the timber of the complex roof is framework revealed. The attic is lighted by the square windows in the upper portion of the tower.

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House

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The Bateman and related Williams family retained ownership of 5 Thomas and 64 Vanderhorst until 1964, when according to the terms of Cecile King Williams' will, the prop-

erty was transferred to Marie Burnham Taylor and the Episcopal Church Mome for Children. That property was transferred the same year to the Episcopal Church Home for Women and Marie Burnham Taylor.

The following year it was sold to Gordon Realty Co., which sold it in 1972 to Michael J. McDermott. McDermott began restoring the house. Last April, the property was purchased by A. Perritt Rollins Jr., who is continuing the restoration.