

Do You Know Your Charleston?

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Dubose Heyward Lived Out Back

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

Ninety Church St. is a virtually intact Charleston single house of the mid-18th century, with piazzas in the Regency style, added in the early 19th Century.

The house is attributed to Thomas Legare, a merchant of Huguenot descent, who is said to have purchased the lot in 1752. No such deed, however, is found on record.

There were three Thomas Legares living in Charlestown in the mid-18th century. The one identified with 90 Church St. is undoubtedly Thomas Legare (1715-1778), as the property is subsequently found in the name of his son, Samuel Legare (1744-97).

No transaction conveying the property to Samuel Legare is found on record. However, the property was sold out of his estate in 1798.

The property, then known as No. 25 in "Old Church Street," was conveyed on March 5, 1798, to James Miller, Esq., a merchant, for 1,653 pounds Sterling.

Miller and his wife sold the property in 1801 to Hannah Heyward, who subsequently sold it to Mary Christiana Gregorie and Nathaniel Russell, in trust for James Gregorie and Alexander Frazier Gregorie (sons of James Gregorie, deceased, and Mary Christiana Gregorie).

They, in January 1810, sold the property to George Macaulay, a merchant. Macaulay, in 1816, purchased two other lots, with houses thereon, from Margaret Bethune.

According to tradition, Macaulay, after the 1816 purchase, demolished the house adjacent to the south of present-day 90 Church in order to erect piazzas and extend his garden.

Macaulay died in 1826. His will devised to his son, George Macaulay the younger, two houses, then numbered 94 and 96 Church St. and valued at \$10,000 each.



(Staff Photo by Brad Nettles)

90 Church St.

The will further states that No. 94 was at the writing of the will (Oct. 4, 1822) occupied by Thomas W. Baco, and No. 96 was occupied by Macaulay senior. The two houses named are presumably those now numbered 86 and 90 Church St.

The younger Macaulay died in 1847, devising the properties (which had been bequeathed by the will of "my venerated Father George Macaulay"), to his children, Lydia

Hutchinson, wife of Thomas Leger Hutchinson; Serena Woolf, wife of George Woolf; and George Augustus Macaulay.

The heirs sold the property now known as 90 Church in 1848 to Samuel McCartney and Alexander Gordon.

The property subsequently went through various owners until 1926, when it was acquired and restored by W. Lucas Simons. It was recently purchased from his estate by his

daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. G. Fraser Wilson.

Ninety Church is a 3½-story structure of brick, three bays on the street facade and five bays on the piazza side.

The exterior walls are of Charleston grey brick, laid in Flemish bond. Embellishments in brickwork include a simple dentil cornice under

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between the first and second story windows, on the front facade, flat arches over windows of the street facade and segmental arches over openings on the piazza side.

The flat arch of the central opening on the ground level of the street facade is wider than the window frame, indicating a doorway originally filled the opening. Evidence of the door opening may also be seen in the cypress paneling of the front room on the ground floor.

Entrance to the house is now gained through the piazza door, and a doorway between the piazza and the central stairhall.

The segmental arches of the upper piazza are characteristic of the Regency style, while the rather robust columns, acanthus leaf decorations over the columns and mutules in the

soffit are characteristic of the Greek Revival. It is possible the piazzas were "updated" sometime after their construction.

The piazzas were extensively damaged in a fire in 1973, but have been restored to their appearance before the conflagration.

The interior of the house remains substantially as it was when built in the mid-18th Century.

The main rooms on the ground and first floors are fully paneled, the wide cypress boards having raised panels in the Georgian style, in the ground floor rooms.

The primary rooms also retain mantels in the Georgian style, with Greek key and decorative consoles on the most important. The Greek key motif is repeated in the cornice of the front room on the ground floor.

The staircase has very slender newels and balusters, with ivory but-

tons inlaid in the tops of the newels.

In the rear of the property is a two-story brick service building. DuBose Heyward, author of "Porgy" and other works, was a friend of W. Lucas Simons and lived in an apartment in the service building for a time.