

J. Henry Struhs House **250 Ashley Ave.** c. 1893

The house at 250 Ashley Ave. is a simple, two-story Charleston single house with double piazzas. It stands on Lot 2 of 101 lots laid out in April 1892 for **Daniel Cooper and John Stokien**.¹

The men sold both Lots 1 and 2 to grocer **Henry Buck** on June 16, 1892, for \$1000,² and he resold just Lot 2 to **Mrs. Annie Struhs** about a year later on July 1, 1893, for only \$650; that price, compared to other sales in the area of existing dwellings, indicates that the house had not been constructed yet.³ Instead, the house seems to have been built for Mrs. Struhs and her husband, J. Henry Struhs.⁴ The Struhs lived in the house by 1894. Mr. Struhs had worked in the phosphate business, but about 1906 he became the magistrate (local judge) for St. Andrews Parish. He later added coroner duties to his job.



Mrs. Struhs sold their home to the **Fincken-Jordan Co.** on December 21, 1911.⁵ A few months later, on July 3, 1912, the company sold the house to **Mr. Ripley Knox**,⁶ and he transferred it on the same day to **Mrs. Annie L. Knox**.⁷ John J. Knox lived in the house from 1913 to 1918.

Josephine E. Carsten bought the house next on November 1, 1918, and lived in it along with her husband, carpenter William J. Carsten. They were short-term owners of the house, and Mrs. Carsten sold it on June 9, 1922,⁸ to **Huldah Lindsay Harleston**.⁹



The Harlestons, James and Huldah (pictured left), occupied the house immediately, and began a very long period of owner occupancy. On January 19, 1926, James Harleston died.¹⁰ He had served as the steward at the Charleston County Club for twenty years, following the position from the old location on the Upper Peninsula to the new location on James

¹ Plat book B, page 149

² Deed book H21, page 316

³ Deed book W21, page 150

⁴ (b. Mar. 8, 1859; d. Jan. 11, 1946)

⁵ Deed book E26, page 63

⁶ Deed book H26, page 157

⁷ Deed book F26, page 179

⁸ Deed book S28, page 234

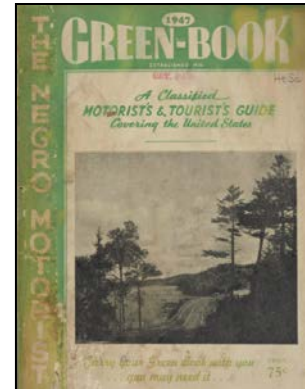
⁹ Deed book H29, page 309

¹⁰ "Long Club's Steward," Charleston News & Courier, Jan. 22, 1926, at 3

Island. In addition, he was a highly regarded golf club maker.

In the 1930 census, his widow, Mrs. Harleston, was listed as a dressmaker working from her house. Sharing the house was a garage worker, Walter Littlejohn, and his family. At that point, the neighborhood was racially mixed with both black and white families living on the block.

By the late 1930s, the house was being used both as the home of the Harleston family and also a safe place for black visitors to Charleston to find room and board. Because of Jim Crow laws, black travelers could not always know how they would be received at unfamiliar businesses. In response, Mr. Victor Green, a mailman in New York, began publishing a travel guide that specifically catered to black travelers. *The Negro Motorist Green Book* identified friendly businesses in communities, first just in New York, and later across the country and even internationally. In the 1938 edition—the first one that included areas outside of New York—Mrs. Harleston’s house was identified as a tourist home. Later editions also included a reference to “Harleston’s Villa,” a tavern, at 250 Ashley Ave.



Mrs. Huldah Harleston died on March 27, 1944, at the house. Neither the 1940 census nor her 1944 death certificate made any mention of her operating a boarding house when recording her occupation. Neither were there any mentions of the use of the house as a hotel and tavern in the Charleston newspapers. Nevertheless, based on the *Green Guide*, the tourist home remained through 1948; only the tavern appeared in the 1949 and

1950 editions. There were no mentions of the address in the guides after 1950. Whether the house continued to operate as a haven, albeit without a listing in the *Green Guide*, is unknown. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, banning racial discriminations in accommodations, the need for a black-oriented guide died out, and the last *Green Guide* was published in 1966.

A daughter, **Emily Marie Harleston Hare** (pictured right), acquired the house in September 1946, paying \$4000 to her three siblings to buy out their interests.¹¹ She and her husband, H.D. DeCosta Construction Co. carpenter Harry W. Hare, resided in the house until his death in 1993. Mrs. Hare died on May 31, 2009, and three of her children, Angela Hare; Harry Hare, Jr.; and Alexine Leach, received the house from the estate on April 28,



¹¹ Deed book J47, page 143

2010.¹² The third generation of the Harleston-Hare family continues to occupy the house today.

¹² Deed book 0119, page 474