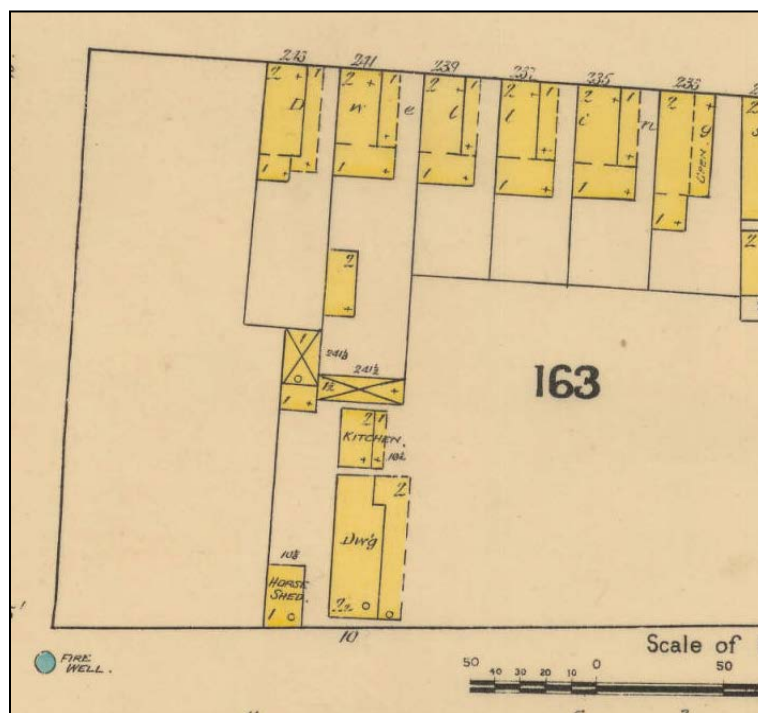


John Thompson House

10 Percy Street

c. 1858

John Thomson was a very successful man. He emigrated from Scotland and eventually made his way to Charleston. Once here, he opened a seed business on King Street that grew into a very lucrative establishment. In addition, he was active farmer himself, operating fields both in the Uptown area and also in West Ashley. In fact, he was the first person to engage in truck farming in that area (that being the idea of growing produce in the suburbs and shipping it in, often by rail, to town).



He acquired a large tract including six contiguous lots bounding on Coming, Bogard, and Percy Streets along with two other lots elsewhere in the same neighborhood from William Robb on April 5, 1858, for \$3530.¹ Mr. Thomson was living in the house by 1859. Assuming that he was responsible for the construction of the house, he chose a familiar form in the Charleston single house. He made it his home for more than 30 years.

When Mr. Thomson died in March 1893, he was already a widower and had no children. He left some of his real estate holdings, including 10 Percy St. (which still included the empty lot next door) to the man who had bought out his seed company a few years early, William McIntosh.

¹ Deed book T13, page 234

The rest of his sizable estate (speculated to be worth about \$200,000 in the press) was left to the City of Charleston. News of the bequest gave birth to any number of suggested uses, often supported with vigorous letters to the editor.

In the end, the City of Charleston sat on the money for a while before deciding to construct a municipal auditorium with it. A Confederate reunion was scheduled to occur in Charleston in 1899, and the City built the auditorium with that purpose in mind. Thomson Auditorium stood on Cannon Park just south of Calhoun St. After the reunion, the building served other functions including both a hospital and, for several years, the home of the Charleston Museum. In 1981, it burned (just after the museum had vacated it), and all that remains are the columns.

Meanwhile, Mr. McIntosh took up residence in his new home at 10 Percy Street. He apparently did not have the same knack for business as his predecessor, and he was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1903. The house, which was described as a "very substantial" home of two-and-one-half stories and adjacent lot were sold in 1904 following a public auction for \$2400 to Mr. G.F. Hottinger.² It seems that Mr. Hottinger purchased the property for rental purposes. In an ad in January 1905, the house was listed for rent and was described as "newly renovated."

On December 24, 1936, Adela Hottinger conveyed the property to Adela Hottinger Geils.³ Then, Adela Hottinger Geils sold it to Eloise Bryant on June 29, 1945, who sold it to Anna Lee Bonneau in June 1945.⁴ However, in subsequent years, Mrs. Bryant obtained permits to add to the house and make repairs.

Ms. Geils' most notable fact is that she carried the notion of using "We Will Overcome" from the tobacco strike in Charleston to a union training facility in Tennessee where it was reworked as the famous "We Shall Overcome." Ms. Bonneau kept the house at 10 Percy Street until selling it in 1997.

Ms. Bonneau sold the house to Juliette Seabrook for \$85,000 on December 11, 1997.⁵ It was quickly resold to Denise Yount Reubel on December 16, 1997.⁶

The current owners, William and Celia L. Denton bought the house for \$475,000, on June 8, 2006.⁷

² Deed book U24, page 145

³ Deed book K39, page 370

⁴ Deed book W45, page 489

⁵ Deed book F294, page 786

⁶ Deed book U277, page 575

⁷ Deed book T586, page 624