

House Weathered Many Storms

N.Y.C. 8/19/68

By W. H. J. THOMAS
Staff Reporter

A building that has served as dwelling, boarding house, and masonic temple, and has seen its share of storms and hurricanes, one of which nearly destroyed it, stands on what must be the best waterfront lot in Charleston.

Today the three-story structure at 44 East Battery (over the centuries it has been listed as 2, 26, and 40 East Battery) might not readily be recognized

as a fine dwelling house but inside its additions and modifications is still the better part of a very decent 18th century home that was the residence of Charleston's Missroon family for more than 60 years.

The southern-most house on the east side of East Battery, it was apparently built by Harry Grant around 1789. He sold the dwelling in 1795 to Francis Kinloch and four years later Kinloch sold it to James Lee.

The next year Lee sold it

to the trustees of Mrs. Fraser, the wife of Dr. James Fraser. Capt. James Missroon purchased it by 1808 and his family name is the one that has stuck with it since that day.

Capt. Missroon and his descendants were in the maritime trade, with offices and wharfs being built nearby later. He was born in Londonderry, Ireland on Dec. 26, 1772, and spent some 50 years in Charleston before his death here on June 27, 1848.

In early city directories he

is listed as merchant or as the keeper of a "navigation store". His son Henry Missroon remained in aspects of the business and at one period in the 1850s, while living in the dwelling, is termed a ships agent. An old but undated photograph shows rather elaborate covered piers extending behind the house.

Sometime during the 19th century the Missroons added to their properties north along East Bay with a two-story office section being connected to the dwelling. The house passed from the family's hands after the Civil War and was used as a residence by a number of persons.

the fortified wall that formed the southeast corner of the original line of military works that completely surrounded the settlement of 1680 on Oyster Point. The Bastion probably dates from 1700-05.

When the building was being remade for the Shriners in the 1920s, the fortifications were carefully studied and it was found why the Missroon house basement was always perfectly dry despite the fact that its floor lay below sea level by almost three feet at high tide.

Few Charleston basements were ever truly dry but one right on the water was something of an oddity. But it was discovered that the old Bastion completely protected the area about the house, being six feet thick and extending down 15 feet.

A visitor to the building today will find much of the original woodwork in the four main rooms of the first two floors. The brass and crystal chandeliers in the halls on either floor are also believed to date from the end of the 19th century when it was still a residence of quality.

In what must have been the upstairs sitting-room, one may still find quite elaborate interior work not unlike the Adam style. In the cornice may be seen cherubs and garlands and the trim about the handsome doorway is apparently unaltered.

When the exterior was extended, the architects took the style of the center stair windows and repeated them in the addition to give balance to the old dwelling.

Shooting Victims 'Satisfactory'

pparent

Do You Know Your Charleston?

During the 1890s it became the home of George D. Bryan, the local attorney who served as judge of probate here, and was later the home of Mrs. K. L. Trenholm.

In 1911 the house was purchased by George H. Moffett but was shattered by a hurricane that same year. The house was converted into a boarding house called the Shamrock Terrace but also suffered periods of vacancy before being repaired in the 1920s as the "Omar Temple" of the Masonic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. It has been owned by the Shriners since that time, but was leased to the U.S. Navy during World War II.

The Missroon house was built on the colonial fortifications known as Granville's Bastion,



Early photograph shows dwelling bet