

# 293 East Bay

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Corner of East Bay and Society

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Historical Research Methods



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## INTRODUCTION

Ask a Charlestonian what structure exists at 293 East Bay, and likely they will furrow their brow as they attempt to remember what is built there now. The building now situated on the lot is indistinguishable from other 1960s one-story structures throughout the city of Charleston. Perhaps the lot is overshadowed by the Harris Teeter located across the street, or maybe it is forgettable because the current building is but a shade compared to the structure that was first built at 293 East Bay in 1788. The progression of 293 East Bay and the land to the west and south that it used to be a part of is a rich example of Charleston's cultural evolution over a 300 year period. The construction and destruction of the Nathaniel Heyward Mansion, one of the earliest structures built on the lot, and illustrates a story of a building that slipped through the cracks of preservation in Charleston, whose debilitation came before the creation of Charleston's first preservation society. The Nathaniel Heyward Mansion stood for approximately 130 years at 293 East Bay. Although the house was but one part of the evolution of the land on the corner of Society and East Bay Streets, it offers a nostalgic view of what the lot could be in a city whose preservation practices has created a kind of fluid time capsule that tangibly illustrates the rich history of Charleston's prosperous rise in the eighteenth century, its relationship to the Civil War and slavery, as well as its role in the twenty-first century. Although preservationists may prefer that one of the earliest buildings built on the lot stood today, the buildings that came after the Nathaniel Heyward Mansion, such as the tenements owned by John W. Roberson and the current 1960s structure, all offer a contribution to the story of 293 East Bay and the cultural evolution of the city.

## PROPERTY OWNERS

According to Alice R. Huger Smith and D.E. Huger Smith in *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston South Carolina*, Isaac Mazyck conveyed over 60 acres to Thomas Gadsden in 1720.<sup>1</sup> This land would later become 293 East Bay. The Buist and Buist records explain that Thomas Gadsden sold the property that is known today as 293 East Bay to Francies LeBrasseur in 1726, measuring east to west 240 feet and approximately 104 feet “on the southeast part of the high land.”<sup>2</sup> When Gadsden purchased the land, it was surrounded by a pasture and the marsh of the Cooper River.<sup>3</sup>

The land was known as the Petit Versailles when LeBrasseur owned it.<sup>4</sup> It is unclear how, but a man named Thomas Shubrick owned the lot by 1759, which was then known as the Brewery or the “old Brew House land” when he sold it to the South Carolina Society.<sup>5</sup>

The Society began as a small charity society for French Huguenots in the early eighteenth century. They became formally recognized in 1751 and allowed those of other nationalities to join with the intention of continuing as a charity society. When they purchased the lands from Shubrick they created what is known today as Society Street.<sup>6</sup> The Society possessed the lands for twelve years before selling it to Theodore Gaillard. Thomas Lynch gained possession the land shortly after, although how is unknown. His daughter Elizabeth was in possession of the property when she and her husband, James Hamilton, are recorded selling it to Nathaniel Heyward in 1788.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alice R Huger Smith and D.E. Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston South Carolina* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co.), 1917, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> Huger and Huger, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Huger and Huger, p. 281.

<sup>4</sup> Huger and Huger do not explain in their book what Petit Versailles was or why it is named that. The researcher has also been unable to find references to it.

<sup>5</sup> Huger and Huger, p. 286.

<sup>6</sup> “History and Purpose,” South Carolina Society Hall, [southcarolinasocietyhall.com](http://southcarolinasocietyhall.com).

<sup>7</sup> Buist and Buist, p. 237.





Figure 1. Nathaniel Heyward, taken 1845.

Heyward (Figure 1) then spent several years buying the land up to Wentworth Street and almost to Anson Street, surrounding what would be 293 East Bay (Figure 2). The Federal style house that he built on the lot became his primary residence in Charleston.

Heyward died in 1851 and the land passed to his son Charles by will.<sup>8</sup>

Charles possessed the lands until his death in 1866. His will, dated January 29, 1866, details

that part of his property would go to his son Edward Barnwell Heyward

and the other to his daughter, Elizabeth Trapier, “for and during the

term of her natural life for her sole and separate use so as not to be liable to the debts and contracts of her husband.”<sup>9</sup>

However, a lawsuit occurred over Charles Heyward’s will in February of 1867. It included “all that lot of land at the



Figure 2. Detail of Nathaniel Heyward’s property.

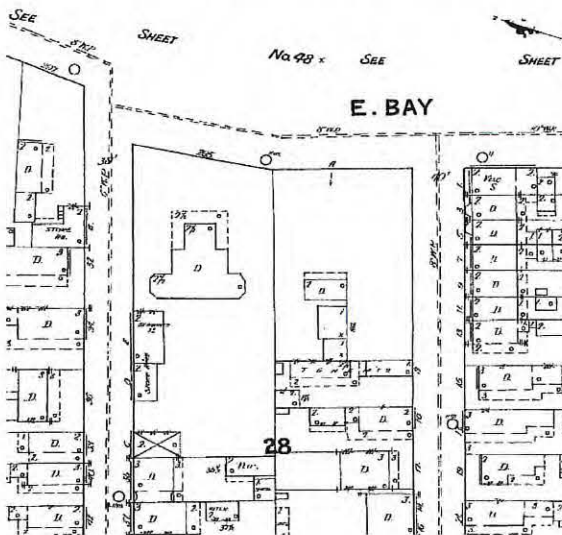


Figure 3. 1888 Sanborn map showing the Heyward property from Society to Wentworth Streets.

<sup>8</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 239.

Southwest corner of East Bay and Society Streets, with the large dwelling and outbuildings thereon, containing on front of East Bay Street 107 feet 3 inches, and in depth on Society St, 250 feet 9 inches.”<sup>10</sup> It also included the adjoining lots to the west and on Wentworth Street—the total of the Heyward family property on East Bay (Figure 3)—as well as a plantation. It is notable that the property now considered 293 East Bay was valued for the lawsuit at \$12,000, a

significant amount in 1867. The children of Charles Heyward determined that the property should not be divided and decided to sell instead. Given that this suit occurred in 1867, two years after the conclusion of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, it is likely that Charles’ children did not have the financial means to continue operating such an extensive estate. Also, that Charles gave his daughter half of his estate that was specified as not to be touched by her husband and his debts suggests that she and her husband may have had financial problems.<sup>11</sup> This could also explain the decision to sell her father’s property.

The executors of the estate held an auction in 1868 that Theodore D. Jervey won for \$16,250. He sold “all that lot, piece or parcel of land with the mansion and other buildings thereon” five years later to Henry A. Middleton for \$11,905.<sup>12</sup>

Accounts of Henry A. Middleton  
 1867-1868  
 NORTH OF VILLAS  
 RESIDENCE  
 EAST BAY ST

1. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	1. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
2. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	2. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
3. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	3. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
4. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	4. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
5. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	5. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
6. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	6. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
7. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	7. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
8. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	8. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
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10. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	10. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
11. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	11. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
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16. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	16. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
17. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	17. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
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27. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	27. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in
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100. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in	5 10 00	100. 1/2 lot 107 ft 3 in x 250 ft 9 in

Figure 5. Accounts of Henry Middleton. Red lines show rent of East Bay until its sale on March 25.

<sup>10</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 239.

<sup>11</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, 239.



In Middleton's will from 1878, he divided all of his estate between his six daughters, his heiresses. However, only one daughter, Alice (Figure 4), owned the house on East Bay. Buist and Buist writes that:

And whereas, for the settlement of the said estate and under the powers aforesaid and all and any other powers, rights or interests the parties hereto enabling and after due advertisement the sold premises hereinafter described were sold at public auction on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 1891, and Alice Middleton was the highest bidder at the sum of \$8555.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 4. Alice Middleton at SC & West Indian Exposition Photo Passbook, 1901-1902.

In the papers of Henry A. Middleton's estate is a document listing his accounts (Figure 5). From the time he buys the Heyward Mansion and the surrounding property he turns the house from a single family home into rentable apartments. Each month his accounts list the East Bay house rent until March 25, 1891, which says "Sale East Bay House."<sup>14</sup> This corroborates the purchase of the house by his daughter Alice that year.

Alice Middleton sold the land surrounding the Heyward Mansion over a one year span beginning in 1893. Over a decade later, in 1914, she sold the last remaining lot, the corner of East Bay and Society Streets, location of the Heyward Mansion and outbuildings, to John W. Roberson.<sup>15</sup> According to the Middleton family papers, Alice was nearly fifty-one when she purchased the house.<sup>16</sup> She sold the house to John W. Roberson one year before she died.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 240.

<sup>13</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 242.

<sup>14</sup> Estate of Henry A. Middleton Papers, Collection 1168.00, Box 12 of 173, South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>15</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 243.

<sup>16</sup> Middleton Family Papers, Collection 1168.12.162, South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>17</sup> This information was obtained by the Middleton Family Papers that gives the date of her birth and by Deed Book O 27 p. 204 that lists the date of sale between Alice Middleton and John W Roberson.

Maintaining such a large house as an elderly woman may have been a challenge, which can explain why the house fell into disrepair and was torn down just several years after she sold it.

Roberson promptly divided the land into separate lots (Figure 6).<sup>18</sup> He built three frame tenement buildings (23, 25, and 27 Society Street) on the rear yard of the Heyward Mansion which he rents to tenants (Figure 7).<sup>19</sup>

In 1914 and 1915 he sold the lots to Nathaniel A. Hunt. In 1921 Lily Roberson, John Roberson's wife, is listed in a deed book gifting Society Street, "divided into lots," at the SW corner to Christiana L. Waterman.<sup>20</sup> In 1933 Waterman sells the

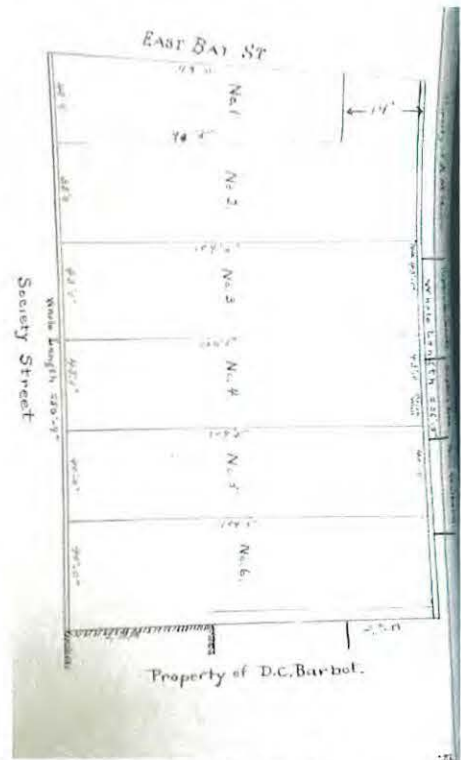


Figure 6. Drawing from Buist and Buist Title Records of lot division.



Figure 7. 29 Society Street. 23, 25, and 27 are gone.

SW corner of Society and East Bay Streets, 293 East Bay, to Frederick B. Martin. She also sells to his brother Henry R. Martin 27 Society Street.<sup>21</sup>

The Martin brothers owned the land on the corner of East Bay Street and continuing down Society Street, although at this time the addresses were on Society Street, until 1956, when they sold 25 and 27 Society Street to Rudolph, Irving, Klyde, and

Marvin Robinson. In 1956, Cummings & McCrady, Inc.

Architects Engineers, bought the land on the corner and built

the building that currently stands on the corner of East Bay and Society Street.

<sup>18</sup> Buist and Buist Title Records, p. 245.

<sup>19</sup> John Poston, *Buildings of Charleston*, p. 462.

<sup>20</sup> RMC Deed Book Y 33 339.

<sup>21</sup> Ancestry.com shows that Frederick and Henry were brothers.



## HEYWARD FAMILY

The Heyward family is integral in the story of 293 East Bay. The lot they owned was vast, and over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries people divided and sold the lot to different owners. The lot divisions show how events in Charleston forced people to find other ways to survive when the economy was disrupted and when the owners of the lot no longer had the ability, financial or otherwise, to care for such a large piece of property. Now, the land from Wentworth to Society and East Bay to Anson bears little trace of the Petit Versailles, the Brewery, or the Nathaniel Heyward House. The story of the Heyward family and the progression of owners of the house and the property surrounding it offer an illustrative example of the success of lowcountry planters in the eighteenth century and cultural disruptions in the nineteenth century.

Nathaniel Heyward was born of Daniel Heyward and his wife Elizabeth Gignilliat in 1766. A successful rice planter, he and his sons built a plantation in 1730 near the Combahee River in South Carolina.<sup>22</sup> His father died while Nathaniel was overseas during the Revolutionary War, and to his chagrin, he returned to learn he was given just a small piece of land according to his father's will. He later married Gabriel Manigault's granddaughter Harriet Manigault in Charleston.<sup>23</sup> In possession of his wife's large dowry, Nathaniel bought land later known as the "Swamp Plantations."<sup>24</sup> One of these was known as the Bluff, where Nathaniel lived for most of his life.

According to the handwritten document from the South Carolina Historical Society detailing Nathaniel Heyward's life, Heyward owned the most number of slaves in South Carolina

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<sup>22</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document, unsigned, dated 1900, South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document.

<sup>24</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document.

at a total around 2,300. The document also writes that his executors reached a total of over two million dollars in property value upon his death in 1851, which strongly indicates how successful Heyward was in his plantations scattered across South Carolina.<sup>25</sup>

The author describes Heyward as “a man of few words and even taciturn at times. He was however a good listener and always ready to appreciate a well told anecdote or joke.”<sup>26</sup> He felt very strongly about familial traditions, both English and American, and his will reflects this decision. Heyward had a strong desire “to build up his family and perpetuate his name, which he was prevented from doing in the English way by the laws of primogeniture having been abolished. In the final distribution of his property therefore he gave his best plantation to those of his children who had been dutiful sons and those of the next generation whose minds were best balanced.”<sup>27</sup> In his will, Heyward agreed to give Charles, his only surviving son, the house at 293 East Bay and the land surrounding it on the condition that Charles moved from his home in Wraggsborough, gave that home to Nathaniel Heyward’s grandson, also named Nathaniel, and set up residence at the 293 East Bay home. If Charles chose not to move, his nephew Nathaniel would be given the house at 293 East Bay. Evidently Charles Heyward agreed to the terms, because in his will he grants the property to his two children, Edward and Elizabeth. According to their family tree, Charles was the only living son of Nathaniel’s at the time of his will in 1846 (Figure 8).<sup>28</sup> This explains why he gifted Charles the house. However, Nathaniel Heyward, the grandson, was alive at the time of Charles’ death in 1866, as was Charles’ son, the other grandson, Edward Barnwell Heyward. Edward was also the first grandson born. Although there

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<sup>25</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document.

<sup>26</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document.

<sup>27</sup> Barnwell Rhett Heyward Papers, Box 11 of 236, handwritten document.

<sup>28</sup> Ancestry.com, Nathaniel Heyward’s Family Tree.

is no explanation as to why Edward was not identified in Nathaniel Heyward the Elder's will as the heir, somehow he gained possession of the house and property over his younger cousin Nathaniel.

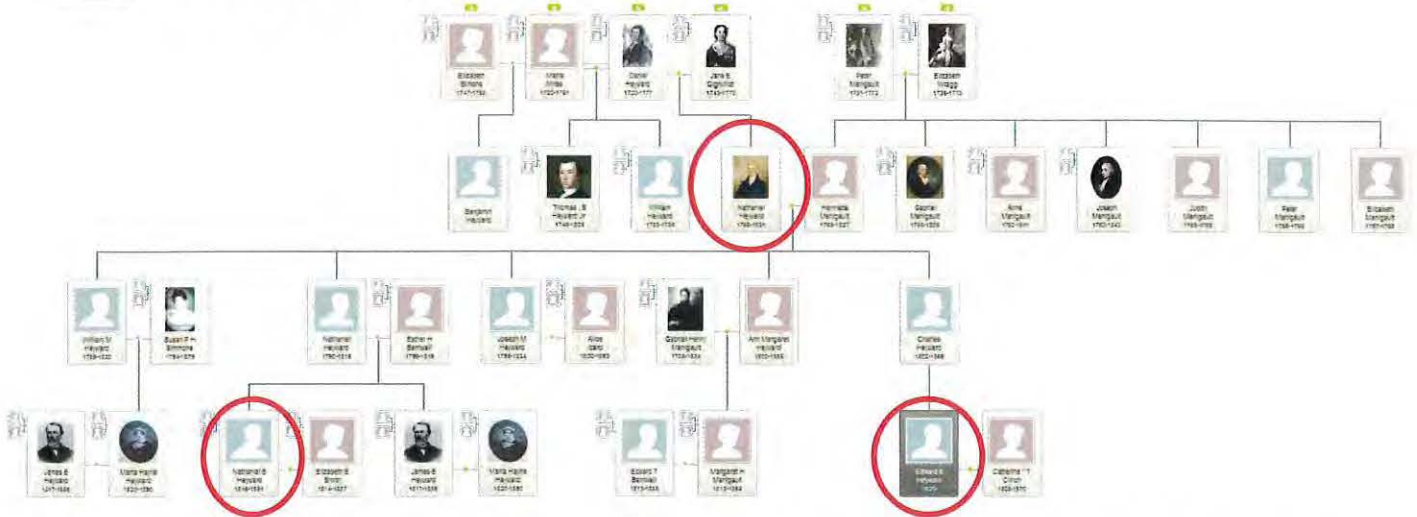


Figure 8. Family tree of the Heyward Family.

However, Edward Barnwell Heyward did not keep the house for long, because he and his sister Elizabeth, sole heirs of their father's property, held a suit that determined Charles Heyward's property that included all of the land he owned in Charleston, including their pew at St. Paul's Church, should not be divided among them. Instead, they chose to sell their shares. The mid-nineteenth century proved that the Heyward family could not continue supporting such an extensive estate Nathaniel Heyward begun at the height of his fortune in the late eighteenth century. As a result, the Nathaniel Heyward House passed out of the Heyward's hands and became subdivided for apartments in less than twenty years.



## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF ORIGINAL BUILDING

### The Nathaniel Heyward

Mansion was a frame house with a portico on the west side toward East Bay (Figure 9). The building was completed made up of three clear sections. The two-story portico was in the Tuscan style, identified by the four slender, unfluted columns of the portico. The portico had a closed triangular pediment and a wide

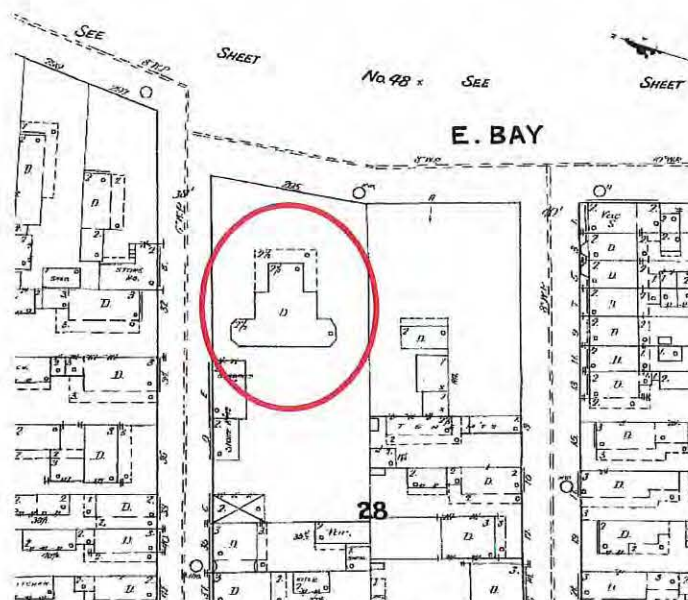


Figure 9. 1888 Sanborn map.

cornice, both of which were decorated with widely spaced medallions. Two more columns on each side extended to the second section of the house that was in the shape of a rectangle. The main entryway was through the portico, up a small flight of stairs on the outside. The entryway was a three bay square. Behind this section of the house was a rectangular section that the columns of the portico extended to. Behind this was a longer section with shaved corners so that the back of the house looked like a stretched out octagon. Several brick outbuildings stood behind the house. The entire property was surrounded by a brick wall that was erected about the time that the house was built. In a photo dating approximately to 1907 (Figure 10), the front of the property features a wooden gate with brick columns with “sandstone acorns” on top.<sup>29</sup> The gate itself appears to be a combination of wooden panels topped with decorated iron rails.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> “Heyward House Remembered by Few,” CCPL.

<sup>30</sup> Halsey Map, Preservation Society of Charleston, [www.halseymap.com](http://www.halseymap.com).

Although there are no known photographs of the interior, according to W.H.J. Thomas in the article “Heyward House Remembered By Few,” the entryway was quite large and could have been used as a sitting room. A hallway oriented east to

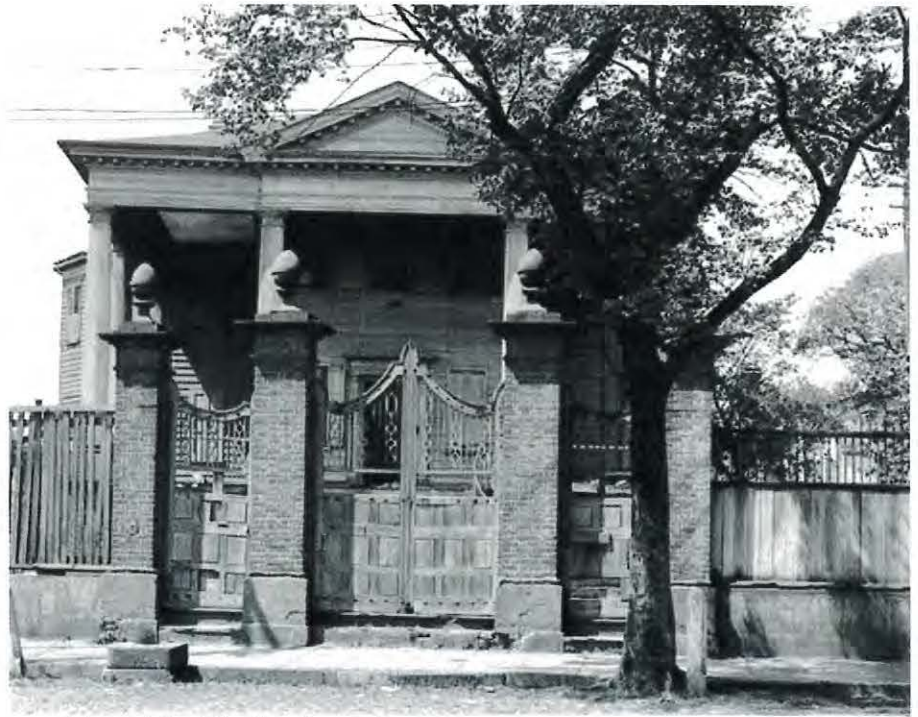


Figure 10. Photograph, circa 1907, of Nathaniel Heyward House from East Bay Street.

west led to a parlor and a bedroom on either side. The back portion of the house had more bedrooms on one side and a dining room at

the other. The upper floors were later divided in the nineteenth century when Henry Middleton

turned the building into apartments. At least one of the upper rooms was paneled in wood. During the time that it was apartments, the lot extended nearly to Anson Street, one street over from East Bay.<sup>31</sup>

#### A FAMILY HOME DESTROYED

Unfortunately, the Nathaniel Heyward Mansion is no longer at 293 East Bay. The house miraculously

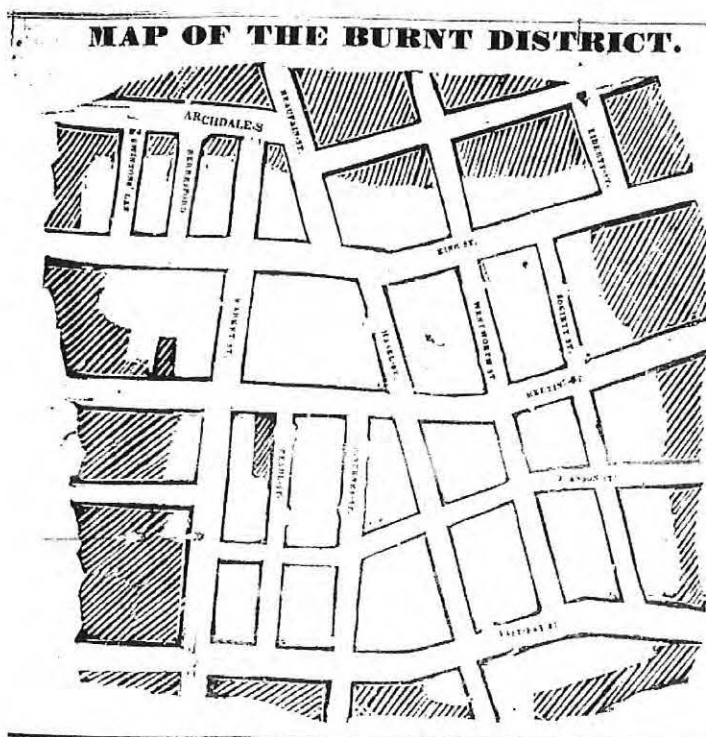


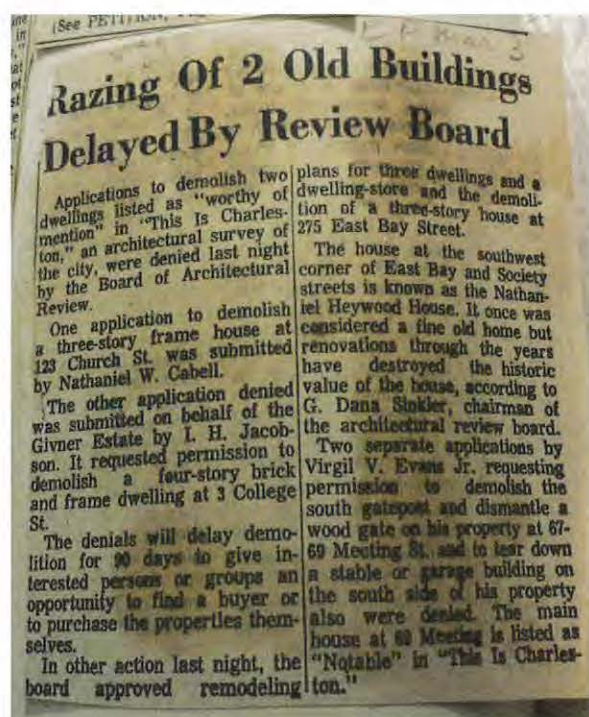
Figure 11. 1838 Map.

<sup>31</sup> “Heyward House Remembered by Few,” CCPL.



survived the fire of 1838 that burned more than one thousand structures in a little over twelve.<sup>32</sup>

The ~~Halsey~~ <sup>Halsey</sup> Map of 1838 (Figure 11) that shows the burned area visualizes the lucky escape of



the Heyward Mansion. The shaded edges that denote the boundary of the fire come extremely close to

Society and East Bay.<sup>33</sup> The house survived the earthquake of 1886 too. According to the earthquake damage records, Henry Middleton's property only received minimal chimney damage.<sup>34</sup> It survived the fire of 1838, the Civil War, the earthquake of 1886, and living as an apartment in the 1870s and 1880s.

However, the frame building could not withstand the decay of time. In a newspaper article from the

Figure 12. Newspaper article from the *Evening Post*, 1966.

*Evening Post* in March 1966 (Figure 12), the chairman of the architectural review board, G. Dana Sinkler, is

paraphrased saying that the Nathaniel Heyward Mansion “was once considered a fine old home but renovations through the years have destroyed the historic value of the house.”<sup>35</sup> In the end, the house had lost so much of its original plan and character that it was not worth saving. The building was let go in a way. From the 1870s, when it was converted into apartments that Henry Middleton rented out, the property quickly deteriorated. As far as the evidence shows from Alice Middleton's accounts, she did not improve the failing parts of the house.

<sup>32</sup> “History Engine: The Great Fire of Charleston and its Cultural Awakening,” [historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/3531](http://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/3531).

<sup>33</sup> “1838 (April 27-29) Fire,” Preservation Society of Charleston, [www.halseymap.com](http://www.halseymap.com).

<sup>34</sup> City of Charleston Division of Records Management History File, The Earthquake of 1886, CCPL.

<sup>35</sup> *Evening Post*, March 3, 1966, Scrapbook 1966-1967, Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

## DATE OF DESTRUCTION

When the building was destroyed remains a mystery. The authors of *On the Eve of the Charleston Renaissance* write that the building was torn down in 1920.<sup>36</sup> Other sources simply say that it was demolished around World War I.<sup>37</sup> *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston South Carolina* shows an illustration of the Nathaniel Heyward House with the caption “recently pulled down.” The book was published in 1917, which suggests that it was demolished that year. However, a news article from the *Evening Post* in 1966 writes that “the house at the southwest corner of East Bay and Society streets is known as the Nathaniel Heyward House.”<sup>38</sup> The use of present tense in the article suggests that the building was still standing at the time of publication.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, the news article from the *News & Courier* from 1968 begins with the words:

For more than 50 years, after violent alterations, one of Charleston’s most stately 18<sup>th</sup> century mansions stood disguised beneath the trimmings and general appearance of a slum tenement...not since the World War I years has the old dwelling...shown any of its former self. What remained of the house was recently removed when the new offices of Cummings and McCrady...were built.<sup>40</sup>

This excerpt suggests more clearly that at least parts of the building were still standing in the mid-1960s. The article is unclear, however, concerning what parts of the building remained in the 1960s. W.H.J. Thomas, the author of the article, acknowledges that he was unable to

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<sup>36</sup> Douglas W. Bostick and Daniel J. Crooks, Jr., *On the Eve of the Charleston Renaissance: The George W. Johnson Photographs*, Charleston, Joggling Board Press, 2005, 94.

<sup>37</sup> Halsey Map, Preservation Society of Charleston, [www.halseymap.com](http://www.halseymap.com).

<sup>38</sup> *Evening Post*, March 3, 1966, Scrapbook 1966-1967, Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

<sup>39</sup> The researcher of this paper contacted Sinkler to inquire about the existence of the house at the time of the article or not. Unfortunately, he was not able to remember when the house was pulled down or in what context he is quoted in the newspaper article.

<sup>40</sup> “Heyward House Remembered by Few,” by W.H.J. Thomas, *News & Courier*, February 12, 1968, p. 1B, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library.

obtain information about the house or the interior plan from the standard sources, which highlights the unusual circumstances surrounding the Heyward House and its demolition.<sup>41</sup>

*Old Codger's Guide to Charleston* begins their lists of inhabitants of 293 East Bay in 1920.<sup>42</sup> This, in combination with the newspaper article "Heyward House Remembered By Few," may suggest that although sources say that the house was pulled down around 1917, part of it was standing. That part may or may not have been one of the John W. Roberson tenements originally located at 23 through 33 Society Street.

One can assume that the Heyward House was still standing in 1914 due to a deed from Alice Middleton to John Roberson, in which the lot described within the deed is "that lot with the mansion (Heyward) and outbuildings."<sup>43</sup> However, the lot is never referenced within any deed after 1914 as the location of the Heyward Mansion.

The ward books of peninsular Charleston facilitate the formation of a loose timeline of the structural evolution of 293 East Bay and its immediate area. The ward book for the years 1914 to 1918, for example, show that the Wentworth and East Bay cross section had a building owned by John Roberson and later by Nathaniel Hunt. In the ward book, the SW corner, or 293/295, had two wooden buildings owned by Alice Middleton on a lot that measured 100 ft X 250 ft. These dimensions correspond with earlier dimensions of land upon which rested the Nathaniel Heyward House in the deeds leading up to the transfer to Alice Middleton. Both the name of the owner and the property dimensions have been crossed out and replaced with John Roberson's name and new dimensions of 93 ft X 49 ft 9 in.<sup>44</sup> Because the existence of two wood buildings remains consistent through the ward book, one can infer that Roberson subdivided the

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<sup>41</sup> "Heyward House Remembered by Few," CCPL.

<sup>42</sup> Betty and J. Francis Brenner, *Old Codger's Guide to Charleston Address Book 1900-1999*, (Charleston: Jackson's Inc. of Charleston, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Deed Book O 27 pg 204, microfilm, RMC.

<sup>44</sup> Ward Book 1914-1918, pg 37, microfilm, Historical Room, RMC.



lot upon which the Heyward Mansion stood. It is less obvious, however, if one of the wood buildings is the Heyward Mansion, or part of it.

The ward book for 1918 to 1922 shows that John Roberson owned the SW corner, or 293/295, on East Bay and Wentworth Streets. The property consisted of two wood buildings with lots each measuring 93 ft X 49 ft 9 in. One additional property listed under Roberson's ownership was assessed on Society Street. This listing under Society Street in the same ward books lists the two wood buildings plus four more wooden buildings. Two of the lots these buildings were built upon measured 35 ft X 104 ft 5 in and the other two measured 42 ft X 104 ft 5 in.<sup>45</sup> These dimensions, when added up, are roughly the same width and length of Nathaniel Heyward's original property on the corner of East Bay and Society Streets.

The ward book for 1922 to 1925 lists John W. Roberson as the owner of two wood buildings on the southwest corner. The lot measures 93 ft X 49 ft 9 in. The ward book also shows that Roberson owned numbers 25 and 27 Society Street, whose measurements are 35 ft X 104 ft and 5 in for 25 Society St and 43 ft X 104 ft for 27 Society St.<sup>46</sup> These measurements correspond to the total length and width of the original lot. Because the Heyward Mansion was the only frame house on the lot measuring 250 ft X 104 ft, one may infer that either the house was gone at this point in time or part of it was still standing and then, as part of the John Roberson tenements, a second wood dwelling was built behind the existing one.

Deed books show that John Roberson's tenements were 23-33 Society Street, and the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project photographs labels the first house with the bays in the back of the house as 23 Society Street.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ward Book 1918-1922, pg 37, microfilm, Historic Room, RMC.

<sup>46</sup> Ward Book 1922-1935, pg 89, microfilm, Historical Room, RMC.

<sup>47</sup> Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project Photographs, Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

An undated photograph shows this building (Figure 13).<sup>48</sup> Behind it one can see three frame single houses. The 1902/1944 Sanborn map shows these four buildings in plan view (Figure 14).<sup>49</sup> The map also shows that the apartment building on the corner of Society and East Bay had different addresses. The apartments facing



East Bay are labeled as 293 and the apartments on the north side, facing Society Street, have the label 23, indicating that 293 East Bay and 23 Society Street are likely the same building.

Figure 13. Undated photograph, possibly the McCrady photograph of 1965, showing the John Roberson tenements. The handwritten date in top center is the researcher's.

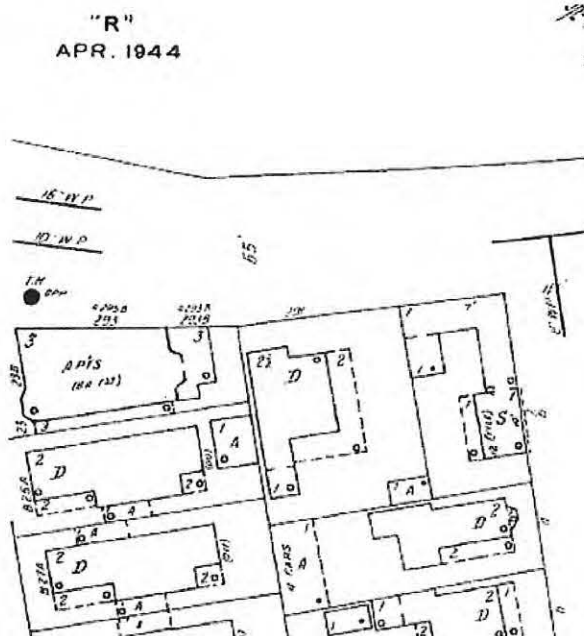


Figure 14. 1902/1951 Sanborn map.

<sup>48</sup> Photograph with handwritten "293 E. Bay Nathaniel Heyward House," South Carolina Historical Society. The telephone lines and cars in the foreground suggest a date of the 1950s or 1960s, prior to the construction of the current building in 1965. This may be the John McCrady, Jr. photograph.

<sup>49</sup> 1902/1944 Sanborn map, Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, sanborn.umi.com.

Although evidence shows that John W Roberson built three frame buildings on Society



Figure 15. Photograph from the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project depicting 23 and 25 Society Street in 1960.

Street “on the site of the rear yard of the...Heyward House,”<sup>50</sup> photographic evidence from the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project Photographic Survey in 1960 (Figure 15) and from the South Carolina Historical Society show 23 Society Street very close to East Bay, or in the yard in front of the location of where the Heyward Mansion would have stood.<sup>51</sup>

Although this structure seems to have the similar shape as the back of the original house,

the bay on the east side is centralized along the east wall of the building and is unaligned with the opposite bay. Both bays on the Nathaniel Heyward House were directly positioned across each other on the east west axis. The *News & Courier* author writes that the front portion of the house was torn down, leaving the “long rear section with its bay at south and north.”<sup>52</sup> This description describes the architectural plan of 23 Society Street except for the position of the bays, but there is a dearth of information among the records to fully explain whether 23 Society Street was a new building like its tenement counterparts or if it was part of the Nathaniel Heyward House.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Poston, *Buildings of Charleston*, p. 462.

<sup>51</sup> Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project Photographs, Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

<sup>52</sup> “Heyward House Remembered by Few,” CCPL.

<sup>53</sup> Poston’s *Buildings of Charleston* writes that the Roberson tenements were constructed in 1915. If the partial or complete demolition of the Nathaniel Heyward House occurred in 1917, at least part of the original house stood on the site of the Roberson tenements. The researcher found no information to suggest that the house was moved closer to the street, where 23 Society Street was, so the exact position of the tenements and the original house on the lot is unknown at this time.



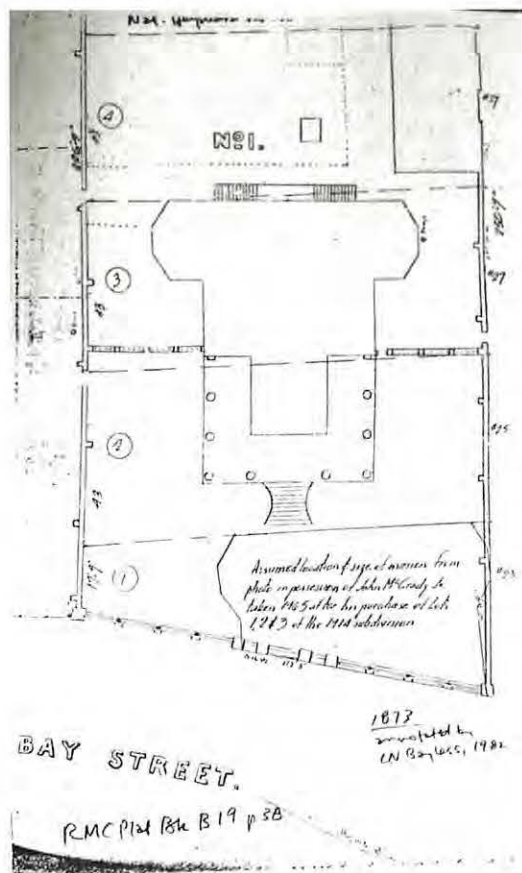


Figure 16. Plat with handwritten notes.

Further complicating the question regarding the evolution of dwelling structures on the corner of Society and East Bay Streets is a plat that depicts the Nathaniel Heyward House (Figure 16). In front of it, abutting the corners of the two streets, is the hand-drawn outline of 23 Society Street. Written within the outline is the notation, “assumed location & size of masion [likely a grammatical error] from photo in possession of John McCrady Jr. taken 1965 after his purchase of lots 1, 2 & 3 of the 1914 subdivision.”<sup>54</sup> Given that the current one-story building was built in 1965, this document is helpful in illustrating that at least one building that was there after the destruction of the mansion and before the construction of the current building.<sup>55</sup> The plat confuses matters further, though, by

suggesting that the mansion—likely the Nathaniel Heyward Mansion—was assumed to be closer to the street, or in the same position as 23 Society Street. The plat summarizes the confusion surrounding the lot, the demolition of the Heyward House, the construction of the Roberson tenements, and the similar architectural details of 23 Society Street and the original house.

One can conclude that, although there is no definitive evidence, there were buildings at 293 East Bay, that they were made of wood, and that they were likely built by 1922 or earlier. The date corresponds to the demolition, partial or complete, of the Heyward House in 1917.

<sup>54</sup> Copy of Plat Book B 19 pg 38, original in RMC, copy from Historic Charleston Foundation Archives.

<sup>55</sup> \*I have not been able to locate the John McCrady Jr. photograph. I have a suspicion that it is the undated photograph in the possession of the South Carolina Historical Society (Figure \*) that I have previously cited.

Although the building and its gates no longer remain, it is not entirely forgotten. Two mantles from the house were purchased and brought to 39 Church Street, where they remained through the 1950s. Now, they are located in the hallway of Clemson University/College of Charleston's graduate program in historic preservation in Charleston, SC. The wood mantle depicted below is in the Adamesque style, a neo-Classical style popular in the late-eighteenth century. The frieze in the center of the mantle depicts a fox hunt scene, a popular motif at the time of the mantle's completion. Other bucolic images on the mantle include a church on one side and a house on the other.<sup>56</sup>



Figure 17. One of the mantles from the Nathaniel Heyward House at 39 Church Street.

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<sup>56</sup> MSHP Study Collection, 2011.06.257, Clemson University/College of Charleston Graduate Program in Historic Preservation.





Figure 18. Mantle from 39 Church Street, now at 292 Meeting Street.



Figure 19. Detail of mantle from Nathaniel Heyward House.



Figure 20. Detail of mantle from Nathaniel Heyward House.

#### ARCHITECTURE OF CURRENT BUILDING

The building that stands on the corner of Society and East Bay Streets is a one story brick building that is painted blue. It has a flat roof with wide, overhanging eaves. Long, rectangular windows inset into the walls offer a view onto the street. The building is set at an angle on the corner so that the front of the building on East Bay has a triangular area with low shrubs and a several small trees. The entrance has a flat overhang above the doors. They are set to the west side of the building, making the front

appear asymmetrical. To the east of the doors are three sets of two windows spaced apart. White formed cement surround the windows and just under the eaves. Overall, the building is unassuming and a representation typical of mid-century one-story buildings in Charleston.

## CONCLUSION

293 East Bay experienced transitions relating to its geographical boundaries and the structures built on the lot that were shaped by cultural and economic circumstances in a period spanning 300 years. The Nathaniel Heyward Mansion was a direct result of the prosperity lowcountry planters experienced in the eighteenth century. The wealth Nathaniel Heyward amassed from his successful rice plantations allowed him the financial flexibility to build a permanent home on Charleston's peninsula. The house he built was an elegant example of the Federal style. The exterior details, from the acorn gate posts to the two-story portico, were a direct and visible representation of Heyward's wealth. Although the lack of information concerning the original interior is unfortunate, the description given in the *News and Courier* article offers a small window into the architectural integrity of the house. Unfortunately, the house was demolished approximately one decade before Charleston's first preservation society, The Preservation of Old Dwellings, formed. Henry Middleton transformed the house into rentable property, but when his middle-aged, unmarried daughter purchased the house in 1891, she was unable to maintain it both physically and financially. When she sold 293 East Bay to John Roberson in 1914, the house was falling down, and the portico may already have been taken off. Roberson's decision to turn the lot into several tenement houses highlights his need for an income-generating prospect that also helped those hit by the economic depression and the beginning of the First World War. 23, 25, and 27 Society Street were torn down in the 1960s to make way for the current commercial building originally used by an architectural and engineering firm, yet another visible example of a transition in Charleston. The architectural loss of the Nathaniel Heyward House is tragic for a preservation-minded city like Charleston.

However, the evolution of the lot over time offers a rich look into the factors that made Charleston the city it is today.



ANNOTATED CHAIN OF TITLE

**1696**

Grantor: Unknown

Grantee: Isaac Mazyck

Book & Page: RR 582

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 90 acres

The book and page comes from the Buist and Buist Records.

**1706**

Grantor: Unknown

Grantee: Isaac Mazyck

Book & Page: RR 552

Type: Unknown

Lot: 71 acres abutting the 90 acres gained in 1696

The book and page comes from the Buist and Buist records.

**1726**

Grantor: Isaac Mazyck

Grantee: Thomas Gadsden

Book & Page: Unknown

Type: Conveyance



Lot: "63 or 64 acres with the marsh-land adjoining."<sup>57</sup>

**1726**

Grantor: Thomas Gadsden

Grantee: Francies LeBrasseur

Book & Page: F 67

Type: Conveyance

Lot: E to W 240 ft and 104 ft

**1759**

Grantor: Thomas Shubrick

Grantee: South Carolina Society

Book & Page: VV 503-515

Type: Conveyance

Lot: N on Centurion St and E by a piece of land formerly called Petit Versailles, now the  
Brewery; E to W 240 ft and N to S 104 ft

There is no description in the deed about what the Petit Versailles or the Brewery are.

**1771**

Grantor: South Carolina Society

Grantee: Theodore Gaillard

Book & Page: C 4 pg 3

Type: Conveyance

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<sup>57</sup> Huger and Huger, 281.

Lot: N of Centurion St 228 ft, depth (N to S) 104 ft, E on part of Thomas Gadsden land lately sold by the South Carolina Society to Thomas Lynch, Esq.

James Hamilton married Thomas Lynch's daughter, and she somehow got the land.

**1788**

Grantor: James & Elizabeth Hamilton

Grantee: Nathaniel Heyward

Book & Page: A6 455

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 1 & 2 on E.B. White's 1866 plat; 107 on E Bay and Society 178 ft

According to Buist and Buist, the original dimensions are incorrect. They believe that he actually owned 250 ft and the Petit Versailles (240 ft)

**1846**

Grantor: Nathaniel Heyward

Grantee: Charles Heyward

Book & Page: Will Book K 452

Type: gift/will

Lot: House and lot of land

Nathaniel made Charles the heir on the condition that Charles gave his current home to his nephew Nathaniel and moved into his father's East Bay home.

**4/21/1873**

Grantor: Est. Charles Heyward

Grantee: Theo D Jervey

Book & Page: J 16 148

Type: Auction

Lot: 101 x 110, E Bay to Society Streets, NW corner of Wentworth

**1/28/1873**

Grantor: Theo D Jervey

Grantee: Henry A Middleton

Book & Page: J 16 pg 148.

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 211 x 250, E Bay St

**3/25/1891**

Grantor: Henry A Middleton

Grantee: Alice Middleton

Type: Conveyance

Book & Page: Will Book R pg 273

Lot: "East Bay House"

There is not a deed book mentioned that explains how Alice Middleton received the house.

However, the Middleton family papers contains the account papers of her father, Henry A.

Middleton. One of the pages lists the sale of the East Bay House for \$8,555 to Alice Middleton.<sup>58</sup>

One can reasonable conclude that this is the 293 East Bay, the Nathaniel Heyward House,

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<sup>58</sup> Middleton Family Papers, Collection 1168.12.162, South Carolina Historical Society.



because earlier accounts on the East Bay house are rents paid by Alice Middleton and her sisters to her father. The Buist and Buist records support that she was able to purchase the house over her sisters.<sup>59</sup>

**3/16/1914**

Grantor: Alice Middleton

Grantee: John W Roberson

Book & Page: O 27 204

Type: Conveyance

Lot: East Bay 108 ft Society St 250 ft W 103 ft S 26 ft, 25-33 Society Street, "Heyward Mansion" and outbuildings

**10/19/1914**

Grantor: John W. Roberson

Grantee: Nathaniel A. Hunt

Book & Page: U 25 568

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 25, 27, 29, 31, 33 Society Streets

**5/5/1915**

Grantor: Nathaniel A. Hunt

Grantee: John W Roberson

Book & Page: E 28 41

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<sup>59</sup> Buist & Buist Title Records, 242.

Type: Conveyance

Lot: E Bay WS Society St SS

**6/5/1915**

Grantor: Nathaniel A. Hunt

Grantee: John W. Roberson

Book & Page: Y 26 331

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 27 Society St

**12/21/1921**

Grantor: Lily Roberson

Grantee: Henry R Martin

Book & Page: Y 33 338

Type: Gift

Lot: 25 Society St

**12/21/1921**

Grantor: Lily Roberson

Grantee: Christiana L Waterman

Book & Page: Y 33 339

Type: Gift

Lot: Society Street, "divided into lots," SW corner

**1/18/1933**

Grantor: Christiana L Waterman

Grantee: Frederick B. Martin

Book & Page: U 36 209

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 49'9" E Bay, SW corner Society and E Bay Sts

"...being the same property conveyed to me, Christiana L. Waterman, by Lily Roberson on December 21, 1929."

**1/29/1933**

Grantor: Christiana L. Waterman

Grantee: Henry R. Martin

Book & Page: U 36 208

Type: Gift

Lot: 27 Society St

**12/30/1937**

Grantor: Henry R. Martin

Grantee: Frederick B. Martin

Book & Page: C 40 617

Type: Gift

Lot: 43' Society St S 43' E and W 104', 27 Society St



“...being the same property conveyed to Christiana L. Waterman by Lily Roberson on December 21, 1929...and a portion conveyed to me, Henry R. Martin, by Christiana L. Waterman by deed on January 18, 1933.”

**2/21/1956**

Grantor: Executors of Frederick B Martin

Grantee: Rudolph, Irving, Klyde Robinson

Book & Page: V 66 552

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 49'9 Society St, 91'7 E Bay St, S 28'10, SW corner of E Bay, also 27 Society St

“...being a portion of the premises conveyed to Frederick B. Martin by deed of Christiana L. Waterman, January 18, 1933.”

“...being a portion of the premises conveyed to Frederick B. Martin by deed of Henry B. Martin on December 30, 1937.”

**2/21/1956**

Grantor: Executors of Henry R. Martin

Grantee: Rudolph, Irving, Marvin, and Klyde Robinson

Book & Page: V 66 555

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 35' Society St 31' E Bay W 60' N 104', 25 Society St

**12/30/1965**

Grantor: Rudolph, Irving, Marvin, and Klyde Robinson

Grantee: Cummings & McCrady, Inc.

Book & Page: P 84 139

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 23, 25, 27 Society St

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