

32 Ashton Street

Charles Magrath House

c. 1878

The laterally arranged, two-story house at 32 Ashton Street was built on Lot 12 (about 40 by 115) of the Bee Tract. When **Mary**

Singleton Bee (nee Gadsden) died on July 23, 1875, her heirs brought a legal action to sell the property. A plat was prepared in February 1878, and an auction was held on March 26, 1878. The high bid was placed by coppersmith **Charles Magrath** of \$65,¹ a price in keeping with unimproved lots in the area at that time.



The plat of the Bee Tract showed a house elsewhere on the larger tract, but there was no indication that any improvements had been made to Lot 12 by that time. However, by 1879, Mr. McGrath was listed as a resident of the house on Ashton Street. (The house was inconsistently listed as both 12 and 12 ½ Ashton Street before the street was renumbered in 1885.)

Charles McGrath sold the house to mulatto butcher **Samuel P. Gaillard** (b. abt. 1857; d. Oct. 4, 1937) on April 13, 1885, for \$700.² Upon acquiring the house, it seems to have been used as a rental property. Then, Mr. Gaillard and his family lived in the house for many years starting in about 1893. On October 12, 1891, Mr. Gaillard had placed his house in a trust for his own benefit and then his children with his first wife, Martha Drayton,³ but if none outlived him, then for Margaret Middleton, who was soon to be his second wife.⁴ The trustees reconveyed the house to Mr. Gaillard on December 24, 1897.⁵

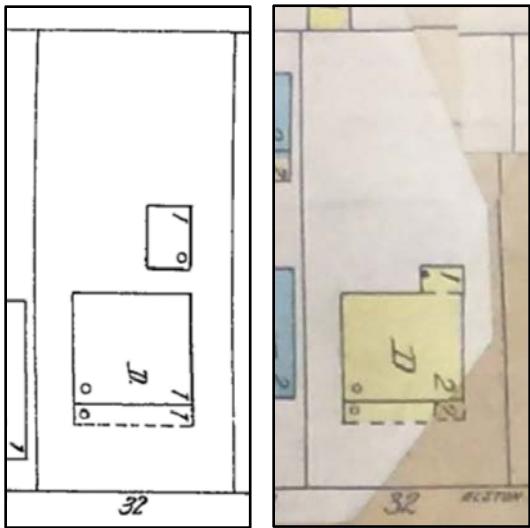
¹ Deed book N17, page 21

² Deed book H20, page 170

³ Gabriel, Samuel, Bertha and Susan Gaillard were the children.

⁴ Deed book M21, page 61

⁵ Deed book E23, page 316



The house seems to have been substantially expanded by Mr. Gaillard by adding a second floor to the house. The earliest Sanborn map which captured the area was printed in 1902 (left) and showed the house as a one-story house with a one-story porch across the front. Until 1921, the house was consistently listed in the county tax records as a single-story house, but in 1921 the house switched to a two-story house. Oddly, the value of the house was consistently value at \$550 in the years before and after. Consistent with that date of addition is that by the time of the 1929 updates to the Sanborn maps,⁶ the house had had a second floor added with a two-story porch across the front. The Sanborn maps of 1944 (left) show a house of exactly the same footprint (except for a small room at the rear) but with two floors.

Mr. Gaillard's son, **Merton Blanks Gaillard**, received the house from his father on October 19, 1936.⁷ Following Samuel Gaillard's death in 1937, Merton Gaillard, also a butcher, lived in the house along with his wife, their daughter, and renters. Merton Gaillard died in October 1942, and he devised the house to his wife, **Zara Gaillard**, for her life and then to his daughter, **Rosmond Gaillard**. Mrs. Zara Gaillard must have remarried, and on March 13, 1962, Zara D. Gaillard Hamilton conveyed her interest in the house to her daughter.⁸

Rosmond died on December 15, 1991, and a long list of relatives⁹ inherited the house on November 19, 1992.¹⁰ Either the house sat vacant or else no returns were provided because the house disappeared from the city directories starting in 1992 until Holly A. Maben, a payroll office worker with local schools, acquired the house on April 25, 2001, for \$47,000.¹¹ The house passed out of the extended Gaillard family for the first time in 116 years, but Ms. Haben returned the house to use and resided there herself.

⁶ The next edition of the Sanborn maps was printed in April 1944, but a set updated only through 1929 is on file at the Charleston County Library.

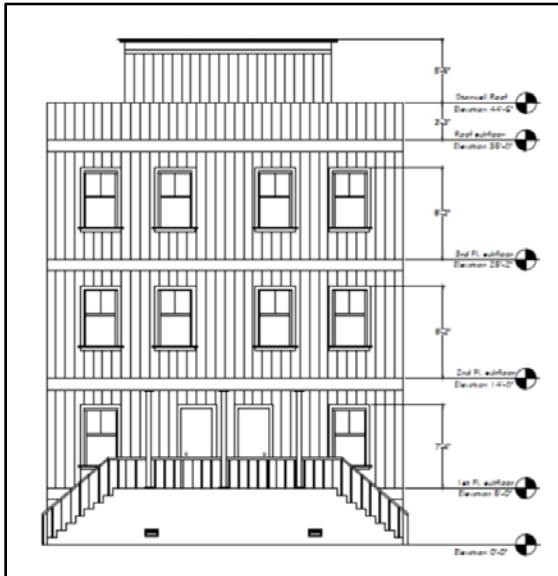
⁷ Deed book X37 page 254

⁸ Deed book E76, page 376

⁹ The recipients were Emmie P. Moore, Shirley Davis, Frank Tisdale, Joanna Tisdale, Oreanna D. Harris, Wilhelmina Dobbins, R.B. Dobbins, Mamie Thomas, Anthony Dobbins, Tallie Tisdale, Johnnie M. Tisdale, Dawanna Dobbins, Ronald Dobbins, and Dorean Dobbins.

¹⁰ Deed book O220, page 87

¹¹ Deed book U369, page 574



On June 2, 2017, the house was sold for \$420,000 to **Jason Pennington**.¹² In July 2017, Mr. Pennington submitted plans for an eight-bedroom second building in the backyard. The proposal was never subjected to a BAR review, and instead Mr. Pennington made a different submission for a small building in October 2017.

¹² Deed book 642, page 47