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Stylistic Fare Varies At 28 Montagu Dwelling

EDITOR'S NOTE: Twelfth in a series of articles on the early dwellings of Montagu Street. The thirteenth will appear two weeks from today.

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The solid, low-built dwelling house at 28 Montagu St. may be viewed as a study in contrasts from several major building periods in Charleston history. Its bulk and blockiness hide its true origins in the city's post-Revolutionary era.

All massive columns, narrow weather boarding, and large Victorian window panes in appearance, the dwelling is obviously one which has been rebuilt at least once during the late 19th century.

The fragments of the exterior which attest to its true time of construction must be hunted for as they peek through, virtually unaltered in the last 162 years though obscured by later overbearing additions.

Evidence indicates the dwelling was built soon after a time when its Charleston village suburban neighborhood was relatively undeveloped.

The builder was apparently that of a merchant, with the property being held in fee during the time in which he occupied the residence.

The house stands on the lot of two Charleston numbers 105 and 107, which were purchased as one by John Hume,

planter, from William Hart.

Eleven years later Hume and his wife Mary conveyed the fragment of two lots to Daniel Mazyck of the prominent Huguenot merchant and land-owning family.

Mazyck, who for some uncertain reason is described in the deed as "Eldest Captain in the second Regiment of Foot of the State aforesaid on Continental Establishment, Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Francis Marion", kept the property another 12 years.

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On Sept. 28 1809, he and his wife Sarah sold it to John P. Wilhelm and John Glen, as trustee for Mrs. Hannah Groning, wife of merchant Lewis Groning. The consideration was \$1,600.

It appears that the dwelling was built for Mrs. Groning soon after this transaction, following the plan of a double-house with a central hallway and four rooms for each story, though the rear rooms appear to have been built as more shallow than the principal rooms on the south entrance front.

The property was retained until 1833 by Mrs. Groning when it was conveyed to William Roach.

The Roach family would retain the house and lot for 65

years before it was sold on March 26, 1898, for \$2,575 by Mary G. Roach and Sarah C. Roach to William Martin Dye.

Dye, a railroad postal clerk, lived on at 28 Montagu until his death in 1912, and the property was retained under the ownership of his estate until October of 1944 when it was sold for \$3,000 to Elizabeth McKay Schwerin.

It was next purchased on March 15, 1946, for \$10,000 by Henry D. Renken and Mrs. May Bell Todd Renken.

The Renkens sold the 52-foot-by-192-foot lot to William I. Holt on Dec. 19, 1946.

The late Mr. Holt, a former chairman of the U.S. board of cotton examiners here, did extensive renovation on the dwelling and remodeled it as four apartments.

Much of the early residence, as built for Mrs. Groning, may still be noted on the interior of 28 Montagu.

The drawing room of the west side of the house was completed as the most elaborately enriched of the rooms, and today it retains the better part of its late Adam-style features.

The mantel of this front room is a particularly handsome example of gouge-work, with modified dentils and diamond-shapes in bands and with plaques of reeded swags trimmed in cable molding.

Paneled dados are topped by a gouge-work band which partially repeats the motif of the mantel. The simple, low-relief

plaster cornice about the room completes the decorative treatment.

The center hallway, while retaining the Adam door surrounds and the six-panel Adam doors, is otherwise altered, though it is uncertain whether this would be an 1830 remodeling or a rather subdued 1890 project (coupled with uncertain alterations to rear rooms to complicate the matter further).

The eastside front room, simpler than the sitting room to the west, still has its own interesting examples of late Adam mantel with fluted oval plaque and cable molding trim. Its wainscoting and door and window architraves are also intact, though the plaster work suggests a time closer to 1840 than 1810.

The most drastic period changes, of course, are those of the exterior.

Either during the time of the Roach family ownership or, more doubtfully, that of the Dye ownership, a truly extensive rebuilding of the dwelling took place.

The basement brickwork and the exterior cornice point to the Adam, but the massive columns (more than a yard in circumference at the base, while piazza columns on Adam houses seldom measure over 22 inches) had to be a much later replacement.

The weather-boarding seems to date from after 1870 and the double-pane windows may be as late as 1900.



28 Montagu Built Circa 1809

Dwelling was constructed for merchant's wife at the end of the Adam period. Since then, the house has had sev-

eral period changes. (Staff Photo by Evans)