

20 New Street

George Washington Rouse House

c. 1875

The large house at 20 New Street occupies two adjacent lots of the Henry Middleton Tract: Lots 27 (closer to Broad Street) and 28 (closer to Tradd Street). **Henry Middleton** had his land, on both sides of New Street, carved into largely uniform lots in 1800 and sold two of them to the **Grand Lodge of the State of South Carolina, Ancient York Masons** for £400 on January 2, 1801.¹ At the end of that year, on December 19, the masons voted to sell the property to **William Reside**, a cabinet maker. The properties were possibly paid for by Mr. Reside before the transfer was actually carried out given the lag in completing the transfer. After more than three years, on July 14, 1804, John Drayton, the Grand Master of the masons, finally sold the lots for £483 to Mr. Reside,² who quickly resold them to **Jacob Deleon** for £600³ on July 16, 1804.⁴

The Deleon family held the lots for more than ten years without building on them. Jacob Deleon⁵ held the properties until selling them to **Abraham Deleon** on March 18, 1812, for \$10,000.⁶ Abraham Deleon, moved to Camden, South Carolina and sold the two lots to **William Mazyck** on February 26, 1819.⁷

The first house on the property was built for Mr. Mazyck's son-in-law Dr. Samuel Wilson, Jr. and daughter Mary Mazyck Wilson in 1819, and they were occupying the new house by 1820. In the 1819 city directory, Dr. Wilson was still listed as a resident of Magazine Street. But in late 1819, an ad appeared for the sale of a house on Magazine Street that had lately been the house of Dr. Samuel Wilson, Jr., suggesting he had only recently relocated. Moreover, the 1820 United States census (whose information was certified in February 1821) did not record addresses, but several of the men who were listed on the census within a few households of Dr. Wilson were all residents of New Street in the 1819 city directory. Dr. Wilson was listed as living on New Street starting with the next city directory, published for 1822.⁸

The Wilsons' household was quite large. Dr. Wilson's family included one man (26-44 years old), one woman (16-25 years old), and a boy and girl (both under 10). Dr. and Mrs. Wilson's ages corresponded with those of the adults in the house. In the 1820 census, slaves were listed as part of the same household as the named head of the household, and Dr. Wilson's household included 12 slaves: three boys and two girls (under 14), two males and three females (14-25), one woman (26-44), and one older man (at least 45).

¹ Deed book D7, page 72

² Deed book Q7, page 252

³ Deed book O7, page 257

⁴ Curiously, the deeds conveying the lots were not recorded in the same order as the sales. The deed to Mr. Deleon was not recorded until March 21, 1805, several months before the deed to Mr. Reside was recorded on November 5, 1805.

⁵ The deed also listed Myer Moses as a seller. His relationship to Mr. Deleon is unknown, and there are no deeds documenting how he received perhaps a part interest in the lots from Mr. Deleon.

⁶ Deed book F8, page 106

⁷ Deed book C9, page 245

⁸ The house was numbered 6 New Street in 1822, 1825, and 1829. It was later renumbered 10 New Street and kept that number until the 1880s when the city undertook a citywide street renumbering.

Very little information about the Wilsons' house has been located. Given the number of slaves on site, the house would clearly have included some sort of dependencies, likely a carriage and kitchen house with living quarters above. In 1852, the county tax books recorded the house as a four-story wooden building on a lot of 80 by 152 feet with a value of \$6400. (The reference to a four-story house could include either a tall working level on the ground floor, a finished attic space, or both.)

On June 12, 1824, Mr. Mazyck conveyed the house to his son-in-law, **Dr. Samuel Wilson**, in trust for the benefit of his daughter, Mary.⁹ The deed specified that the property was to be used as the couple's residence, but that if they chose to live elsewhere, the rental income could be used for Mary's support instead.

Dr. Samuel Wilson¹⁰ was the son and grandson of prominent Charleston doctors. He married three times. Dr. Wilson had been a doctor for many years but retired from medicine about 1830 and instead served as a commissioner of the City Market.¹¹ At about the same time that Dr. Wilson retired from medicine, he befriended noted American artist and ornithologist John James Audubon; many examples of their extensive correspondence and friendship survive. It is highly likely that Mr. Audubon was entertained at his friend's house on New Street.

Dr. Wilson's first wife, Mary Mazyck,¹² had been born in 1795, but she died fairly young on January 26, 1831. Dr. Wilson married two more times: first in 1832 to his sister-in-law Elizabeth Mazyck and then to Louisa Carrere. His third wife outlived him by more than 40 years.¹³

In the 1840 and 1850 census, Dr. Wilson and Elizabeth Wilson shared the house with extended family members including children and grandchildren. In the 1850 census, slaves were listed separately and grouped by their owners. Dr. Wilson owned 20 slaves, but no further information is recorded about where they lived or how they were used. Presumably at least some were domestic servants at the New Street house. In the 1860 census, slaves were still enumerated separately, but they were grouped according to the ward in which they lived. Dr. Wilson was the owner of seven slaves living in the Second Ward (which included New Street), but three of them were listed as fugitives. By that time, Dr. and Mrs. Wilson were occupying the house without other occupants. Not long after the census, Dr. Wilson died on July 1, 1861.

In 1861, the house burned in the Fire of 1861.¹⁴ According to an account of the fire, "[t]he flames spread right and left, destroying and making a clean sweep of fine residences in Logan, New, Savage, Mazyck and the lower end of Broad Street. Nor could the work of destruction and desolation be stayed had it not been that the fire exhausted itself for want of material."¹⁵ Another account said this: "New street and Savage street are left without a landmark, save the brick chimneys of the handsome dwellings which recently adorned that section."¹⁶

⁹ Deed book P9, page 133

¹⁰ (b. May 19, 1791; d. July 1, 1861)

¹¹ "Obituary," *Charleston Mercury*, July 4, 1861, at 4

¹² Making family history confused is the fact that Dr. Wilson's own father, also named Samuel Wilson (1763-1827), had also married a woman named Mary Mazyck, a daughter of Isaac Mazyck.

¹³ Ms. Carrere was born on November 23, 1815. After the death of Dr. Wilson in 1861, she married for a second time to Thomas Worth Glover. She died on August 14, 1904, and is buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery of Orangeburg, South Carolina.

¹⁴ "The Great Fire of 1861," *Charleston Mercury*, Dec. 21, 1861, at 8

¹⁵ "The Great Fire," *Charleston Daily Courier*, Dec. 13, 1861, at 1

¹⁶ "The Great Fire—Further Particulars," *Charleston Mercury*, Dec. 13, 1861, at 6

In 1867, the two lots were split apart for the first time. Lot 27 (where the house stands today) was sold to **William G. Whilden**.¹⁷ The empty lot to the south, Lot 28, was sold to **George Gibbes**,¹⁸ who then sold it to Mr. Whilden on 1870.¹⁹ Mr. Whilden was the manager of a china and crockery store on Hayne Street, but he must have experienced business problems. On January 18, 1872, a public auction was held to sell off the property of Mr. Whilden, who had had to file for bankruptcy. Among the property that was sold were “[t]wo VACANT LOTS on the east side of New street, measuring each 40 by 151, formerly known as the residence of Dr. Samuel Wilson.”²⁰ Mr. Whilden moved to Greenville in 1884 and worked in the insurance business before dying on June 8, 1896.²¹

Mrs. Clementine Bernard was the high bidder at \$1000 during the bankruptcy sale of Lot 27 and Lot 28, and the deed was recorded on March 5, 1872.²² On March 22, 1873, Rev. James P. Boyce (possibly a creditor of Mr. Whilden’s) of Greenville, South Carolina executed a quitclaim deed conveying whatever interest he had in Lot 27, if any, to Mrs. Bernard.²³

On August 15, 1873, **Capt. George Washington Rouse** paid \$750 for Lot 27 to buy it from Mrs. Bernard.²⁴ A note on the deed explained that money was being borrowed from the City of Charleston’s special fund for rebuilding the burnt district to erect a new “Dwelling House and Buildings” on the lot. On January 27, 1874, Mrs. Bernard agreed to give Mr. Rouse the first option to buy the neighboring vacant Lot 28 for \$750 if he wanted to within the next two years.²⁵ On November 24, 1875, Mr. Rouse exercised that option and bought Lot 28.²⁶ The house must have been started immediately since the value of Lot 27 increased from \$750 in 1875 without any house indicated to \$5000 in 1876 with a 2 ½ story wooden house, a clear indication that the house was built then.

Capt. Rouse was born on May 4, 1838, in Charleston. He served in the Confederate Army and in the Secret Service between Charleston and Bermuda. After the Civil War, he toured Europe. He married Cordelia Lucretia Reeves,²⁷ and they had at least three children. Mr. Rouse was business partners with J.D. Parry in the ownership of a printing company on Chalmers Street while a resident of New Street. He later moved to 300 King Street and operated a restaurant by 1880. He died on June 14, 1914, and is buried at Magnolia Cemetery with his wife. At least for a time, the dependency was occupied as a separate residence; Mr. John Calvary was listed as living in the rear of the property in 1877.

George W. and Cordelia L. Rouse sold the properties with the house to **Oskar Aichel** on April 17, 1878, for \$7500.²⁸ The sale included gas fixtures, a set of parlor furniture, a mirror, cornices, the front bedroom carpet, a fireproof safe, an oil cloth, and stair and hall carpets. In the 1880 census, Oscar Aichel and Margaret Aichel lived at the house along with four children, a governess, and a cook and his wife. Mr. Aichel was a well-known German retail grocer, born in about 1837, who operated John Hurkamp & Co. He was active in German social circles and was once the president of the German Friendly Society

¹⁷ Deed book A14, page 793

¹⁸ Deed book A14, page 737

¹⁹ Deed book P15, page 429

²⁰ Charleston Daily News, Jan. 18, 1872, at 3

²¹ “Death of W.G. Whilden,” The State, June 9, 1896, at 1

²² Deed book B16, page 396

²³ Deed book H16, page 437

²⁴ Deed book N16, page 102

²⁵ Deed book K16, page 345

²⁶ Deed book V16, page 202

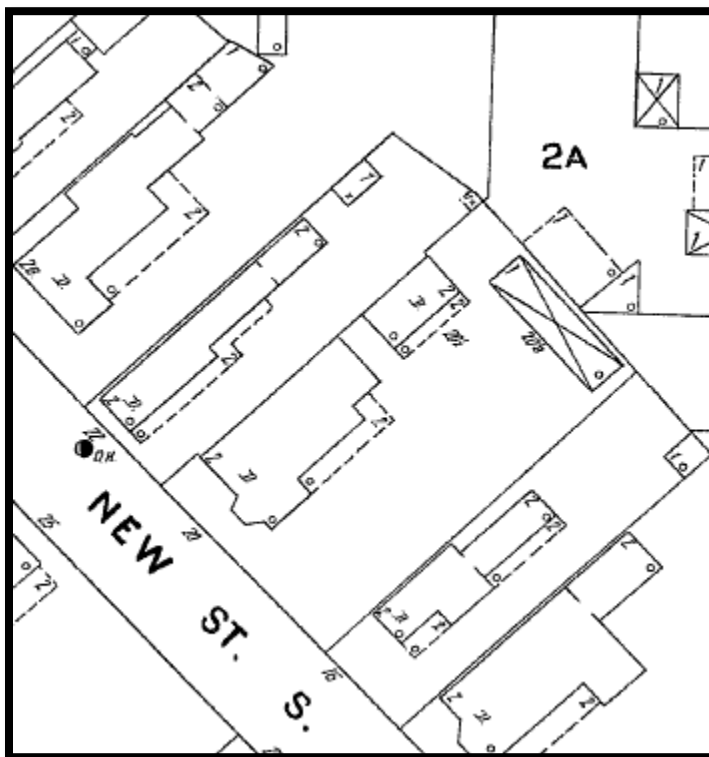
²⁷ (b. 1849; d. July 16, 1920)

²⁸ Deed book O17, page 71

and also of the Deutscher Freundschaftsbund. Professionally, he was also the vice president of the Retails Grocers' Association.

Mr. Aichel died in the bathing house at the foot of Tradd Street in August 1895.²⁹ He had gone for a morning bath. Later, the attendant of the facility found Mr. Aichel's dog there but did not see Mr. Aichel. Upon entering, the attendant found Mr. Aichel's belongings still present and began a search. Mr. Aichel's body was found floating face down in the pool.

In 1901, a lawsuit was filed to decide issues relating to Mr. Aichel's estate. **Miss Johanna M.H. Aichel** (commonly known as Miss Nettie Aichel) bought the house from the estate for \$6500 in a transaction that was recorded July 7, 1903.³⁰ During that window, the Sanborn Insurance Co. prepared its first insurance maps of the southwest corner of the peninsula and included New Street. According to the highly reliable and accurate map (shown left), the house's dependency was still a detached two story structure which had a two-story porch on the southern façade. In the rear of the property was a one-story utility building that no longer remains. The 1944 and 1951 editions of the same map showed no changes.



Miss Aichel was an accomplished musician who studied both music and modern languages in Stuttgart, Germany for six years. Upon her return to Charleston, she taught music lessons and modern languages. She died on May 22, 1946, and left the house to her sister, **Alma Aichel Metz**.

It would seem that Mr. Aichel's children had strong musical abilities, as he did himself. Mr. Aichel was the organist for St. Michael's for ten years. In addition to his son, who was also the organist for St. Michael's, and Miss Nettie, his daughter Alma was also a talented musician. She studied at the Brussels Conservatory and the Royal College of Music in Munich. Although Mrs. Metz did not receive the house until 1946, she had maintained a music studio at 20 New Street where she offered violin lessons from home starting in 1906.³¹

Adding even more talent to the house's musical history was Carl H. Metz, Alma's husband. Mr. Metz was born on March 20, 1872, and learned music from his father, a regimental bandmaster during the Civil War. Mr. Metz performed publically for the first time in 1884 and went on to head many local bands. He formed his eponymous band in 1903 and was a regular attraction during concerts held in Hampton Park and at the Battery. His odd claim to fame is that his band was the first to ever play "Dixie"

²⁹ "Apoplexy in Water," Evening Post, Aug. 31, 1895, at 1

³⁰ Deed book W23, page 59

³¹ Gale Young, "Mrs. Metz Marks 100th Birthday," News & Courier, January 18, 1974, at 14

in a presidential inauguration when his band played at the inauguration of President William H. Taft. In addition to his own band and a resume including such random jobs as the president of the Palmetto Soap Co. and clerk in the county treasurer's office, he served as the bandmaster for The Citadel for more than thirty years, from 1912 to June 1943, and composed the music for the school's song. He died, a resident of 20 New Street, on May 24, 1957.³²

When Mrs. Metz died on August 8, 1974, she left the house to her nieces **Margaret Gotjen Marshall and Ruth Gotjen Flynn**. Margaret then conveyed her one-half interest to her sister and co-owner, Ruth, on September 30, 1976.³³ Mrs. Flynn had already been living in the house for several years while her aunt was moved to the nearby Franke Home, a retirement home. The musical connections continued with the sisters; both women had played violin with the Charleston Symphony. Mrs. Flynn, who had been a violinist starting with the first season of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in 1936-1937, even met her husband, Michael J. Flynn,³⁴ while he was playing trumpet with the orchestra.³⁵ She continued to play with the orchestra for 45 years.³⁶

Following Mrs. Flynn's death on April 1, 1995, her daughter **Kathleen F. Dejong** acquired the house on January 4, 1996.³⁷

George B. and Therese Smythe bought the house for \$1.7 million on September 7, 2005.³⁸

³² "Carl Metz, Former Citadel Bandmaster, Dies At 85," Evening Post, May 24, 1957, at 2

³³ Deed book N110, page 108

³⁴ Mr. Flynn immigrated to Canada after serving in the British military, but his log cabin in Alberta burned in a forest fire. Citing the red tape that was involved in coming to the United States, Mr. Flynn snuck across the (northern!) border and joined a circus band. The band broke up while playing in Savannah, and Mr. Flynn made his way to Charleston where he met his future wife. They married in 1945.

³⁵ Leola Roberts, "Two Sister Teams Play With Symphony," News & Courier, Nov. 30, 1952, at 4C

³⁶ "Retired CSO violinist Ruth G. Flynn dies," Post & Courier, Apr. 3, 1995, at 12A

³⁷ Deed book Y263, page 768

³⁸ Deed book L552, page 357