

James Morrison House, ca. 1852

236 St. Philip's Street
Charleston, South Carolina

The date of construction for 236 St. Philip's Street was determined through a combination of documentary sources. The building is not present on the Bridgens and Allen map of 1852. It is, however, present in the 1852 Ward Book. It is also known that the property changed hands in 1852, passing from John M. Lewis to James Morrison, a laborer in March of that year. It appears, then, that the building was constructed after March of 1851 and by the end of 1852.

Extant architectural evidence in the building does show some elements that appear to date to the 1850s, including some moldings and some of the structural technologies and components. Most of the extant architectural evidence, however, appears to date to the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. This includes window muntins and sashes, mantelpieces, paneling, plaster, flooring, diagonal chimney orientation, etc. This has raised some questions as to what happened to the building between its construction in 1852 and the late nineteenth century. No evidence has been found for an earlier chimney orientation, with the exception that the opening for the current chimney stack appears to have been cut through the rafters of the roof. The foundations of the building have not, to date, been examined in detail and may reveal more on this matter. Also, no evidence has been found to date for an interior stair.

At this time it seems reasonable to say that the building was constructed as a two-story wood frame dwelling in 1852 and underwent a major renovation some time in the late nineteenth century.

Charleston Public Library – SC Room

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps - Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1888, 1902, 1944 and the 1950s show the structure at 236 St. Philip's Street as a two-story wood frame dwelling with a two-story south-side piazza. By the time of the earliest Sanborn map in 1888, the building already has a two-story single room extension from the rear, or east, flush with the north elevation. The 1902 Sanborn map shows another two-story single room addition on the east end of the building. This is essentially the form of the building as it stands today, with the exception of the enclosure of the two-story piazza, which appears to have taken place sometime during the third quarter of the twentieth century. Also notable is the evolution of the surrounding properties, corresponding to the Ward Books. The Sanborn maps reveal a court to the south of the current property at 236 St. Philip's Street, which is no longer evident as most of the dwellings which once defined it have been lost during the second half of the twentieth century.

Charleston County Register Mesne Conveyance – Historic Document Room

McCrady Plats – McCrady Plat #6723, dated April 1804, shows the property which would become 236 St. Philip's Street as part of lot #52 in the "Rugely Lands." McCrady Plat #8115, not dated, shows the proposed subdivision of lot #52 of the Rugely Lands, including the creation of a court to service five small lots. McCrady Plat #6777, dated 1846, shows Alexander Black's subdivision of lot #52 into four lots, different than the subdivision shown on the previous plat but preserving the court, show as 10 feet wide. The street frontage of the two lots on the east side of St. Philip's Street is determined to be 33 feet each, roughly consistent with their present street frontage.

Charleston Ward Book Entries (1852-1902): Ward Book entries from 1852 to 1902 only were recorded.

1852-56 (Wd 8)

James Morrison¹

Lot size: 35x75

Structures: 2W²

¹ James Morrison is listed in the Charleston City Directories throughout the 1860s and 1870s as a "laborer." Note that "now J. Conway" is written underneath James Morrison's name in the Ward Book entry. The identity of this individual is at this time unknown.

² From this point on the description of the structures on the site remains one two-story wooden building.

1871-75 (Wd 8)	<u>Cain A. Manigault</u> ³
1876-79 (Wd 8)	<u>Cain A. Manigault</u>
1880 (Wd 8)	<u>Cain A. Manigault</u>
1881-82 (Wd 8)	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>
1883-86 (Wd 11) ⁴	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>
1888-89	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>
1894-98	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>
1898-1902	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>

Charleston County Deed Books – The purpose of consulting the deed records was primarily to attempt to determine a date of construction for the building and to be able to associate some names with the early history of the building. Therefore, only deeds from the mid-nineteenth century were examined.

July 1, 1846

Deed Book X-11, page 35 and 86

J. M. Lewis from Alexander Black

March 20, 1850

Deed Book G-12, page 56

William Mathiesson from James M. Lewis

March 29, 1851

Deed Book F-12, page 1851

James Morrison from William Mathiesson

Chain-of-Title as constructed from Ward and Deed Books:

? – 1846 July	<u>Alexander Black</u>
1846 July – 1850 March	<u>John M. Lewis</u>
1850 March – 1851 March	<u>William Mathiesson</u>
1851 March – 1871	<u>James Morrison</u>
1871 – 1881	<u>Cain Manigault</u>
1881 – 1902	<u>Annie E. Ackerman</u>

South Carolina Historical Society

Charleston City Directories

1873-74 – James Ackerman, painter⁵
1875-76 – James Ackerman, painter
1877-78 – James Ackerman, painter W.C. Miller & Sons

³ Cain Manigault is listed in the 1873/4 Charleston City Directory as a porter.

⁴ From this point on the Ward ascription remains Ward 11.

⁵ City Directory lists property as 1 McMahon Court from 1873-1881.

1878-79 – ditto
1879-80 – James Ackerman, house, sign and ornamental painter
1881 – ditto
*Resident cannot be determined from 1882-1892*⁶
1892 – J.H. Wohlers, Percival Manufacturing Company⁷
1893 – ditto
1894 – ditto
1896 – Samuel Padgett, Flagman SC&GA RR
1897 – J.H. Wohlers
1900 – J.H. Wohlers⁸

⁶ James Ackerman is listed in the City Directory in 1882 as living at 48 Smith St.

⁷ City Directory now refers to property as 236 St. Philip's Street.

⁸ McMahon's Court is now called Ackerman's Court.