

JAMES GREGORIE HOUSE

Constructed 1791
28 Broad Street

Built in 1791 for merchant William Shirliff, this house was purchased two years later by one of Charleston's leading Scottish merchants, James Gregorie (1740-1807). A 1797 plat provides one of the most complete descriptions of an eighteenth century merchant's residence possessing counting house and store on the first floor, family quarters above, and back buildings for domestic and commercial use. In his 1807 will, Gregorie emphasized the dual use of the property, bequeathing life interest in the house to his wife, Mary Christiana Hopton (1745-1823), with provisions for renting "the front store, Counting house or room, the front cellar, the long back store, and the two upper floors of the little back store" to his son Alexander Frazier Gregorie.

A native of Edinburgh, James Gregorie first opened shop in 1780 on Church Street, leasing from merchant and insurance broker Samuel Legare (see entry for Peter Leger Tenement, 90 Church Street). In 1785, the city directory lists his business on the northeast corner of Tradd and Bedon's Alley. Gregorie was partners with London merchant James Douglas, and a 329 page account book of their trade between 1784 and 1792 documents in detail the range of consumer goods sold in their retail establishment. By 1807, Gregorie owned plantations in Beaufort and Christ Church parish and town rental properties on Broad, Meeting, and Church streets.

The formal parterred garden at the rear of Gregorie's property was undoubtedly the domain of Mrs. Gregorie, whose mother, Sarah Hopton (1711-1801), was one of Charleston's leading early gardeners. Mrs. Hopton and Martha Logan created large private gardens along King, Meeting, and George Streets in the mid-eighteenth century and corresponded with Philadelphia botanist John Bartram, exchanging plant material and garden information.

The property now bears little resemblance to its 1797 appearance, and is headquarters for the law firm Young, Clement, Rivers, and Tisdale. The exterior brick cornice and first floor granite storefront represent nineteenth century changes to the building. The original kitchen and wash house has been incorporated into the current legal office complex.

Sources:

Briggs, Loutrel W. Charleston Gardens (Columbia, SC, 1951), 24.

Charleston County Probate Court, Will Bk. E, 11.

Charleston County RMCO, Bk. L-6, 49.

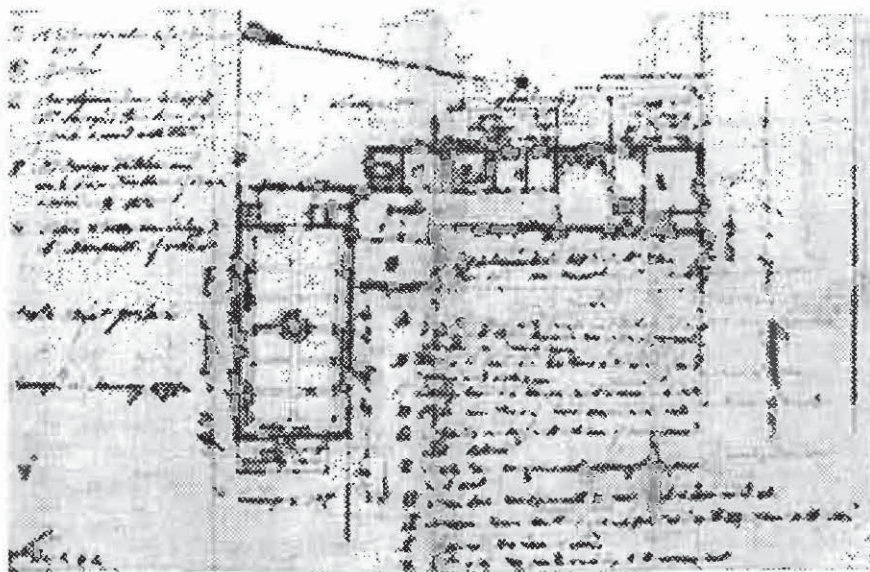
Charleston County RMCO, McCrady Plats, #503.

"Letters of Martha Logan to John Bartram, 1760-1763", SCHM 59, 38-46.

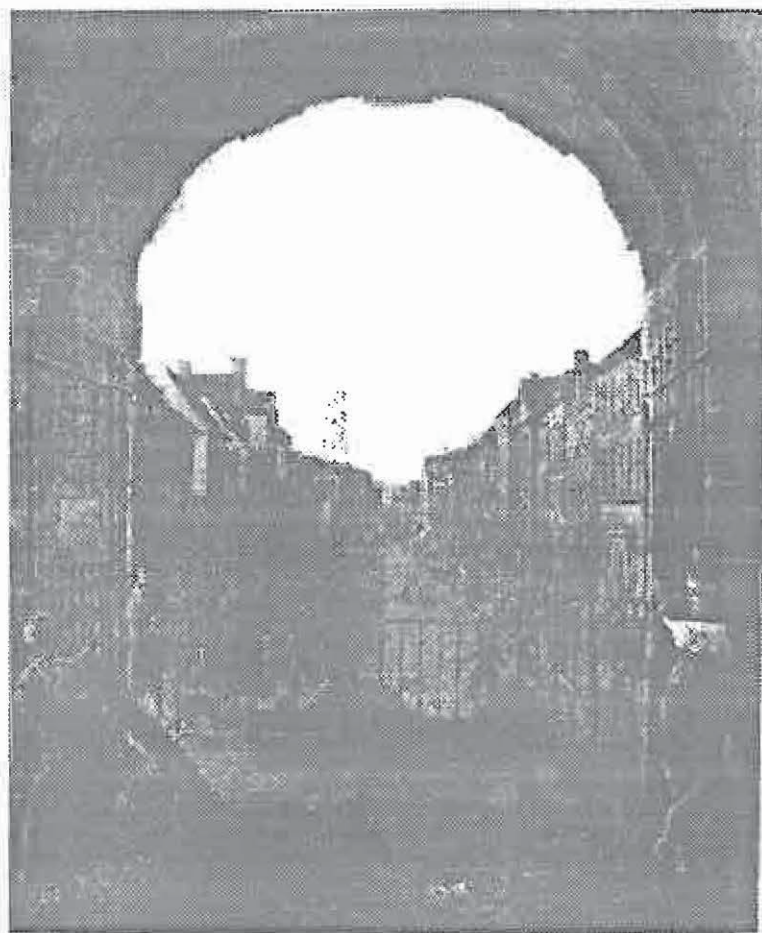
Richardson, Emma B. Charleston Garden Plats, Leaflet No. 19, The Charleston Museum, December, 1943.

Surles, Flora Belle. Anne King Gregorie (Columbia, SC, 1968), 4-7.

University of Michigan, W. L. Clements Library, James Douglas Account Book 1784-1792.



*Unsigned plat, dated January 1797, depicting the full range of outbuildings and parterred garden
McCrary Plat Collection, Charleston RMC*



*"Perspective View of Broad Street"
by John Blake White, 1837 depicts
the commercial and residential mix
of this part of Charleston's east-west
thorough fare from inside the entry
of the Exchange , Collection of the
City of Charleston*