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15 MEETING STREET

" 12 Years to Build, Completed in 1770"

Twelve years are said to have gone into the building of the pre-Revolutionary double house that is now 15 Meeting street, and as a result it stands today as another of Charleston's monuments to a day when people took time to do things graciously and well.

John Edwards, who built the house which was completed in 1770, was a brave and brilliant patriot of his day, one of the men who was to protest to the last minute the surrender of Charleston to the British. He and others of the protesting group were members of the Council of Safety, and his activities resulted in his being sent as a prisoner to St. Augustine, Fla. Following his confinement there, he was returned to Charleston where he soon died, probably as a result of exposure and ill treatment.

During the occupation of the city by the British, Admiral Arbuthnot took over half of the house as his headquarters, and left the remaining half for the use of John Edwards' widow and children.

Mrs. Edwards Brave

Mrs. Edwards, who partook of the revolutionary spirit of her husband, remained undaunted after his death and the subsequent humiliation entailed in the use of a portion of her beautiful home by the enemy forces. When residents of Charleston were ordered one night to illuminate their houses in honor of the defeat of General Gates at Camden, the patriot's widow staunchly refused to comply, and as a result British and Tory sympathizers broke all the glasses in the front of the house.

Her son, General Edward Edwards, later owned the house.

At the time of the Insurrection in Santo Domingo in 1793, the house was occupied by John Bee Holmes, son of the second Mrs. Edwards by an earlier marriage. The insurrection sent to him the Count de Grasse and his family, who were his guests for a year. A permanent calendar was inscribed by the count in the following manner: "Dedicated to Mr. John Bee Holmes by Augustus de Grasse," and " Augustus de Grasse, fecit 1796."

Holmes likewise possessed a noteworthy Revolutionary record. At the time of the capture of Savannah he was wounded, captured and put in a prison ship. This ship was brought to Charleston, where an unintentionally cruel mandate moored it in the harbor in view of Holme's house in the year 1779.

Among the other distinguished owners of the house have been Henry W. Connor, father of General James Connor, who also lived there for a time; John Gadsden, father of the Rev. Christopher Gadsden and Major Edward Willis.

Improvements Made

The late George W. Williams owned the house for many years and introduced various improvements. He constructed the large circular porches on the first and second floors and raised the level of the spacious grounds to the street, where an iron fence gives an excellent view of the wide lawn and spreading trees. ~~Mrs. Williams now lives there.~~

The house is built of cypress on a brick basement. Its weather boarding on the front is cut to resemble blocks of stone and the basement is treated in the same manner. A double flight of steps leads to the portico from the north and south sides, each flight broken by a landing. The portico roof is supported by two Corinthian columns and by pilasters against the wall. A hall runs through the middle of the house and this is broken by an arch. On either side of the hall are two rooms and a staircase is at the rear.

According to "Dwelling Houses of Charleston" by D. E. Huger Smith and Alice R. Huger Smith, "The house differs in its general plan from the usual double house of its day, but its panelling and finish place it in the front rank."