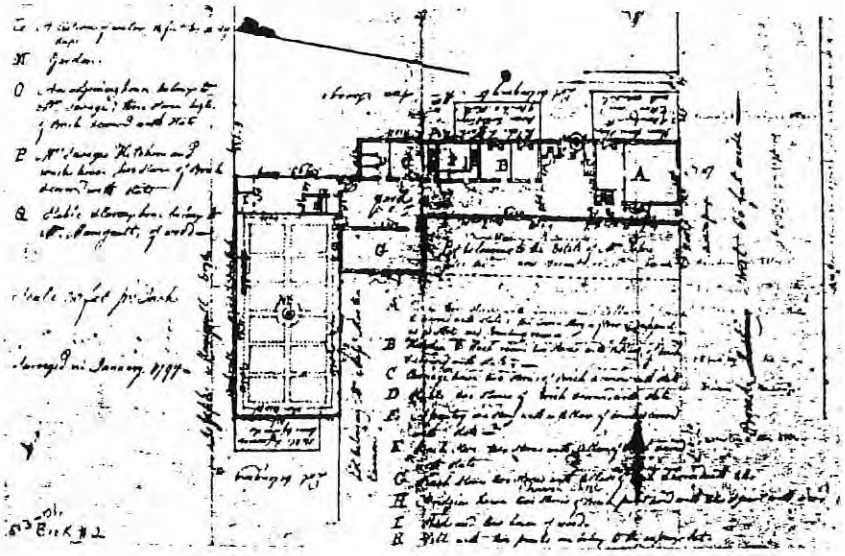
JAMES GREGORIE HOUSE (1791)
28 Broad Street

Built in 1791 for merchant William Shirtliff, this house was purchased two years later by one of Charleston's leading Scottish merchants and Nathaniel Russell's brother-in-law, James Gregorie. A native of Edinburgh, Gregorie first opened business in Charleston in 1780 in the house now listed as 90 Church Street. He was a partner with London merchant James Douglas in the firm Gregorie, Douglas and Company, and a surviving, 329-page account book documents their trade in a broad range of consumer goods from agricultural supplies to fine furniture. Gregorie was a founding member of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Saint Andrew's Society, and an elder of First Scots' Presbyterian Church. At the time of his death in 1807, he owned rental property on Broad, Church and Meeting Streets and plantations in Beaufort and Christ Church parishes.

A 1797 plat of this property provides one of our best descriptions of an eighteenth century merchant's residence in Charleston with a counting room and store on the first floor, drawing room and family quarters above, and a full range of outbuildings for domestic and commercial use.

The garden along Chalmers Street at the rear of the property was undoubtedly the domain of James Gregorie's wife, Mary Christiana Hopton, whose mother Sarah Hopton had been one of Charleston's leading early gardeners. The garden is shown laid out in formal parterres on a cross axial plan surrounded by a high brick wall.



1797 plat of James Gregorie's property on Broad Street.

From "Charleston's Federal Architecture: A Field Guide" (HCF Museum Division Fieldtrip, 11/7/1994). Note: sources not indicated.

News (founded in 1866) to form The News and Courier, under the ownership of B. R. Riordan and Capt. F.W. Dawson, who made it a primary advocate of New South industrialism, first expressing the shibboleth of that movement, "Bring the mills to the cotton."
(Mazyck & Waddell, 14-15, illus. 48. Green, unpub. notes; HCF. Ravenel, Architects, 177.)

21 Broad St. -- David Alexander, a merchant, built this three story brick building c. 1802. A photograph of 1883 shows its facade faced with brick laid in Flemish bond. The present Victorian facade is presumed to date after the earthquake of 1886, and includes a conical-roofed turret. (Green, unpub. notes; HCF. Mazyck & Waddell, illus 48.)

23 Broad St. -- Edgar Wells, a tailor, constructed this building c. 1786. The facade treatment dates from c. 1838.

24 Broad St. -- This building was built by John James Himeli soon after 1791, and was given by him to his wife, as trustee, in 1803. After his death she sold it in 1817 to Ann Eleanor Van Rhyn, whose executors sold it to Abraham Ottolengui in 1841. Ottolengui altered the facade, c. 1841, and a cast-iron store front was added c. 1875 by the heirs of Jacob Barrett. The storefront was so damaged by the collision of an automobile in 1948 that it was removed. The lower facade treatment is c. 1948. (Green, unpub. notes; HCF.)

25-27 Broad St. -- William Wragg Smith, an attorney, built this double building c. 1839. It was heavily damaged in the 1886 earthquake and the facade was extensively rebuilt afterwards, with pressed metal window cornices. (Green, unpub. notes; HCF.)

26 Broad St. -- William Rouse, a shoemaker, built this building c. 1791. The facade was altered c. 1875. (Green, unpub. notes;HCF.)

28 Broad St. -- Built c. 1791 by William Shirtcliff, a merchant, this building shows evidence of a facade change,

which occurred in 1800. In that year James Gregorie, who owned both 30 and 32 Broad, leased the then vacant lot at 32 Broad to Stephen Thomas, who agreed to erect a three story brick building thereon. The agreement also permitted Gregorie to insert joists into Thomas' east wall, for the purpose of building two stories over an arched passageway between the two buildings. Although Gregorie matched the Charleston grey brick and Flemish bond of his existing building, the juncture is discernible. The granite storefront on the first floor probably dates from c. 1840.

(Green, unpub. notes; HCF. Stoney, This is Charleston, 12.)

29 Broad St. -- George Macaulay and John Maynard Davis, merchants, built this building c. 1790. The elaborate mansard roof and the stucco dripstones, however, are late 19th century.

(Green, unpub. notes; HCF.)

30 Broad St. -- Stephen Thomas, a merchant tailor, made an agreement with the owner of this property, James Gregorie, to lease the lot and construct thereon a "brick house of three stories." The Federal period facade, typical of the year of construction, 1800, is of Charleston grey brick laid in Flemish bond. The gable roof has dormers on the front slope. Stephen Thomas was a leader of the Huguenot Church congregation about this time. He is buried in the Huguenot Churchyard. In 1974, the rear part of this building was demolished and a new building was constructed behind the facade, for the expansion of First Federal Savings and Loan Association, whose main building is next door.

(Green, unpub. MS; HCF. Stockton, N&C, Jan. 31, 1974. Stoney, This is Charleston, 12.)

31 Broad St. -- William Lee, watchmaker, built here by December 1792, when he leased the building to Basil Pourie, merchant. The pressed metal cornice, window cornices and door surround are late 19th century.

(Green, unpub. MS; HCF.)