

John Edwards House Saw British Occupation

By HELEN N. OTHERSEN
Staff Reporter

The John Edwards House, an intriguing pre-Revolutionary home considered valuable to Charleston, rests along tree-lined lower Meeting Street.

Twelve years of John Edwards' life went into building the home at 15 Meeting St., which he completed in 1770. Edwards was a brave and brilliant Charleston patriot, and was one of the men who protested the city's surrender to the British, even to the last minute. He and other protesters were members of the "Council of Safety."

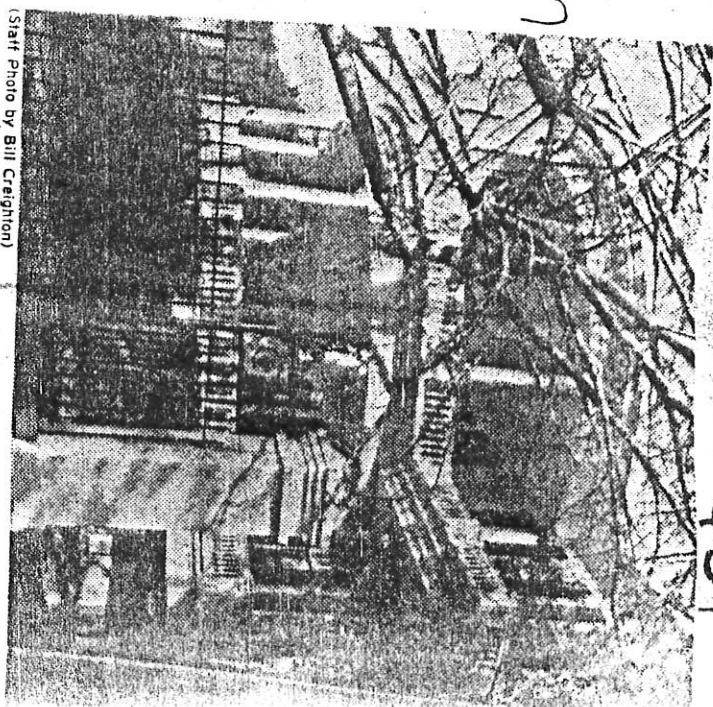
Edwards' dissidence had earlier led to his imprisonment at St. Augustine, Fla. He began building his house when he returned to Charleston, where he later died from the results of exposure and ill treatment during his imprisonment.

During the British occupation of Charleston, Admiral Arbuthnot used half of the Edwards House for his headquarters.

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and left the remaining portion to John Edwards' widow and children. Mrs. Edwards possessed her husband's revolutionary spirit and remained undaunted during this time. When Charlestonians were ordered one night to place candles in their windows to honor the British victory over General Gates at Camden, Mrs. Edwards refused to comply and suffered the consequences of having all her home's front window panes broken.

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(Staff Photo by Bill Creighton)

John Edwards House - 15

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When numbers of unhappy planters fled from Santo Domingo during the 1793 insurrection, one family, the Comte de Grasses, was received for a year at the house by Revolutionary John B. Holmes, stepson and son-in-law of John Edwards. A permanent calendar was inscribed by the guests and given to Holmes in 1796. Some of the De Grasses family are buried in St. Mary's churchyard.

Other distinguished owners of the house include John Edwards' son, Gen. Edward Edwards; Henry W. Connor, president of the Bank of Charleston; John Gadsden, father of Revolutionary Christopher Gadsden, with whom John Edwards was imprisoned and killed.

The house is built of brick on a white wash boarding and basement cut to resemble bluestone. A double flight of leads to the north and side, with each flight by a landing. The portico is supported by two Doric columns and pillars against the wall.

The present owner Charles R. Allen, who purchased it on Dec. 5, 1973, from Gene M. Allen, an heir.

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Enter Contract Measure Given First Reading

H. MORGAN
Staff Writer

Charleston City Council gave first reading approval to an ordinance setting forth a contract between the city and the developer of the \$40 million complex.

Little questioning of the measure came before the

vote, however, because Mayor Riley successfully delayed debate on the ordinance until its next reading Jan. 24. Unless several councilmen reverse their votes at that time, the ordinance becomes law. The ordinance outlines the

obligations between the Holywell Corp. and the City of Charleston. The measure relates to the construction, financing and operation of the complex.

The vote was 7-2 for approval of the contract ordinance, with three councilmen abstaining because of possible conflicts of interest.

Councilman W.L. Stephens Jr., who voted against approval, said, "There has been no public bidding or discussion of a referendum on this question. The (developers) agreed to provide us with the plans

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George W. Williams, who bought the house from Willis, made many eye-catching improvements to the already fine house. He added the large semicircular piazzas on the first and second floors of the southern end. He also raised the level of the spacious grounds to the street, where an iron fence allows an excellent view of the wide lawn and spreading trees. The Williams family also planted a Ginkgo tree as a sapling in 1890 which survives today. A native of China and Japan, the tree is appealing for its brilliant fall foliage and the fantastic shapes into which the limbs manage to twist themselves.

Directly opposite the house sits the Calhoun Mansion, built after the Edwards House was completed.

The usual "double" house of its period, the Edwards' House has first-rate paneling and finish. An intricately carved mantle piece, shown in D.E. Smith's "The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, S.C.," is in one of the two drawing rooms on the second floor, which extend across the whole front of the house. A hall runs through the middle of the dwelling and this is broken by an arch. On either side of the hall are two spacious rooms and a staircase is at the rear.