

Justinus Stoll's Building, c. 1759
5 Stoll's Alley
Home of Mrs. Warwick P. Bonsal

Justinus Stoll, who from being a blacksmith in Charleston became a planter in St. Helena's Parish, appears to have built this house and its charming neighbors sometime after 1759 when he acquired their site. At the time the site of Water Street was Vanderhorst Creek - a branch of it ran between East Bay and Church Street, heading up near Tradd, where Landgrave Smith planted the Madagascar rice. Stoll, or his forerunners, filled in the branch. Stoll also completed the alley by getting the narrow passage through to the bay.

In the 1930's, Mrs. George Dana Canfield, who as Alida Marshall grew up nearby, began a one woman preservation venture in Stoll's Alley. She revived the charming group of buildings that look as though they had come out of an early Dutch painting, changed the face of the neighborhood, and made homes for her family to spread into - among these homes is her daughter, Mrs. Bonsal's house.

This charming little house is filled with early furniture and portraits, rare silver, a very splendid collection of Chinese Export ware, and earlier Chinese porcelains and Chinese paintings, all of which Mrs. Bonsal has inherited.

Sitting Room: (Note to the hostess: because of the many splendid furnishings of this house, the most exceptional or the ones we think your guest might be interested in most will be pointed out).

All of the lamp bases in this house are of Chinese porcelain, some of them earlier than the Export Ware into Europe. Notice the lovely ones in this room.

On your right standing by the door is a charming night table. It

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is an American one and notice its many interesting, functional features (the drawer at the bottom pulls out). Above it hangs a small portrait by Sully.

On the lovely card table nearby stand a pair of beautiful Chinese Export ware pitchers. Their finials are lovely as are the decoration in the small medallions. Altogether very choice. They are the Famille Rose period, probably late 1700's. The table is English. Above is a Chinese painting, one of four in this room. They belong to a very large set and are done at the time when yellow was first being introduced into Chinese painting in the early Ching Dynasty (c. 1650). The brush stroke is particularly fine.

The little nest of tables on either side of the sofa have cunning japanned work and as you see they do not match. Some of two sets, I guess - Victorian and Regency period.

The pair of chairs on either side of the mantel and there is a third by the secretary bookcase are very beautiful. Their serpentine top and pedestal backs indicate they were made by cabinet makers of the Connecticut or Rhode Island area when furniture of excellent quality was at its height there (c. 1790-95). Kneeland and Adams were outstanding cabinet makers of that area.

The Chinese urns on the mantel with their many colorful figures are indeed magnificent. They tell a story in their four panels and are complete with "beggar women" as finials on their lids. They are "Famille Verte" - that name given to the Kang Hsi porcelains decorated in transparent enamels and in the main used in the late Ming period, but there are a few differences.

(Notes for the hostess : Mrs. Bonsal likes the old Regency clock on the mantel. She says that it was bought years ago by her father in

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a junkyard here for \$5.00! The lovely card table on the east wall with bell flower inlay is thought to be of Southern origin, and the other card table, the desk secretary and the similar table in the hall with the shell inlay resembles that furniture done in the Baltimore area, but it may be later. The table with claw feet is one of a pair. There is also a splendid Regency sofa with claw feet.

Notice that the secretary bookcase contains a part of dinner service of Chinese Export ware with the Bonsal coat-of-arms. It is "Amorial", made to order for this family c. 1800. (Did you know that President George Washington was the first American to negotiate directly with the Empress Dowager (1784) seeking "Amorial" for the young republic?) Also, in the desk are some very choice pieces of "Famille Rose". Sitting on the desk is a very old and interesting piece of Leedsware and it is said this family brought it to America when they came.

Hall: As you go into the hall, notice the large Chinese urns on either side of the door. They are extremely beautiful and also have many interesting, highly colored figures and appear also to be that type of Chinese porcelain decorated in transparent enamels. We are told that black is very unusual.

The large vase on the Pembroke table here is the Export ware of the "tobacco red" decoration or more correctly "iron red" and exactly matches that large dinner set in the Russell House.

Downstairs - Dining Room: The sideboard on the east wall (to your left) is a most unusual one. It is American made of the Hepplewhite side with a lovely serpentine front and perfectly beautiful brasses. The small cartouche is the Bonsal Coat-of-Arms, and is of

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the same porcelain you saw in the secretary in the sitting room in this house.

On the sideboard is very lovely silver - The coffee pot is an early Kirk one - ^{remember} ~~Kirk~~ that Kirk never marked his early pieces "sterling". The candlesticks are rare - made in Sheffield, England c. 1773 and are highly prized. (Not to be confused with Sheffield silver). The pair of shell condiment dishes were made in Birmingham, England, c. 1800.

On the other sideboard - the larger one to your right (west wall) is a very handsome tea-set made in New York c. 1813 - (the pieces are signed M. Pelletreau.) The silver smiths of this period each used a different finial - it was a sort of trade mark. Notice this tea-set has a "bunch of flowers" as finials. (The Charleston silversmiths of this period often used the dolphin). The pair of sauce boats are also American - made in Boston c. 1813 by J. Loring.

In the small wall cabinet is a dinner service of that Exportware made for the American trade between 1790-1812, known as Nanking. Mrs. Bonsal says this is just part of a very, very large set!

The small portrait nearby (south wall) is Samuel Luther Dana, a friend and business partner of Samuel F. B. Morse when he invented the telegraph. Wonder if Morse did his friend's portrait? It certainly looks like his work, but the collar and tie seem to be a bit late - There are two other very early portraits in the room - over the sideboard on the east wall and again over the beautiful Chippendale desk on the west wall. They are Mrs. Bonsal's ancestors both Kittredges - and are done by painters of the early Hudson River School. They are not signed.

On the mantel are a pair of very beautifully colored, hard paste

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porcelain parrots, probably done in one of the Austrian factories. The pair of Chinese vases are a most beautiful green. They were probably done "to order" during the reign of the Empress Dowager, and are a bit later than the other porcelains in the house - they are exquisitely executed.