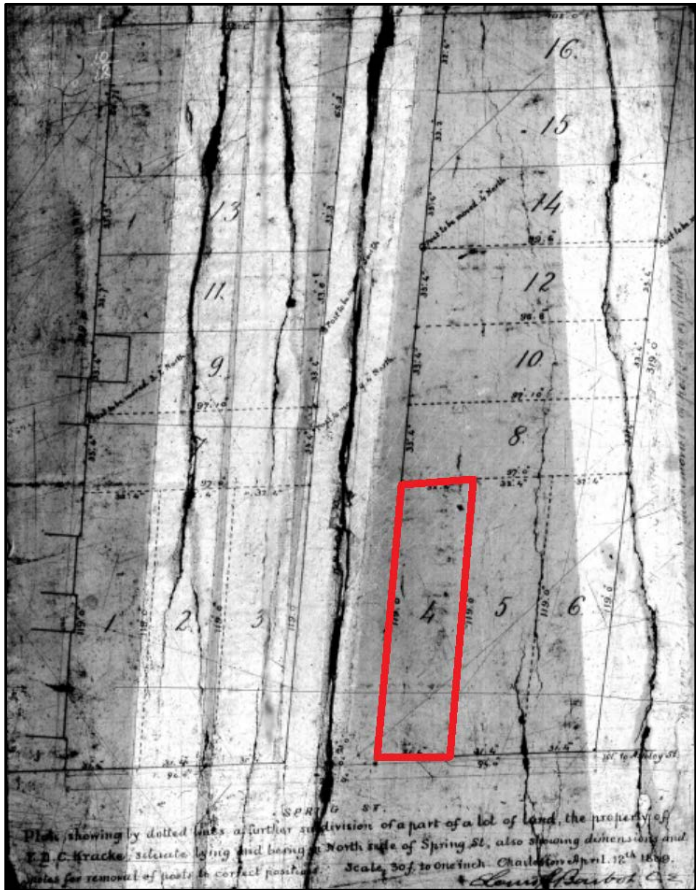


# Otis C. Beckmann House

142 Spring Street

c. 1890



On April 12, 1889, F.D.C. Kracke owned over 200 feet of land on the north side of Spring Street. He created an eponymous street running through the center and laid out lots on both sides; 142 Spring Street would be built on Lot 4 of the new subdivision.<sup>1</sup>

**Otis Chafee Beckmann**<sup>2</sup> bought the empty Lot 4 at the northeast corner of Spring Street and Kracke Street for \$600 from the estate of F.D.C. Kracke on March 4, 1890.<sup>3</sup> He then pulled a permit for a \$1000, two-story house in early 1890.<sup>4</sup> The house he built is a simple, two-story frame dwelling with a flat roof and two-

story porch across the front. The most notable aspect of the house is the millwork: The house has decorative wooden brackets around the eaves, turned columns, and very unusual sawn porch balusters.

The use of the decorative wood elements is perhaps not surprising: Mr. Beckmann was a bookkeeper by trade but was also an officer of the Percival Manufacturing Co. (a company that produced doors, sashes, and other wooden

<sup>1</sup> Plat book C, page 56  
<sup>2</sup> Mr. Beckmann was born in October 1856; married Julia [unknown surname] in 1893; and died on June 19, 1928, in Richmond, Georgia.  
<sup>3</sup> Deed book E21, page 138  
<sup>4</sup> "We Are Making Progress," News and Courier, Apr. 18, 1890, at 8 (year-to-date)

house parts).<sup>5</sup> He lived at the new house only briefly before he built another house at 27 Charlotte Street<sup>6</sup> and relocated. (Mr. Beckmann must have liked the look of his Spring Street house since he used identical sawn balusters on the porch of his new house.)

**Arthur D. Hoffman**, alternately identified as either a black or mulatto butcher with a green grocery at 157 ½ Wentworth, bought the new house at 142 Spring Street as well as the neighboring lot at 2 Kracke Street (Lot 8) for \$3200 on April 18, 1893.<sup>7</sup> He and his wife, Eva Dawson Hoffman,<sup>8</sup> lived in their house almost twenty-four years until March 17, 1917, when he died. The couple's children took over the family business and lived with their mother for at least a few years.

Throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, the house remained in the extended Hoffman family's ownership though a series of inheritances and intrafamily transfers. Mrs. Hoffman died in November 1953, having outlived all of her children. On April 5, 1958,<sup>9</sup> realtor Mr. **William Hubert Drayton**,<sup>10</sup> who had inherited the house from his mother-in-law's estate, transferred the house to his daughter (Arthur and Eva's granddaughter) **Mildred Louise Drayton Jefferson**,<sup>11</sup> but he remained until dying in November 1969. Finally, on April 21, 1989, Arthur and Eva Hoffman's great-grandson DuPont Chemicals production assistant **William Henry Jefferson, Jr.** received it from his mother,<sup>12</sup> and he lived in the house with his wife, Nita.

Mr. Jefferson sold the house to **Paul and Elizabeth Pope** (49.5% each) and **David R. Pope** (1%) on August 2, 2005, for \$470,000.<sup>13</sup> The house passed out of the Hoffman-Drayton-Jefferson family for the first time in over 110 years. Apparently at this same time, the house was converted into a rental property;

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<sup>5</sup> "Topics of the Town," Evening Post, Aug. 8, 1902, at 2

<sup>6</sup> "Building Up the City," News and Courier Sept. 11, 1893, at 4 (recap of permits from Sept. 1, 1892 to Aug. 31, 1893)

<sup>7</sup> Deed book W21, page 101

<sup>8</sup> (b. Dec. 20, 1869; d. Nov. 14, 1953)

<sup>9</sup> Deed book X64, page 379

<sup>10</sup> (b. July 4, 1889; d. Dec. 2, 1950)

<sup>11</sup> (b. Mar. 7, 1928; d. June 1, 2010)

<sup>12</sup> Deed book U183, page 92

<sup>13</sup> Deed book N547, page 715

very oddly for the neighborhood, there is no indication that the house had been divided into separate units throughout its history.



**Harry Cooper Wilson III and Mary McFadden Wilson** bought it on August 7, 2013.<sup>14</sup> The house underwent a restoration in 2013-2014 by the Wilsons.<sup>15</sup> The historic features of the exterior were saved, and modifications that had been made to accommodate rental units were removed. The house was featured in *Southern Living* in January 2017.<sup>16</sup> The house received a 2014 Carolopolis Award for excellence in restoration from the Preservation Society

of Charleston.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Deed book 351, page 483

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/08142013-359> (BAR agenda for Aug. 14, 2013); <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/09112013-384> (BAR agenda for Sept. 11, 2013)

<sup>16</sup> M.K. Quinlan, "Modern Compromise," *Southern Living*, Jan. 2017, at 15

<sup>17</sup> "Carolopolis Honors Homes," *Post and Courier*, Feb. 1, 2015, at Home & Garden 1