

Published in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of our nation and the 206th anniversary of the founding of the College. Published by The College of Charleston Foundation, Inc., March 20, 1976

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The College of Charleston Press



GEMS IN A CROWN

A PICTORIAL OF
PRESERVATION AT THE
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

**The Charles Graves House
36 Coming Street
circa 1842-43**



36 Coming Street before restoration. The masked piazza renders the facade especially interesting.



The restored Graves House carries a plaque informing visitors of its history.

It is extraordinary for town property available for leasing to remain vacant for nearly seventy-five years. Yet the property at 36 Coming Street, part of the Glebe lands divided for rental purposes in 1770, apparently remained empty until 1842. In that year Charles Graves, a planter who dealt in real estate, obtained a 25 year lease from St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church with the rental fee set at \$70 a year. In addition, Graves promised to fulfill building requirements set years before when the Glebe lands were offered for rental purposes.

In 1842-43 Graves constructed the three-story brick single house, which looks today much as it did 130 years ago. Yet the house has exterior architectural features

which are confusing. For example, the hipped roof, simple cornices, and lack of ornamentation suggest an eighteenth century dwelling house. While the piazza's high, sturdy entrance and Doric columns are of the antebellum Greek revival style. However, both the house's interior, with revival mantels and woodwork, and the city records reveal its construction date.

Graves died shortly after the completion of his new house and the building passed to his daughter, who sold it several years later. Through the years the 36 Coming St. property passed through various hands. College of Charleston acquisition was in 1972, and restoration soon followed. The Graves House is now a girls' dormitory.