

From: [Kevin R. Eberle](#)
To: [Emmons, Karen](#); [Pemberton, Katherine](#); [Perry, Valerie](#)
Subject: Mystery shots
Date: Sunday, May 24, 2020 10:28:42 AM
Attachments: [Tuxbury Lumber office - 1907.png](#)

I have a set watch list set on eBay that periodically triggers notices of sales of interest. (Typically, they are NOT of interest, and I get a notice only because of some odd wording in the listing that returned a false positive.) Last week, I got a notice that this was an item of interest:

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/22-Antique-Charleston-SC-Plantations-Black-Americana-Photographs-Streets/353081321427>

I checked it out. There are 22 shots, and two of them are interesting (to me).

One of the shots says refers to having been at the location photographed in July 1907, so I presume all of them were taken at the same time. Most of the shots seem to relate to the Tuxbury Lumber Co. There is one shot of a man on a horse in front of the office of the lumber company. (The seller wrongly describes it as a photo of a man in front of a grand plantation.) That building was built in 1905 WAY up on the peninsula near Pittsburgh Ave. and has been gone for a very long time.

The seller has two shots of the captions on the backs of the photos, but they are really hard to read. From what I can tell, several of the photos show views near Otranto and Dean Hall Plantations in Berkeley County. That makes sense since several of the large tracts were used for timber production.

There are two shots that include unidentified downtown Charleston shots. Both seems to have been taken in a poor area of town. There is a dense collection of one- and two-story wooden houses (mainly one-story). That leads me to think the shots were taken below Mt. Pleasant Street in the "downtown." There were clusters of houses in the African American communities on the Neck, but the density was less. Also, one of the shots shows a gas street light on the corner. I tend to think of that as something you'd see downtown and not in the Neck.

The problem with pinpointing the spot is that there are no telltale landmarks to get one's bearings. And, the Sanborn maps generally excluded poor African American sections of town. By the time those areas were included in the 1941 update, the houses might have been radically changed or torn down and replaced. There is a set of city plats from the early 1880s with a broader geographic coverage that include the same sort of info as Sanborn maps, but those would be almost 30 years too early.

I was going to buy the set when I saw it. Then the bidding started. Yikes! There are more than 60 people watching the sale and more than a dozen active bidders even with five days to go! I was going to buy the set even when the bidding was about \$100, fish out the ones that I really wanted, and then resell the others to recoup the bulk of the price. But, the price has skyrocketed to almost \$600 for the photos now!

I can't believe that there is anyone else interested in the two shots of downtown Charleston at that

sort of price. I think instead that the bidding must be driven by the African American content of several of the shots showing people at their cabins. (There is a strong community of people who collect those sort of things.)

I wrote to the seller and proposed something else. I explained that I would love to have the originals of the Charleston shots, but that having super high resolution copies was almost as good. So, I proposed paying the seller for super high res scans of the two or three images that related to downtown Charleston. I explained that that would be great since the price is otherwise way outside my range but that I could still get what I really wanted AND that the seller would basically be able to "sell" the images twice. So far, I have no heard back.

Anyway, these are the two photos that I think are interesting (along with the view of the Tuxbury office).

Hope everyone has a great Memorial Day weekend.

Kevin

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