

88 Beaufain Street

B. Pressley Smith House

Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner Fiske Willis, of Charleston and Boston

88 Beaufain is a side-hall plan Charleston single house built just a few years after the Earthquake of 1886. The side hall plan was common in this time period. Unlike more traditional Charleston single house plans where the entry opens onto a side porch, or piazza, the entry is on the other side and opens onto a separate stair hall. This allows for a double parlor to span the length of the piazza. The beautiful front bay window and brackets are also indicative of the Victorian period.

Early on, this area on the western side of the peninsula was populated with industries such as rice and lumber mills. By the 1850s this section of Beaufain Street was giving way to more residential structures and by the 1870s there was a large brick house on this site owned by the Smith Family.

The 1886 Earthquake “badly wrecked” that brick house. B.Pressley Smith was listed as the owner and he was advised that the structure would need “a general overhauling.” In the end, Mr. Smith elected to tear down the damaged building and in 1888 built a new 2 ½ wood building at a cost of \$2,500. He sold the house in 1891 to Charles W. Webber. Mr. Webber must have died soon afterwards but his widow Sarah Almira Webber lived her until her death in 1922 at age 84. It remained in the Webber family until 1961.

Parlor

Please note the architectural decoration of palmettes and anthemion and Greek key at the base of the capitals of the pilasters surrounding the doors.

The homeowner is the great – nephew of Gertrude Fiske, a masterful American impressionist from Boston, Massachusetts. Edmund Tarbell and Frank Benson trained her. Her work has been much lauded both in the past and recently and has been exhibited in several Museums and institutions in the northeast. Critics have noted that her works rivaled those of the painter Mary Cassatt.

Gertrude Fiske painted many works of art found throughout the house. The painting over the Eastlake style mantle is titled *The Goat Carts*. The painting above the sofa is titled Uncle *Gardi or The Soldier*. Please note the paintings of the *Bullfighters* and of *Scott Bay*, which is located on the coast of Maine.

Please note the mahogany Charleston made chest and the French bombe chest. The table located in the bay was the homeowner’s grandmother’s bridge table

Dining Room

Please note the same architectural details surrounding the doors that open to the piazza. Gertrude Fiske painted the three works of art on the west wall. The portraits are of the homeowners' children and were done by Camden artist, Louise Thompson. The image of the avenue of the oaks is from the family plantation in Yemassee. It was used in the filming of the movie *Forrest Gump*. The sideboard and high board are both 19th c. pieces.

The corner cabinet is from the early 1900's and was purchased in an antique shop in NC.

Family Room

Art in this room includes *The Surveyor* by Gertrude Fiske and *Ducks* by Frank Benson. The fireplace in this room was relined so that it can be used today. This room was carpeted until the homeowners purchased the property. There were six layers of linoleum under the carpet and on top of the beautiful heart pine floors that you see today.

Eating Area/ Kitchen

The Claypooles added the kitchen addition in 2000. You will notice various artwork on the wall of the eating area. Artists that are represented include Tarbell, Benson and Fiske. Note the baskets and copper pot on top of the cabinets. These came from Boston.

Guests will exit the kitchen through the porch and walk down to the back garden.

Garden

The garden was designed by Sheila Wertimer. It features roses, tea olives, yews, and camellias. Peek inside the garage to get a glimpse of Gertrude Fiske's 1938 Ford Phaeton. The Homeowner says it is somewhat finicky as it works when it wants.

Five guides are recommended.