

for one of his sons as a wedding gift. It remained in the Venning family until 1863.

#### 44 Society Street

##### **Isaac Reeves House**

*Constructed c. 1840; rehabilitated 1962, late 1980s*

Isaac Reeves built this small brick house, set deeply in a large garden.

#### 46 Society Street

##### **Jonah M. Venning House**

*Constructed c. 1840*

Jonah M. Venning, a lumber merchant, factor, commission merchant and member of a prominent planter family of Christ Church Parish, purchased this corner lot in 1820. Venning, who lived in a house he built at 40 Charlotte St., retained this property until his death in the 1860s. Family tradition has it that his kinsman, Robert M. Venning, built this large brick house, c. 1840, as his town residence. The property retains a two-story kitchen building and a stable.

#### 48 Society Street

##### **Susan Robinson Tenements**

*Constructed 1839-40; rehabilitated mid 1960s*

This two-story brick commercial/residential building was constructed soon after the Fire of 1838 as part of a complex of buildings owned by Susan Robinson, wife of John Robinson, who also built the complex of houses on Judith and Elizabeth streets.

#### 49-51 Society Street

##### **Oblate Sisters of Charity Convent House**

*Constructed 1838; additions c. 1894*

The western part of this interesting building was constructed by Edward Roach as a residence. The property was acquired in 1883 by the Roman Catholic Diocese, which established St. Peter's Colored School here and added the eastern wing after 1894. The building became the convent of the Oblate Sisters of Charity.

#### 55 Society Street

##### **Old High School of Charleston**

*Constructed 1840-42; portico constructed 1850; rehabilitated 1984*

*Edward Brickell White, architect*

The Old High School of Charleston at this site was designed by architect Edward B. White, who also designed the portico in 1850. Its impressive terra cotta Corinthian capitals, made in New England, were lost in the 1886 earthquake, and replacements were installed in 1985. The school moved in 1881 to the Radcliffe-King Mansion at George and Meeting streets. Subsequently this building was used for various purposes. It stood vacant for many years before it was rehabilitated in 1983-84 as apartments. It now houses several condominiums.

#### 56 Society Street

##### **Dr. Joseph Johnson House**

*Constructed 1835-40; rehabilitated 1962, 1991*

This substantial, stuccoed, brick house was built by Dr. Joseph Johnson, a medical scientist, astronomer, historian and Intendant (Mayor) of Charleston. It has notable interiors with spacious drawing rooms and a handsome stair hall.

#### 58 Society Street

##### **Burckmyer House**

*Constructed after 1838*

John Charles Burckmyer, a commission merchant, built this substantial, stuccoed brick house after the fire of 1838, apparently as his residence. It remained in his family until 1871.

#### 59 Society Street

*Constructed c. 1839*

Jonah M. Venning built this three-story brick house for income purposes.

#### 63-65 Society Street

##### **St. Paul's Catholic Church (German Church)**

*Constructed c. 1840; renovated as a Catholic Church 1861; altered late 1940s*

Formerly a German Catholic Church, this building became Palmetto Post 112 of the American Legion in 1947. It was later converted to residential use.



46 Society

ca. 1960

JONAH M. VENNING'S HOUSE  
46 Society Street, c. 1839-40  
Home of Dr. George Dunn

The builder, a lumber merchant, factor, commission merchant and a member of a prominent Christ Church Parish planter family, built this three story brick dwelling about 1839. Records show that he never lived here but possibly leased the house to Robert Venning, a member of his family.

As built by Jonah Venning, the house followed the basic single house plan with two principal rooms, a center hallway to each of its three floors and a two-story ell (the third story a later addition) which contained the added convenience of a service staircase. To the rear of the main house (east) stands a two-story kitchen and service dependency, and to the rear of this, a large stable building.

Each of the buildings has its brick laid in a neat Flemish bond, with a sand and oyster shell binding capped with kneaded mortar. Since the Vennings are known to have maintained their own brickworks in Mt. Pleasant, it is quite likely that they made the brick for this house, especially because of the increased expense of brick in Charleston at that time with the rebuilding of this midtown section following the great fire.

In July 1970, the dwelling was sold to the present owner, Dr. Dunn. It has been extensively renovated as his residence and, as you can see, this work is not completely finished.

Here one may see original flooring (heart pine), panelling, high baseboards, mantles and door and window frames throughout the house.

JONAH M. VENNING'S HOUSE  
 46 Society Street, c. 1839-40  
 Home of Dr. George Dunn

### Hall

HOGARTH prints, early 19th century series "Harlot's Progress"  
 Boydell edition. Nice wall paper - correct for period of the house.  
 Jacobean chest (pronounced Ja-co-be-an)

### LIVING ROOM

Double chest on west wall - late 18th century (came from Laurie family castle in Scotland "Maxwelton" - better known in song).  
 Sheraton wash stand in corner; Lap Desk - burled walnut; Chairs - part of set in dining room (Chippendale, if asked).  
 Iron stone china in cabinet; coal box - next to mantle. Oil landscape over mantel - English, contemporary (if asked). Map over lap desk - S. C. 1795, by Samuel Lewis.

### DINING ROOM

Kitchen at west end of room is obviously new. The sideboard is late 18th century - English; Chairs - chippendale style - English. Dining room table - around 1800, called "crocodile table, because of construction of expansion underneath.

Ironstone china on dining room table. China cabinet - about 1850. Sewing table - early 19th century.

### UPSTAIRS HALL

Clock, Scotland, 1764; Old picture of Exchange Building - 1828.

### LIBRARY

Earliest piece in room is corner cupboard - about 1700, English. Swords on mantle - family ones - one used by owners great great grandfather and found on him when he was killed at Chancellorsville. (Bookshelves are new - ducts for air condition are on left hand side of mantel)

JONAH M. VENNING'S HOUSE  
46 Society Street, c. 1839-40  
Home of Dr. George Dunn

LIBRARY con't

On N. W. wall - small map of Charleston plan which came out of English publication in late 18th century (point this out only if you have time). Chinese red lacquered chest - over it picture done by owners father. Desk on west wall - made up piece.

If WEATHER permits - ask visitors to go out on piazza - point out Old High School Building on street (1850 - first high school building in city).

# Society Street House Was Probably Built By Venning

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Fifteenth in a series of articles on recent Ansonborough restorations. The sixteenth will appear next Monday.)

By W. H. J. THOMAS  
Staff Reporter

Jonah M. Venning, lumber merchant, factor, commission merchant and member of a

prominent Christ Church parish planter family, purchased the 40-by-100-foot lot at the northeast corner of Anson and Society streets from the Planters and

Mechanics Bank of South Carolina in December of 1820. It is not possible to determine from the few records available on the property if he constructed any

buildings there before the great fire of 1836. If he did, however, it appears he never lived there — nor did he apparently ever live in the three-story brick dwelling now standing there which he probably built about 1839 or 1840, and which today is known as 46 Society.

Venning lived on St. Philip St. during the 1820s, made a purchase of a large lot on the north side of Charlotte Street in 1827 and had completed a fine three-story frame dwelling there by 1831 (known today as 40 Charlotte). This remained his home from the time of its completion until the late 1860s, when he died, according to listings for the period in the city directories.

Family tradition has it that 46 Society was built by and for Robert Murrell Venning (parallel dates would probably place them in the same generation), who built the dwellings at 43 Society, 58 Anson and 60 Anson.

There is no directory listing to back up the story of Robert Venning at 46 Society (supposedly because he spent most of his time in Christ Church parish) and the property remained in Jonah's name until his death. But, since the story has been consistently passed down with the house, it does appear like-

ly that Jonah could have leased the house to Robert for at least one period of time prior to the Civil War.

On Feb. 22, 1869, Edmond G. Holmes, a planter and the administrator of Jonah Venning's estate, conveyed the property to G. Wesley Dingle as guardian for William G. Sachtleben, Venning's grandson, who was then a minor.

The Sachtleben grandson died within a few years and the house and lot passed to his father, Prof. Augustus Sachtleben, who kept a school on Beaufain Street. On May 19, 1874, Prof. Sachtleben sold the property to William B. Smith for \$3,000.

It then passed to Pauline S. Heyward who in turn sold it to James Maxwell Pringle (1845-1931) for \$2,750 on July 1, 1883. The house and lot would remain in his family for more than 25 years.

When James Pringle died, the dwelling went to his two daughters, Edith M. Pringle and Bertha R. Pringle. The former died in 1937, leaving her one-half interest to J. Elmo Southard for his minor son, James H. Southard. When Miss Bertha Pringle died in 1970, her interest also went to James Southard.

On July 9, 1970, the dwelling was sold to its present owner, Dr. George C. Dunn. It is presently being extensively

renovated as a single residence.

As built by Jonah Venning, the house at 46 Society followed the basic single house plan with two principal rooms and a center hallway to each of its three floors, and with a two-story ell (the third story ell section is obviously a later addition to judge from the brick work) which contained the added convenience of a service staircase. To the rear of the main house stands a two-story kitchen and service dependency, and to the rear of this, a large stable building.

## Do You Know Your Charleston?

Each of the buildings has its brick laid in a neat Flemish bond, with a sand and oyster shell binding capped with beaded mortar. Since the Vennings are known to have maintained their own brickworks in the Mount Pleasant area, it is quite likely that they made the brick for this house, especially because of the increased expense of brick in Charleston at that time with the rebuilding of this midtown section following the great fire.

The contractor has now stripped away all plaster on each floor of the main dwelling, leaving exposed beams, brick and ornamental paneling. The tall wooden mantles, with their simple Grecian pilasters, have been removed temporarily from their north wall positions to allow for the repairing and opening up of the fireplaces on each floor (only one had been left unclosed).

The result is something of a study in mid-19th century building methods. It appears quite obvious that after the bearing wall and its joist and partitions timbers were completed and the roof added, a separate team of carpenters came in to measure out and add the paneling, high baseboards, mantles and door and window frames.

At 46 Society, one may see exposed the sliding tongue-in-groove modified cyma recta molding fitted to its baseboard, the joinery of window casings and the manner used for securing the corresponding sections for an ornamental doorway.

After the carpenters, came the plasterers, followed in turn by the painters who most likely marbleized the woodwork and stenciled the ceiling to add that degree of refined treatment not found in the otherwise plain features of the mid-century dwelling.



## Advisory Council Study Of Bridge Terminus Set

By RON BRINSON  
Evening Post Staff Writer

The President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation will make an inspection of the proposed James Island bridge terminus Feb. 5.

The council will begin its quarterly meeting Feb. 3 in Washington. Members will fly to Charleston the afternoon of

The council will meet in executive session to reach a decision. Normally, such decisions are not made public for several weeks.

The council is considering the bridge proposal at the request of the Department of Transportation.

The U.S. Coast Guard concluded that there is a question of impact on a historical area regarding the proposed bridge

the initial application from the S.C. Highway Department to span the Ashley River and Dill Creek from James Island to Lockwood Boulevard near Beau-fain and Wentworth streets.

The Coast Guard concluded that there is a question of impact on a historical area regarding the proposed bridge

Volpe can be expected to allow the council recommendations since he is a member.