

THE HOME OF MRS. T. W. PUNNETT, above at 1 Tradd street, was the first house in its neighborhood to be restored. (Staff Photo by Peck).

Building Dating from Early 19th Century Commands Beautiful Harbor View

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The three-story brick dwelling at the southwest corner of Tradd street and East Bay, commanding a sweeping view of the harbor, was the first house in this neighborhood to be restored, antedating even Rainbow Row. The present owner, Mrs. T. W. Punnett, bought the building in 1927 when it contained an automobile shop and converted it into an attractive dwelling. Mrs. Punnett, who is over ninety years of age, now makes it her home, with her son and daughter.

Although it dates from the early part of the nineteenth century, the house is not the first building to occupy the site. It stands on part of lot No. 6 of the "Grand Modell", or early plan, of Charles Town. The lot was divided in two, and in 1694 the northern half on the corner was granted by the Lords Proprietors to Samuel Williamson.

It later belonged to John Allen, (who wrote "Gent." after his name), and his wife Ann. But the great fire of 1740 swept this neighborhood, and in December, Allen sold the lot and what was left of the building on it to Alexander Hext, a planter.

From Alexander, it must have passed to his relation, Hugh Hext, for by 1769, Hugh's widow was advertising it for sale. She had been Susannah Boone, and had married Michael Berresford, then Hugh Hext, and lastly a Mr. Durand, surviving them all. In 1774, she sold the corner, which then contained a dwelling house and store, to Robert Wells, an editor and bookseller.

An Important Personage
Wells was an important man in the life of the town. His advertisements show that he sold the best literature of that day, comprising books on law, history, mathematics, classical learning, and politics, as well as novels. He stocked maps

and prints, and employed a book-binder who did both plain and gilded work. At his auction sales, catalogues of the items were distributed, said to have been the first book-auction catalogues in America.

Wells published the South Carolina and American General Gazette. As a staunch loyalist, he supported the royal government, at a time when many Americans were beginning to feel uneasy under British rule. Later, during the Revolution, when the British troops held Charleston, he and his son, "Printers to the King's Most Excellent Majesty", published a paper called the Royal Gazette, from March 3, 1781, to the end of 1782. After the Revolution, they lived in the Bahamas, and brought out a paper at Nassau.

It was while Wells owned the corner that it was again swept by fire, this time in the conflagration of 1778, a tremendous blaze which was subdued only when the British regiments on duty here pitched in and fought the flames.

By 1800, the corner lot and the adjoining lot on East Bay belonged to Thomas Barksdale, who left them to his daughters, Mary and Sarah. To judge from its architecture, the house was built soon after. Upon Sarah's death, the two lots went to Mary, and after she died, they reverted, by the terms of her father's will, to other relations. These were James Macbeth and his wife, Cornelius Huguenin and his wife, George B. Edwards, E. J. Edwards, Charles O. Hammond, and Elizabeth Hammond. They sold the corner house to F. Wienholtz in 1855. The lower story contained a store, and the upper floors were used as a dwelling.

In 1878, to settle the Wienholtz estate, the house was sold to J. H. Patjens. In 1914, it was acquired by

the Sea View Realty Co., which sold it in 1927 to Mrs. Punnett.

Is Sturdily Built

The house is sturdily built, and has a slate roof. The stucco which covers the bricks has been colored pink and has weathered to a soft tone. On the Tradd street side, the third story level is marked by a course. The interior woodwork is restrained and consistent, the chief feature being a chairboard around every room.

The ground floor now contains a dining room, a pantry, and a large kitchen, with numerous closets and cupboards. The staircase which ran down against the north side of the house, (probably not its first location), and took up a great deal of space, has been changed to a more convenient place, ending in the hall. In part of the room thus saved, an elevator has been added. The house has furnace heat.

The sunny drawing-room, on the second story, has a magnificent view, looking toward Castle Pinckney and Fort Sumter. Like all the front rooms of the house, it gains interest from its slightly irregular shape, which conforms to that of the lot, and is caused by the fact that East Bay and Tradd street do not meet exactly at right angles.

From the drawing-room, a door opens on to the beautiful wrought-iron balcony, which was a present to the owner from her daughter, Mrs. Punnett was on the balcony one day, when she was recognized and given a deep bow by her cousin who was driving by, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Back of the house, a little garden contains climbing roses, evergreens, and a large plum tree. Many gardens have been made smaller, because houses were enlarged, but here the reverse was true. When Mrs. Punnett bought the house, it extended to the end of the lot. Wishing a place for plants, she had the western end of the building removed. The garden is separated from Tradd street by a brick and stucco wall, with a gate under an arch topped by a fringe of iron-work.

During the remodeling, three cannon balls were found embedded in the brickwork of the house. They are believed to have been fired from Union guns at Fort Johnson during the bombardment of 1863-64.