

WILLIAM HARTH'S HOUSE
9 Legare Street
1817-1825
Home of Susan W. Ravenel

1993

GENERAL HISTORY

This elegant and imposing residence is an interesting adaptation of the traditional Charleston "single house" plan. The house is believed to have been constructed by William Harth between 1817 and 1825 and was remodelled in the Colonial Revival style at the turn of the century.

It was originally built as a tenement house (which was the 19th century term for rental properties). It became the home of Charles Macbeth, Charleston's Civil War mayor (1857-1865), and later became the home of U.S. District Judge William H. Brawley.

The house was originally a large single house, 3 1/2 stories high on a high English basement. An insurance map, May of 1888, shows two tiers of piazzas extending along the south side and rear of the house, a two-story brick kitchen and other outbuildings in the yard.

Subsequently, the house was enlarged by the addition of a two-story wing with bays on the south elevation and a three-story wing to the rear. (It is possible that the living room bay was also added.) The piazzas were modified to curve around the bays of the rear wing. At that time, window cornices in the Colonial Revival style were added to the house.

LIVING ROOM

This gracious room extends across the entire facade of the house and utilizing space normally used as a piazza in the single house plan. The addition of the bay to the south extended the living space as well as giving the room an imposing and visually interesting dimension.

Decorative items found here and throughout the house include numerous objects obtained by the owners when they lived and travelled in Africa. Two antelope "head masks" are "Chewaras" from Mali.

LIVING ROOM
(continued)

Painting, by Adele Buchanan Salley, Mrs. Ravenel's great aunt, over mantel. She also did the large one on canvas and many small pieces.

Piano, Steinway, of ebony. Mr. and Mrs. Ravenel are active Board members of the Spoleto Festival which takes place in Charleston in late May and early June of each year. The piano is used by many of the visiting artists. The piano belonged to Mrs. Ravenel's great-aunt, Adele Buchanan Salley, a pianist.

Bookshelves, added by current owners

Tea Table (in front of the sofa) is Japanese

Small Coffee Table, at bay end of the room, is half of a Korean child's bed. The other half is upstairs.

Rugs, Serape and Kilim

One object of interest will be the Scottish drunkard's chair. You cannot tip it over or fall out!

The mantel piece in this room was changed when the house was remodelled. The original one is now in the kitchen.

On your way to the dining room, please notice the Tom Blagden photo - John Michael pastels and Miss Salley's oil painting.

DINING ROOM

This room contains numerous family heirlooms that are decorative objects collected during the owners' travels.

Rug, on floor, Mahal

Rug, on wall, Morracan

Sideboard, Southern, a link between Philadelphia and South Carolina markets. Sideboards are the most complex pieces to construct. In America, they first appeared in the Federal period, when they reached their most spectacular form. This one was made in South Carolina.

Corner cupboard is American Pine

On far wall is a Korean kitchen chest

Painting over mantel is by Philip Mullen

Monoprint, over chest, from Thailand

The mantel was original to this house. It is interesting to compare to one in the kitchen, which came from the Drawing Room.

KITCHEN

This room which was part of the three-story wing was added to the main house at the turn of the century, and was completely remodelled. It is an excellent example of adaptation of original space.

Framed grass mats are Bakuba pieces from Zaire
Painting over mantel is by Matt Overend



WILLIAM HARTH'S HOUSE
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Home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ravenel

1995

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It was originally built as a tenement house (a 19th century term for rental properties). It became the home of Charles Macbeth, Charleston's Civil War mayor (1857-1865), and later became the home of U.S. District Judge William H. Brawley.

An interesting story about the house tells that William T. Sherman was a frequent Sunday dinner guest in this home while stationed at Ft. Moultrie before the Civil War. He befriended the young boys of the family. When the war broke out, the two boys who were then young men, were sent as Confederate Scouts into North Carolina where one was wounded. The young man was sent to a "hospital" where casualties from both sides were being treated. General Sherman was in the area and as he made his way through the hospital, the young man said "General, we have met before." At this point, Sherman recognized the young man and sat down and wrote a letter to the mother telling her the condition of her son and that he would look after him.

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PAGE 2

The house was renovated in 1977 by Susan Gibbes Woodward Williamson and her husband Thomas Bright Williamson. Mrs. Williamson's great grandmother Susan Keith Heyward lived at 10 Legare Street. She married Wade Hampton Gibbes and came home to 10 Legare to have her son, James Heyward Gibbes who was Mrs. Williamson's grandfather. Mrs. Williamson remarried in 1991 and is married to Charles DuFort Ravenel. On the upstairs bathroom window pane, there is scratched the name "Deveaux". Deveaux Gibbes lived in Charleston and died at a young age.

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Decorative items found here and throughout the house include numerous objects obtained by the owners when they lived and travelled in Africa.

Two antelope "head masks" are "Chewaras" from Mali
Bookshelves, added by current owners in 1977
Tea Table, Japanese, between the two sofas
Small square table, in front of the sofa in the bay, half
of a Korean child's bed
Painting, by Adele Buchanan Salley, Mrs. Ravenel's great aunt,
over mantel. She also did the large tapestry and
many small pieces.
Piano, belonged to Mrs. Ravenel's great-aunt, Adele Buchanan
Salley
Painting, on the oval table, by Charleston artist, William
McCullough.
Rugs, Serapi
Square chair, is a Scottish drunkard's chair. Word has it
that it is impossible to turn over in it.

The original mantel from this room was moved to the back room when the house was remodeled in the turn of the century. The owners are restoring this one.

HALL WAY

The hallway contains works by local artists including John Michael and Tom Blagden.

DINING ROOM

Rug, Mahal, bought in Savannah from Jim Williams
Sideboard, belonged to the Salley family and is believed to be
a link between Philadelphia and South Carolina markets.
Sideboards are the most complex pieces to construct. In
America, they first appeared in the Federal period, when
they reached their most spectacular form. This one was
made in South Carolina.

Corner cupboard, American, Pine
Kitchen chest, Korean, on far wall
Painting, by Philip Mullen, over mantel
Indian, by R.C. Gorman, over the chest
Engraving, Indian, in opposite corner
Rug, Morracan
Belt, Bakuba piece, from Zaire, on the wall

KITCHEN

This room which was added to the house at the turn of the century was completely remodelled. It is an excellent example of adaptation of original space.

Framed mats, are Bakuba pieces from Zaire, called Mudiba, on
the wall
Mantel, which was moved from the living room
Painting over mantel is by Matt Overend, a local artist
Small painting, by William Jameson, a Charleston artist

GARDEN

The garden design was given to the owners as a house present by David Varnell who was a primary designer with Robert Marvin Associates from Walterboro, South Carolina. Mr. Varnell now has his own design firm in New York City and has successfully worked on many projects including the Strawberry Fields in Central Park and Calloway Gardens in Georgia.