

The Life of a Lane:
An Architectural and Social History of 15 Kirkland Lane



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Abstract

This essay is an investigation into an alley in Charleston, South Carolina that is part of a larger group of research on courts and alleys conducted by fellow peers in the Clemson MSHP program. 15 Kirkland Lane will be the focus of this research. The purpose of this research is to understand the creation of Kirkland Lane, significant owners of the property, a chain of title, demographics of owners, tenants, and neighbors, events, a map study, and an architectural analysis. Different primary sources will be used including deeds, plats, property records, census records, city directories, newspapers, and many more. These sources will be able to provide a rich narrative about the life of Kirkland Lane, its inhabitants, owners, and transformation since the early 19th century to present.

Introduction

Alleys and courts have a prominent presence in historic downtown Charleston. They weave through major arteries to create intimate, distinct thoroughfares within the city. These alleys and courts have been home to people from various social, economic, and racial backgrounds. Alleys and courts provide easier access to main streets and housing for growing populations. Typically, not much is known about these intimate spaces within the city. This essay will shed some light on the multi-layered history of one of Charleston's alleys known as Kirkland Lane. In order to understand the creation and evolution of Kirkland Lane, the history of downtown Charleston and Charleston Village must be explained. The following introduction will set the stage for the setting of this alley and its inhabitants over the course of almost two centuries.

English colonists founded Charleston in 1670. The original settlement was along the Ashley River at what is now Charles Towne Landing.¹ The city was then moved to a peninsula surrounded by a bay that provided natural fortification for the blossoming metropolis. English settlers were not the only initial inhabitants of Charleston. French, Irish, and Barbadian settlers were also among the earliest.² Charleston, like many other cities in the New World, was host to disease, pirates, poverty, starvation, and other hardships.³ The city was planned like a European city with gridded streets, public spaces, churches, and fortifications. Walls surrounded the original city of Charleston as a form of protection from outsiders. Major streets like East Bay, Meeting, and Broad were a part of the oldest iteration of Charleston. During the 18th century the population and size of the

¹ Robert L. Rosen, *A Short History of Charleston*. (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 12.

² *Ibid*, 15.

³ *Ibid*, 15.

city continued to grow. In 1725, there were approximately 5,000 people living in Charleston.⁴ The population increased to 6,000 by the end of the 1730s and would continue to grow in to the 19th century.⁵ By the 1790s, Charleston had reached a population close to 17,000 with an almost even division of black and white inhabitants.⁶

Charleston had become a major urban center in the New World with major exports and imports flowing through the port city. Planters and merchants gained enormous amounts of wealth in ever-growing city of Charleston. Charleston continued to grow through the 19th and 20th centuries while experiencing natural disasters and war. Major fires damaged the city in 1740, 1778, 1796, 1838, and 1861.⁷ The city also experienced a devastating earthquake in 1886. Multiple hurricanes damaged the city from 1752 until present, including Hurricane Hugo in 1989.⁸ The city also experienced slave rebellions, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War. This growth and wealth, in spite of disaster, led to the expansion of streets, alleys, courts, and housing for Charleston's residents. As the city expanded, different boroughs began springing up on the peninsula. This included Harleston Village on the western side of the peninsula by the Ashley River.

Harleston Village was one of the earlier "suburbs" established in downtown Charleston. The borough of Harleston was made up of glebe lands, the site for the College of Charleston, and more housing for residents. Harleston Village became home

⁴ Walter J. Frazer, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City*, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 42.

⁵ Ibid, 55.

⁶ Ibid 178.

⁷ "Interactive Maps," *Historic Charleston Foundation*, <https://www.historiccharleston.org/Research/Maps.aspx>.

⁸ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press; 1997,) 19 – refer to timeline for more in depth chronology of disaster/war

to professors, intellectuals, the largest population of free people of color, and mills.⁹ The land was full of tidal creeks that powered the lumber and rice mills of the area. According to John Poston, Coming Street was home to the largest concentration of free people of color in the city as well. Prominent African Americans called Harleston Village home, including Richard Holloway and Morris Brown. The housing stock consisted of different styles like Greek revival, Gothic, and Italianate which coincided with the time period of development in the area.¹⁰ Harleston Village continued developing through the 19th century and created a tight urban area with a range of diversity socially and architecturally. This borough of Charleston is the setting of Kirkland Lane and its later diverse development is important to know in order to understand the evolution of 15 Kirkland Lane as well as the alley as a whole.

History of Kirkland Lane:

Beginnings, Prominent People, and Changes

The following section will reveal the beginnings of Kirkland Lane from a tidal plain to its existence as an alley. This includes the division of lots on plats from the 18th century, to the ownership of William Lennox Kirkland, his death, the division of his land, and the Hampton family who occupied 15 Kirkland Lane and other neighboring properties for an extended period of time in the 19th century.

The plot of land that would become the home of Kirkland Lane was first laid out in the Plan of Harleston plat drawn by William Rigby Naylor (see Figure 1). The square of land is located south of Wentworth, north of Beaufain, west of Pitt and to the east of

⁹ Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press: 1997,) 481.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 481.

Coming streets. The lot is notated with the numbers 1,2,3,10,11, &12 and shows a tidal marsh covering a significant portion of the lot. A different plat from 1797 also identifies the plot of land that would later become Kirkland Lane. This plat identifies a large portion of Harleston Village as well; the lot numbers are notated the same. The lot is still covered with tidal marsh at this point (see Figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

Dr. William Lennox Kirkland, for which the lane is named, and Alexander Black would later own the plot notated above. William Kirkland purchased the land from Benjamin Huger in 1825. Huger was married to William Harleston's daughter and served as the trustee for the property in upcoming Harleston Village. The deed states that the land was sold for two thousand one hundred dollars. The deed identified the property as, "...a portion of that body of land called designated & known by the name of Harleston Green in the City of Charleston and that aforesaid & marked and designated in a plan of said land by the numbers /10,11,12/."¹¹ Kirkland and Black acquired the square of land in the same year. Once it was purchased, J.B. Petival (sometimes spelled Petitval) drew out a plan of forty lots (see Figure 3).¹² The plan that Petival drew shows Kirkland's land on the East and Black's land on the West. The lane was inserted to give access to the 10 lots on the interior part of the block. The two exterior lots on the north and south ends measured 40'X82 2/5' and the three interior lots measured 40'X103 1/4' on either side of the lane. The lane was originally set at 40' wide which created a wide path running north

¹¹ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book Q9, pg.198.

¹² Petitval is mentioned in all of the deeds from 1829 to present, he is also mentioned in a letter to the mayor in 1897, the McCrady plat copy of the plan mentions that the plat was a copy of a sketch given by R. K. Payne "who said it was made by Petitval." Signed Charles Parker - copy taken March 27 1852 see appendix

to south from Beaufain to Wentworth. This land division is the origin of Kirkland Lane.

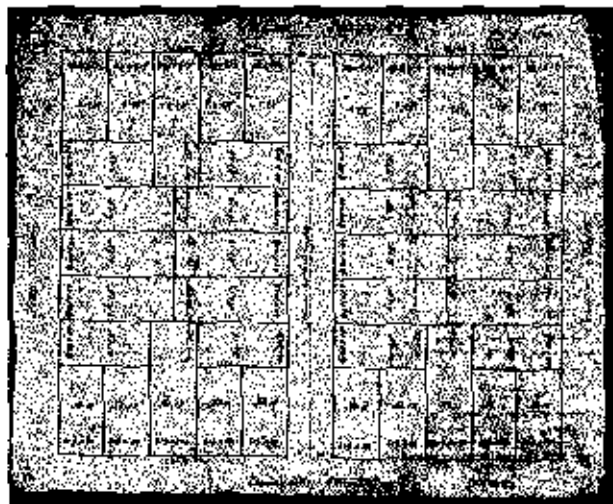


Figure 3

Dr. William Lentox Kirkland, who seems to be responsible for the alley known as Kirkland Lane in Harleston Village was a medical doctor. He received his degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1817 and was accepted in to the Medical Society of South Carolina by 1820.¹³ His grandmother Marianne Kirkland allotted money for his medical education in Pennsylvania in her will.¹⁴ She also deeded her real estate to her "beloved grandson" through James Nathans as a trustee.¹⁵ His father was Joseph Kirkland, who was a physician in Charleston during the late 18th century and early 19th century.¹⁶ Dr. William Kirkland was in practice with another South Carolina physician by the name of Dr. J.E.W. Shecut. They dispensed drugs and medical supplies.¹⁷ Dr.

¹³ "Letter to Mayor Riley regarding History of Kirkland Lane." Charleston City Records, January 6, 1980.

¹⁴ "Kirkland." Vertical File 30-4. South Carolina Historical Society Archives. Addlestone Library, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵ "Kirkland." Vertical File 30-4. South Carolina Historical Society Archives. Addlestone Library, Charleston, SC.

¹⁶ "Kirkland." Vertical File 30-4. South Carolina Historical Society Archives. Addlestone Library, Charleston, SC.

¹⁷ "Letter to Mayor Riley regarding History of Kirkland Lane." Charleston City Records, January 6, 1980.

William Kirkland and his wife Mary lived in Greenville, South Carolina.¹⁸ His presence in Charleston seems to be primarily in property ownership. In Mary's diaries she talks about their home in the upstate and visiting the Mills Hotel in Charleston.¹⁹ Ironically, Dr. William Kirkland died of a fever on his way home to Greenville, South Carolina in 1828 at the age of 31.²⁰

After Kirkland's death, the Master in Equity sold his property at auction in an effort to pay any debts. This prompted the dispersal of the lots to individual owners (see Figure 4). This auction resulted in eleven different owners on the west side of Kirkland Lane. Two of the buyers purchased multiple lots on Kirkland Lane that surrounded lot #19. These men were Nathan Nathans and Henry Muckenfuss. Nathan Nathans purchased four of the neighboring lots. According to the 1830 City Directory of Charleston, he sold "Dry goods, Etc." on King Street.²¹ Henry Muckenfuss purchased three neighboring lots. According to the 1859 City Directory of Charleston he was a clerk.²² The plat below marks lot #19 which represents 15 Kirkland Lane. The name written in the lot is "Dupree" but this is incorrect, because Daphne Hampton was the first owner after Kirkland's death. Her trustee, John Stoncy, purchased the property at the Master's sale.²³ It seems as though "Dupree" may be a possible mistake for "Daphne."

¹⁸ "William Lennox Kirkland," *South Carolina Historical Society & Genealogical Magazine*, Volume 49, pg. 120.

¹⁹ "Kirkland," Vertical File 30-4. South Carolina Historical Society Archives. Addlestone Library, Charleston, SC.

²⁰ "William Lennox Kirkland," *South Carolina Historical Society & Genealogical Magazine*, Volume 49, pg. 120.

²¹ "Nathan Nathans," 1830 Charleston City Directory, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

²² "Henry Muckenfuss," 1859 Charleston City Directory, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

²³ "Letter to Mayor Adger Smyth regarding Kirkland Lane," Charleston City Records, March 6, 1897.

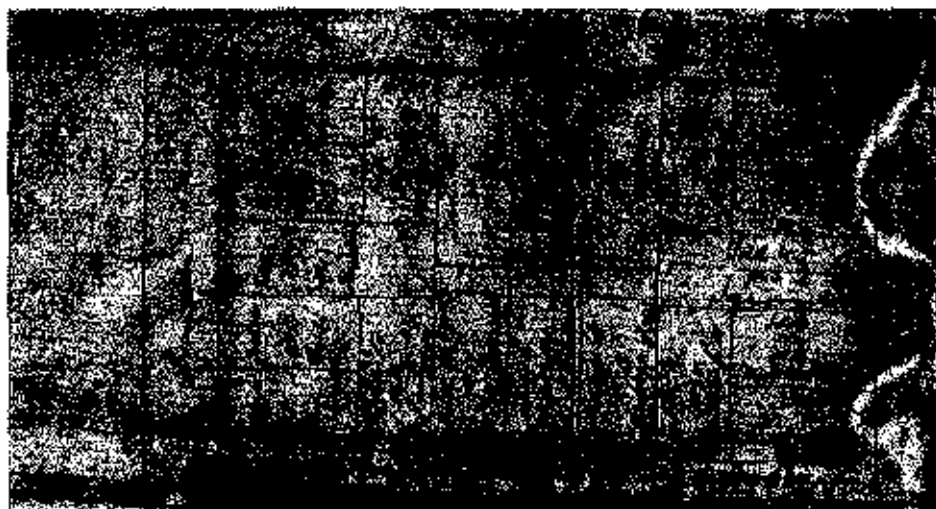


Figure 4

Daphne Hampton purchased the lot on Kirkland Lane on February 8, 1829 through her trustee, John Stoney. She was a free person of color living in Charleston. Her residence before and after her purchase of 15 Kirkland Lane was at 18 Anson Street.²⁴ Different records indicate that she may have used these two residences during this period. Her occupation is unknown because there is no listing of it in the city directories or the capitation tax records. Not much is known about Daphne Hampton since she was a free person of color and a woman, records did not document her life as well as others. She was wealthy and owned multiple properties in downtown Charleston during the 19th century. According to the 1861 capitation tax records her property value was at \$2,200. She is mentioned in the ward books as the owner of #13 and #15 Kirkland Lane in 1852. She is also found in the capitation tax records, which notates the taxes that free people of color had to pay to the city. As a woman, she paid \$5.00; men would have paid \$10. In the deed book, E10 pg. 254, Daphne Hampton conveyed her property on Kirkland Lane

²⁴ *Charleston City Directory, 1831*, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

to John Stoney as a trustee. She left the property to her children in the case of her death. Daphne and her neighbors created a mutual release to change the width of the lane from 20' to 12' which allotted the properties fronting the lane on the west side 8' more of space. In 1883, the lot size of 15 Kirkland Lane changed from 102.5' to 110.5'.²⁵ The neighbors also agree to keep the lane open as a thoroughfare and not build any sort of gate or obstruction.²⁶

Daphne's son, W. R. II Hampton inherited the property at 15 Kirkland Lane after her death and he also acquired two more properties on Kirkland Lane. By the 1870's, W.R.H Hampton owns 11, 13, and 15 on Kirkland Lane. He, like his mother, had multiple residences in downtown Charleston, he lived at 18 Anson Street as a young man, Orange Street in 1861²⁷, and on Kirkland Lane in the late 19th century before his death. Some changes and events happened to the property at 15 Kirkland Lane during Hampton's residence and ownership. In 1886, an earthquake shook Charleston that destroyed much of the city's architectural fabric. In the 1886 earthquake records, 15 Kirkland Lane was listed in good condition with chimneys down that would need to be rebuilt. Hampton's other properties at 11 and 13 were also listed in good condition, with the exception of chimneys that needed repointing.²⁸ Later in 1894, the city engineer drew a plat of the lane that showed encroachments of properties on to the lane itself. The width of the lane was notated at 20' wide with properties invading the path of Kirkland Lane (see Figure 5.) This was a significantly shorter distance than laid out in 1825.

²⁵ Charleston County, Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, D11, pg. 204.

²⁶ *Ibid*, D11, pg.204.

²⁷ "1861 Capitation Tax Records [microfilm], South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

²⁸ "1886 Earthquake Records." South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

Charleston. He held status over darker skinned free people and slaves. This can be seen in his association with the Brown Fellowship Society and his ownership of property. There is minimal information about Hampton, except for some mentions in the newspaper. Hampton is mentioned in the *News and Courier* in a petition for bringing dispensaries to Charleston in 1891 and 1893. Hampton is also mentioned in a list called the "Roll of Citizenship" that declared suffrage for male residents of Wards 3 and 4 of Charleston.³² His funeral notice is also posted in the *News and Courier* on September 6, 1893. His residence is listed in this notice as 11 and 13 Kirkland Lane. Attendance by Brown Fellowship members is requested.

The little information available about Daphne and her son W.R.II. Hampton can lend insight in to their lives on the peninsula in Charleston. They were a part of a different class of racially segregated individuals, were able to own land, held some sort of freedom, and wealth in 19th century Charleston. Their ownership of 15 Kirkland Lane and other properties on the lane defined the progression of change on the lane. The wooden frame buildings at 15 Kirkland Lane would have been constructed during their ownership sometime after 1850. Daphne's home on Anson Street was damaged in the 1861 fire that destroyed much of the Ansonborough neighborhood.³³ This could explain her residence at 15 Kirkland Lane in the latter half of the 19th century. It seems as though the 2-story frame structure that Daphne Hampton inhabited would have been built sometime between 1861 and 1888. These dates seem appropriate because of the fire of 1861, the ward books

³² "Roll of Citizenship" *The News and Courier at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1891.

³³ "Interactive Maps," *Historic Charleston Foundation*, <https://www.historiccharleston.org/Research/Maps.aspx>.

mentioning a frame structure in 1886, and the building shown on the 1888 Sanborn map of Charleston. Overall, the Hampton's are important to the history of 11, 13 & 15 Kirkland Lane and the other properties on the lane because of their ownership for over 50 years.

Chain of Title

After W.R.H. Hampton passed away in 1893, the property on Kirkland Lane was conveyed by Hampton's trustee, James H. Holloway to Norman H. Howard in November of 1898 for \$700.³⁴ The property remained at 40'X110.5' and notated as lot #19 for the duration of this chain of title. Norman H. Howard was African American and ran a pool hall on King Street according to the city directory from 1899. Howard owned the property for sixteen years before selling the property to M. Rutledge Rivers.³⁵ Rivers was a student of law at the firm of Buist & Buist and later became a practicing lawyer.³⁶ He owned the property for one month and then sold the property to Alice Howard Ladson.³⁷ Ladson owned the property from 1914 to 1917. She was an African American woman. Ladson was married, but she did not have an occupation listed in the city directories or the federal census. According to the 1930 federal census she was 19 in 1930 so she would have had the property conveyed to her as a teenager. Ladson conveyed the property in September of 1917 to Henrietta D. Scott, an African American woman, who worked as cook and domestic servant.³⁸ The property was sold for \$10.00 to Scott, so there may have been a familial or friendship connection. In 1923, Scott conveyed the property to her

³⁴ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, C23, pg. 312.

³⁵ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, B26, pg. 249.

³⁶ "M. Rutledge Rivers," 1900 Charleston City Directory, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

³⁷ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, Y26, pg. 269.

³⁸ "Henrietta D. Scott," 1920 Charleston City Directory, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

trustee, James H. Randolph for \$5.00. In the deed, she states that the property should collect rent from tenants and use the funds to pay for taxes, repairs, insurance, and mortgages.³⁹ This ownership went on for almost a decade.

In February 1931, James H. Randolph lost the property because of defaulted taxes in the amount of \$15.13.⁴⁰ The property was seized by the sheriff and sold at auction. More than a year later in March 1932 the property was sold at a sheriff's sale to Lemuel Victorious of New York for \$22.00. Victorious was a first generation American living in New York. His father was from Prussia.⁴¹ In July of 1932, Victorious, as a trustee, deeded the property to Celia Bonaparte as part of Fannie T. Goldsmith's will.⁴² Goldsmith did not have any occupations listed in city directories or censuses, but her father was from Germany.⁴³ Her husband was a dentist in Charleston.⁴⁴ Celia Bonaparte inherited the property from Goldsmith in 1932. Bonaparte was an African American woman who worked as a washer. She lived in Charleston and Manhattan in her lifetime.⁴⁵ Celia Bonaparte then conveyed the property at 15 Kirkland Lane to George Washington in her last will and testament in 1936. George Washington lived at the residence through the 1940s, but his ownership length is unknown to an extent because there is gap in the chain of title. Washington and his family were African Americans. Washington was listed as a cook in the 1940 federal census and he resided at 15 Kirkland Lane with his wife, brother, sister-in-law, and children for a significant period of time.⁴⁶

³⁹ Charleston County, Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, G31, pg. 543.

⁴⁰ Charleston County, Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, S35, pg. 567.

⁴¹ "Lemuel Victorious," 1900 Federal Census, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

⁴² Charleston County, Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, Z36, pg. 492.

⁴³ "Fannie T. Goldsmith," 1920 Federal Census, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Celia Bonaparte," 1920 Federal Census, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

⁴⁶ "George Washington," 1940 Federal Census, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah. — residence in 1935 as well.

The next person to own the property at 15 Kirkland Lane was Karl I. Buse. It is unknown when he purchased the property but he sold it in 1949. Buse was a white male with German parents. He worked as government office clerk according to the 1920 federal census.⁴⁷ Buse sold the property in December of 1949 to Washington Property Company.⁴⁸ The Washington Property Company owned the parcel until 1962 when it was sold at an auction for \$50,000. Washington Property Company lost the property due to insufficient funds.⁴⁹ James A. Washington proceeded to buy the property from the Master's auction and held the property until 1984. In October of 1984, Washington sold to the property to WILKEN Developers.⁵⁰ The property was then conveyed to Richard Ritter in August of 1988 for \$155,000.⁵¹ Ritter then sold the property to Lisa A. Ritter in 1998 for \$10.⁵²

The evolution of ownership has transferred between different races, genders, and ethnicities over time. From the 19th century, it belonged to free people of color, then was granted to African Americans after the Civil War, and ended up in the hands of multiple first generation Americans with European parents. This variety of ownership is in opposition to majority population that has existed on Kirkland Lane. The alley has housed free people of color, slaves, whites, and now a new population of students. This span of different residents happened gradually and Kirkland was typically a place of privacy for the residents. People who lived on this dirt path or alley noticed when others

⁴⁷ "Karl I. Buse," 1920 Federal Census, *Ancestry.com*, North Provo, Utah.

⁴⁸ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, H78, pg. 286

⁴⁹ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, L141, pg. 259.

⁵⁰ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, K144, pg. 211.

⁵¹ Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, A177, pg.225.

⁵² Charleston County. Records of Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Charleston, SC. Deed Book, B301, pg.320.

entered their domain and lived amongst themselves. The people who lived here were the working class of Charleston, which contrasted the residents on exterior streets. This alley became a place for the tired, hungry, and poor. Even if the alley never had a gate erected for privacy, the residents of this place would be able to spot an outsider. The location of Kirkland Lane may have played a large role in its function as an overcrowded place that housed multiple families to one house. The central location provided a place for laborers, cooks, servants, and other skilled laborers to lay their heads in the shadows of main streets like Beaufain or Wentworth. The owners may have been vastly diverse, but the tenants of 15 Kirkland Lane and other residences were primarily African American over time.

Map Study of Kirkland Lane

This section will document the evolution of 15 Kirkland Lane and the alley as a whole through a series of maps from 1844 forward to 1977. The following maps may indicate buildings or just the existence of the lane itself. The following maps will include: the Plan of the City Neck 1844, Bridgens & Allen 1852 map, City of Charleston map of 1869-70, the Bird's Eye of 1872, 1888 Charleston Sanborn, 1899 Veteran Guide to Charleston map, a 1931 Map of the City of Charleston, A 1938 map of the City of Charleston, a 1964 City Engineer map of Charleston, and finally a 1977 City Map of Charleston. Each of these maps is beneficial in their own way, but collectively they provide a visual representation of the evolution of Kirkland Lane from the 19th century through the 20th century.



Figure 6 - 1844 Plan of the City Neck



Figure 7 - Bridgens & Allen Map 1852



Figure 8 - Bird's Eye Map of Charleston 1872

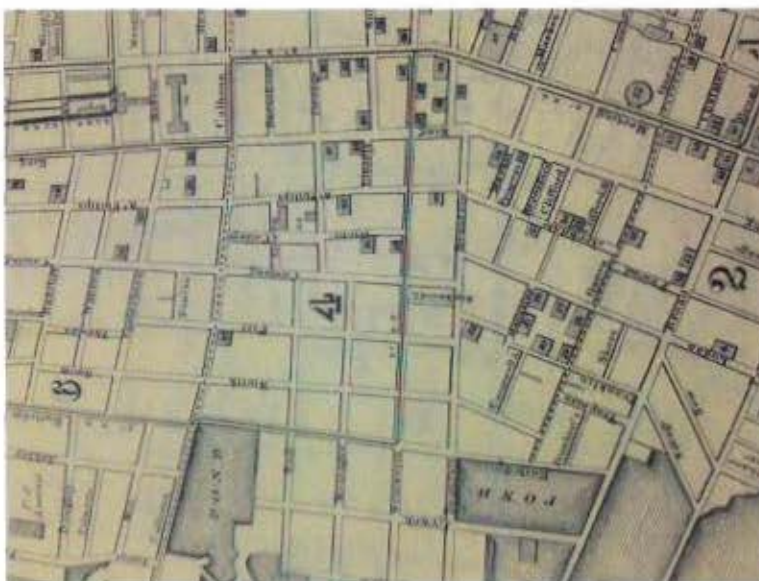


Figure 9 - City of Charleston map of 1869-70



Figure 10 - 1888 Sanborn Map



Figure 13 - 1938 Map of City of Charleston



Figure 14 - 1964 City Engineer Map of Charleston



Figure 15 – 1977 City Map of Charleston

This map study shows the existence of 15 Kirkland Lane, specifically, along with the alley as a whole. The lane can be traced through Charleston's history via maps, as seen above.

Demographics – Late 19th Century to 20th century

Since the creation of Kirkland Lane in the 1820s it has hosted a segregated population. While the owners on Kirkland Lane varied significantly, most of the tenants in these houses were African American or slaves. Using city directories, census data, and newspapers the population of Kirkland Lane can be discovered. A focus will be placed on the residents of 15 Kirkland Lane, but a consensus about the population on the alley will be reached. As previously mentioned above, Daphne Hampton and her son W.R.H. Hampton inhabited the properties at 11, 13, and 15 Kirkland through the 1890s. Their presence was prominent and defined the alley for a significant period of time. Their status as free people of color set a tone for the lane about race. As the 20th century approached

the alley became full of working class, African Americans who crowded in to frame structures that lined the dirt lane. These demographics are seen in the 1861 census, the 1921 city directory, and the 1940 federal census. These documents give insight about population over an 80-year period of the residents of Kirkland Lane.

According to the 1861 city census of Charleston, there was a fairly diverse population on the lane. Daphne Hampton resided at 13 Kirkland Lane. 15 Kirkland Lane is not listed in this census, so it seems as though the building was not yet constructed. 1 Kirkland Lane was unoccupied at the time. Slaves resided at 3, 5, and 7 Kirkland Lane. Frances Knights, a free person of color, resided at 9 Kirkland Lane. A person notated with the surname Williams, also a free person of color, resided at 11 Kirkland Lane. This was the overall demographics for the west side of the alley, which was Dr. Kirkland's original plot. It seems that less people lived on the east side of the alley in 1861. William P. Sharp lived at 2 Kirkland Lane. William Buggin and "others" resided at 4 Kirkland Lane. Slaves lived at 6 Kirkland Lane. All of this information was gathered during the 1961 city census of Charleston, which provides an informative snapshot of the people who inhabited this thoroughfare. The population in 1861 can be used to infer that the slaves that lived here set the stage for other African Americans to live on the alley throughout the 20th century. The census also notes that all the structures on the alley were of frame construction, which seems to be consistent well in to the 20th century.⁵³

⁵³ "Census of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, For the Year 1861. □ Illustrated by Statistical Tables. Prepared under the Authority of the □ City Council by Frederick A. Ford." *Documenting the American South*. Scanned by Apex Data Services. University of North Carolina. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/census/census.html>.

Jumping ahead to 1920, the demographics of the lane have shifted slightly from the mid 19th century. It seems as though the population is all African American and any white residents have left. The 1921 Charleston city census shows Willis Austin, his wife Albertha, and a woman named Charlotte Brown all living at 15 Kirkland Lane.⁵⁴ They were all African American. Austin is listed as a laborer in the directory and Charlotte does not have an occupation listed. There was a large population of people residing on Kirkland Lane, which only occupies the length of a city block. Most people were tenants that rented the properties. Multiple families would be living in single buildings.

In the 1940 federal census, there was a larger number of people living at 15 Kirkland Lane. In 1940, George Washington, who also owned the property, lived at 15 Kirkland Lane with his wife Hattie and his two daughters Alethia and Ruth. According to the census they lived at the same residence in 1935. Washington worked as a cook, but his wife's occupation, if any, is unknown.⁵⁵ Another family also resided at 15 Kirkland Lane. William Anderson lived here along with his wife, Sadie and their child, Leon. William and Laura Singleton are also listed as residents. These people had also been tenants since 1935. William Anderson worked as a porter, no other occupations are known.⁵⁶ The property at 15 Kirkland had two frame buildings that would have been occupied by all of these different tenants during the 1930s and 1940s.

Through examining various city directories and federal census records, a general understanding of race, class, and occupation can be determined. The people of Kirkland Lane lived in larger family units in tightly packed alley. There was an overwhelming

⁵⁴ "Willis Austin." 1921 Charleston City Directory. *Ancestry.com*. North Provo, Utah.

⁵⁵ "George Washington." 1940 Federal Census. *Ancestry.com*. North Provo, Utah.

⁵⁶ "William Anderson." 1940 Federal Census. *Ancestry.com*. North Provo, Utah.

population of African Americans with occupations like tailors, carpenters, fishermen, dressmakers, cooks, draymen, bricklayers, coopers, and porters.⁵⁷ This information shows that the population of Kirkland Lane was made up of working class families during the 20th century and of slaves and their owners in the 19th century. Looking at these three snapshots of time can aid in the understanding of how alleys in Charleston functioned and who occupied them.

Events on Kirkland Lane

Kirkland Lane has been a host to varying events over it's almost 200 year history. The lane has attracted all kinds of incidents from murder to a tuberculosis outbreak. This mention of Kirkland Lane in Charleston's newspapers starts as early as 1864 and continues well in to the late 20th century. The alley has had murder, theft, assaults, fires, disease, and various slum conditions in no particular order.

In April of 1864, an article in the Charleston Mercury described a member of the Captain Ward's Artillery being "garroted" on Kirkland Lane. The person was robbed of four hundred thirty dollars.⁵⁸

In March of 1902, five men were jailed for an assault that happened on Kirkland Lane.⁵⁹

In October of 1917, a woman was cut by her husband and taken to Roper Hospital. Her husband was later arrested at 15 Kirkland Lane.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Charleston City Directories. *Ancestry.com*. North Provo, Utah.

⁵⁸ "Garroted on Kirkland Lane." *Charleston Mercury at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1864.

⁵⁹ "Assault on Kirkland Lane." *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1902.

⁶⁰ "Cut By Her Husband." *The News and Courier at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1917.

In December of 1924, a case of highway robbery that took place on Kirkland Lane was dismissed in court when the accuser did not appear in court.⁶¹

In September of 1940, a stove fire at 15 Kirkland Lane was extinguished. George Washington was the resident at the time.⁶²

Beginning in the late 1950s, Kirkland Lane became a hot bed for Tuberculosis. The alley was overcome with cases of tuberculosis in 1956.⁶³ Of the 100 residents living on the lane, 13 cases over a 12-month period had been reported.⁶⁴ The city scheduled an X-Ray clinic for the residents of Kirkland Lane in order to control the situation. The alley was over crowded and in a slum-like state which only accelerated the possibilities of tuberculosis. In January of 1958, health officials were planning a visit to Kirkland Lane to assess the condition of the houses and yards.⁶⁵ The inspectors were investigating sanitary conditions at the individual residences in order to control the situation. By this time, no new cases of tuberculosis had occurred on the lane. The fire inspector was also scheduled to visit the lane to inspect, "rotten stairs and porches, defective chimneys, poor mortar in foundations, loose plaster, and rotten beams."⁶⁶ These newspaper articles show how the conditions of Kirkland Lane were deteriorating in the mid 20th century. Another article in January of 1958 discusses not only the unsanitary conditions of the slum that took over Kirkland Lane, but the "juvenile delinquency" that was occurring there. The

⁶¹ "Highway Robbery," *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1924.

⁶² "Stove Fire at 15 Kirkland Lane," *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. 1940.

⁶³ "Kirkland Lane Residents Attend X-Ray Clinic," *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. January 1957.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 1957.

⁶⁵ "Inspectors Will Visit Kirkland Lane," *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*. Charleston County Public Library. January 1957.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 1958.

article mentions physical attacks on Wentworth Street had been traced back to a “gang” on Kirkland Lane.⁶⁷ A feature in the *Evening Post* from February 1962 is called “Know Your Slums” and features Kirkland Lane. The author describes the lane as “It is one block long and in that short space are crowded roughly a dozen or so buildings. They are all of frame construction, a dismal, faded, weatherbeaten gray and in varying stages of dilapidation and decay.”⁶⁸ The author continues, “All of the rundown, ramshackle structures house more than one family, most of them two or more... The incredibly crowded houses can be seen jammed against each other across a vacant lot just west of the Lane itself and the Beaufain Street entrance to Kirkland Lane is a narrow, dreary, dirt street that makes its appearance between two drab and dingy buildings.”⁶⁹ This description really creates a sense of place for Kirkland Lane in the 1960s and the decades previous to it. It was an overcrowded place that habilitated crime and disease.

All in all, these various events create a setting for Kirkland Lane from 1864 onward that is somewhat bleak and abysmal. The lifestyle here was one of working class people of a segregated race that lived in overcrowded alley alongside the crime and disease. These accounts from Kirkland Lane should be the only interpretation of the alley, because this place would have been home to many people who carried out a lifestyle of respect and hard work. What this does allow us to understand is that alleys create varying environments for residents and passersby in Charleston.

⁶⁷ “Clean Up The Kirkland Lanes,” *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*, Charleston County Public Library, January 1958.

⁶⁸ “Know Your Slum,” *The Evening Post at America's Historical Newspapers*, Charleston County Public Library, February 1962.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 1962.

Architectural Description

The front building that exists at 15 Kirkland Lane is a 2 1/2-story wooden-frame single house with a central chimney and a piazza that has been enclosed to create another apartment. The building on the backside of the lot is also a 2 1/2-story wooden-frame single house on a raised basement, so it stands slightly taller than the front building. The piazza has not been enclosed and there seems to be an "L" shaped addition of the rear side of the building. A 6' tall privacy fence that was installed during the 20th century surrounds the property. The buildings that exist here match up with the records from the 1888 Sanborn map of Charleston so it is very possible that they were the original structures. Over time these building have been altered and reconfigured depending on their use either as a multi-unit residence or as a single family home at its most early origins. The earliest building permit is from 1932 and it includes general maintenance to the building for \$100.⁷⁰ A major addition happened in 1946, when an 18'X45' addition was placed at the rear of the dwelling.⁷¹ The piazza was enclosed in 1946 to be converted to a bedroom.⁷² These previous two changes to the building were conducted under George Washington's ownership. The building's exterior, interior, and roof was repaired and painted over the course of its lifetime under different ownership according to the building permits. The largest renovation happened in 1984, under the ownership of Wil-Ken Developers when a \$60,000 project that included, new electrical wiring, plumbing, and mechanical systems were installed.⁷³ In 2000, the Board of Architectural Review

⁷⁰ "15 Kirkland Lane." Building Permit from Charleston City Records, Charleston, SC, 1931.

⁷¹ Ibid, 1946.

⁷² Ibid, 1946.

⁷³ Ibid, 1984.

approved the request for a bathroom floor addition and interior painting.⁷⁴ The general changes to 15 Kirkland Lane have not completely obscured the appearance of the building that erected sometime in the late 19th century.⁷⁵

Conclusion

In summary, this exhaustive architectural and social history of 15 Kirkland Lane and the alley allow many conclusions to be drawn. Kirkland Lane was created after a plot of land on the Harleston Green was purchased by Dr. William Lennox Kirkland. Kirkland laid out the lane so that to the plots of land on in the middle of the block that lies between Wentworth, Pitt, Beaufain, and Coming Streets could be accessed. After Kirkland's death in 1828, the property was sold to many different parties. This was the beginning of Kirkland Lane. The property was owned by various kinds of people from free people of color, men, women, first generation Americans, and developers. The Hampton's were prominent owners of 15 Kirkland Lane and were likely the ones who erected the dwelling. This change of hands coincides with the social and architectural changes that the lane experienced. The alley was home to a fairly diverse population in the 19th century and eventually became a place that predominately housed African Americans in the 20th century. 15 Kirkland Lane housed working class people who were sometimes crammed into the space, not unlike the other dwellings on the lane. The alley was a place of family interaction, crime, and disease throughout its history. It is just one fraction of the story about alleys and courts in Charleston. The investigation in to the property should offer some insight in to how people lived on alleys over the peninsula. The

⁷⁴ Ibid, 2000.

⁷⁵ All building permits are available in the appendix for further investigation.

dwelling itself is in the vernacular style of Charleston and has been subjected to architectural changes like additions and renovations.

All of this history leads up to what Kirkland Lane is collectively today. It is still a hidden thoroughfare that only residents and locals would use. It is now paved with structures made of wood, stone, and concrete. It has come a long way from its beginnings as a dingy, dirt path between Beaufain and Wentworth Streets. It now houses people from all walks of life like students, professionals, and families. The evolution of Kirkland Lane can be seen as a reflection of the evolution of Charleston as a whole.

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Appendix A

List of Images

Deeds

Kirkland Files

Hampton Files

Chain of Title

List of Images

Figure 1: Plat of Harleston Village, 1770.

Figure 2: Plat of Harleston Village, 1797, includes indenture.

Figure 3: McCrady Plat of Kirkland Lane, ca. 1825.

Figure 4: McCrady Plat of Lot Division on Kirkland Lane, ca. 1825.

Figure 5: City Engineer Map. Encroachment on lane, 1894.

Figure 6: 1844 Plan of the City Neck

Figure 7: Bridgens & Allen Map 1852

Figure 8: Bird's Eye Map of Charleston 1872

Figure 9: City of Charleston map of 1869-70

Figure 10: 1888 Sanborn Map

Figure 11: 1899 Veteran Map

Figure 12: 1931 Map of the City of Charleston

Figure 13: 1938 Map of City of Charleston

Figure 14: 1964 City Engineer Map of Charleston

Figure 15: 1977 City Map of Charleston