

History Of City's Confederate Home Pays Tribute To Gallant Women Of The South

62 Broad St. N. 1-1

Main Building First Erected In Year 1800

By J. V. NIELSEN JR.
News and Courier Staff Writer

The Confederate Home of Charleston, a four-story building extending from 62 Broad St. one block north to Chalmers St., first became the "Home for Mothers, Widows and Daughters of Confederate Soldiers" in August, 1867.

Mrs. Mary Amaranthia Snowden and her sister, Mrs. Isabella Snowden, mortgaged their own home for enough money to pay one year's rent for the building and one dollar was added by a widow living in a charitable institution in Baltimore.

The association was organized at a meeting of nine women in the Huguenot Church. Those present at the meeting included, in addition to the two Mesdames Snowden, Mrs. Peter C. Gaillard, Mrs. Daniel Elliott Huger, Mrs. Henry Ravenel, Mrs. M. P. Matheson, Mrs. Charles S. Vedder, Miss Matilda Middleton and Miss Eliza Palmer.

These women formed the original board of control, along with Mrs. George Robertson, Mrs. William Ravenel, Mrs. W. E. Mikell, Mrs. J. S. Palmer, Miss Mary B. Campbell, and Miss Anna Simpson.

BUILT IN 1800

The main building on the property now belonging to the home was constructed in 1800 by Gilbert Chalmers, a gentleman described as "a wealthy house carpenter." In 1825 it was bought by Thomas Fleming who sold it in 1827 to the Fellowship Society. In 1834 it was operated as the Carolina Hotel. Archibald McKenzie, who bought the establishment from the Bank of the State of South Carolina, added to the property in 1851. A portion of the building was also used as a U. S. Courthouse prior to the War Between the States and by the Confederate courts.

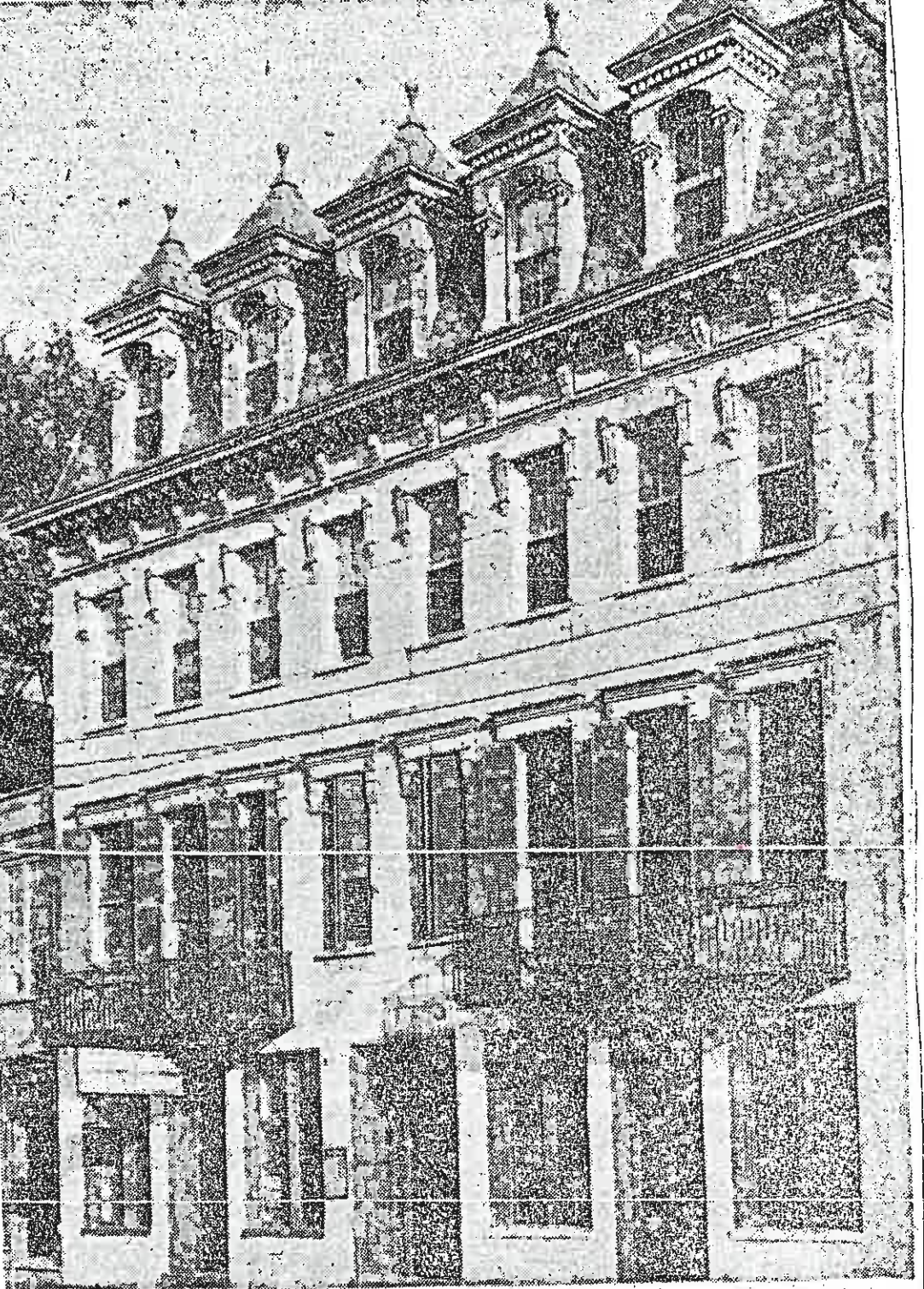
When the property was rented for a home for the needy families of Confederate soldiers, there was a gentlemen's auxiliary to assist in the management of the home and several doctors in the city gave their services free of charge. Friends of the institution purchased the buildings in 1874 and a vacant lot on the east of the original property in 1886.

HOME EXTENDED

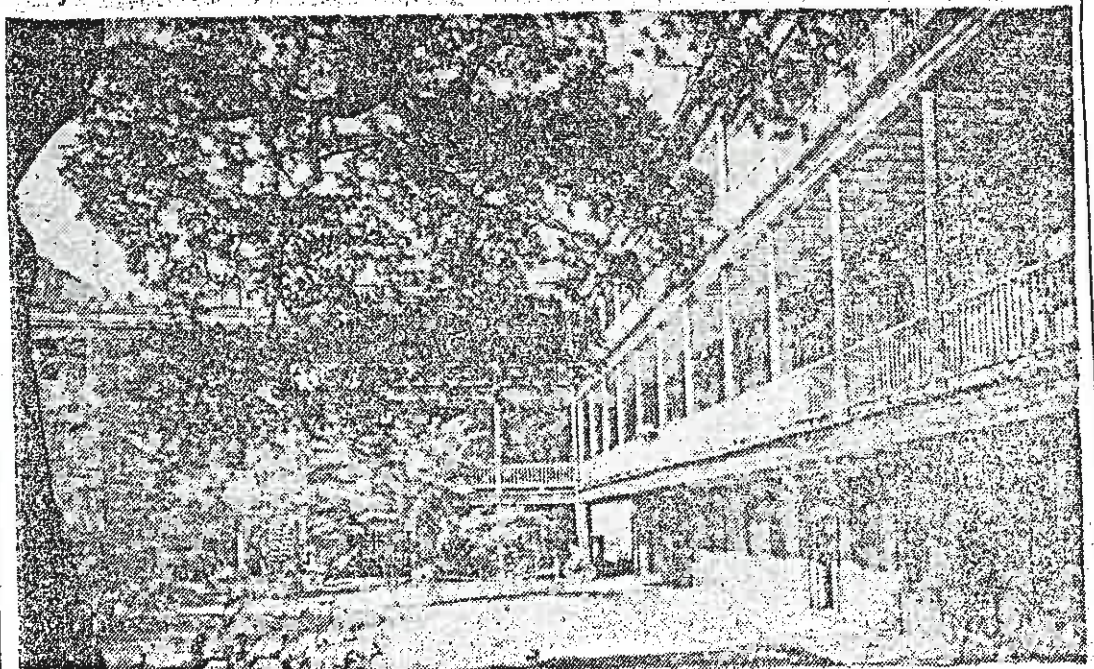
Originally it was stated specifically that mothers, widows and daughters of deceased Confederate soldiers were to be aided, but later the advantages of the home were extended to other women who needed assistance as a result of the deprivations of the war. The board decided to make provision for "such deserving and impoverished women as may in the opinion of the board be deemed worthy of assistance."

The women and children, "permanent inmates," were given soup three times weekly and such other provisions as could be procured. An early report mentions "generous contributions of meat from Messrs. Thos. A. Johnson, James Dunning and Timothy O'Brien." Women under the protection of the home paid one dollar room rent monthly when they could afford it.

When the home opened its doors, 25 children came with their mothers. These children were collected in a school and taught by volunteers. Later other children came from families in the city unable



Front Of Confederate Home Shows Stately Beauty



Rear Of Building Reveals Gracious Courtyard

who could not pay were accepted without charge and were given food, shelter and their student uniforms.

Donations to the school came

give advice and administer serums, simple dressings and treatment. The fee for the convalescent department was \$2.50 a day or \$17.50 a week which included meals. The

the founding of the home. Anyone interested in the home may attend the meetings. A memorial list is read of people who have shown a special interest in the home during its history. Reports are made on

UNCLASIFIED

Confederate Home Spans Many Styles In Architecture

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

The Confederate Home at 64 Broad Street is one of the most intriguing of Charleston's architectural landmarks.

It is intriguing because, behind its exuberant Victorian facade, is a structure with Federal period interiors; because of the remarkable cantilevered piazzas in its courtyard section, extending approximately 140 feet with no visible support; and because it contains in the rear portion fronting on Chalmers Street, a Greek Revival period U.S. Court House.

The history of the complex of structures making up the home begins with the sale of a lot on the north side of Broad Street, measuring 50 feet, nine inches in front on Broad Street and extending northward 301 feet to Mulatto Alley or Beresford Street, as Chalmers Street was then called.

This sale, on Sept. 16, 1800, transferred the property from Ralph Izard Jr. and Elizabeth his wife, to Gilbert Chalmers for 3,000 Pounds Sterling.

A plat accompanying the deed shows on the property a large brick house in ruins, facing Broad Street, and other ruined buildings — buildings which had fallen victim to the 1796 fire which destroyed many houses on Mulatto Alley and State Street as well.

It was evidently Gilbert Chalmers, a master house carpenter, who built the front and oldest portion of the Confederate Home complex, fronting on Broad Street.

On Sept. 15, 1810, Mrs. Sophia Chalmers, widow, sold to John Geddes, for \$13,000, a tenement and lot, measuring in front on Broad Street, 25 feet, four and one-half inches, and in depth from Broad Street to Mulatto Alley, 301 feet, "with a passage leading from Broad Street, aforesaid, which is common for the benefit of the said lot, and the adjoining lot."

This is the first mention found of the

The News and Courier

Do You Know Your Charleston?

passageway which forms the main entrance to the building, in the center of the Broad Street facade.

The documentary evidence indicates that Gilbert Chalmers, sometime between the purchase of the property from the Izards in 1800 and the sale of half of it by the widowed Mrs. Chalmers in 1810, had built on the property a double residence of two tenements, with a central passageway on the ground level, common to both tenements.

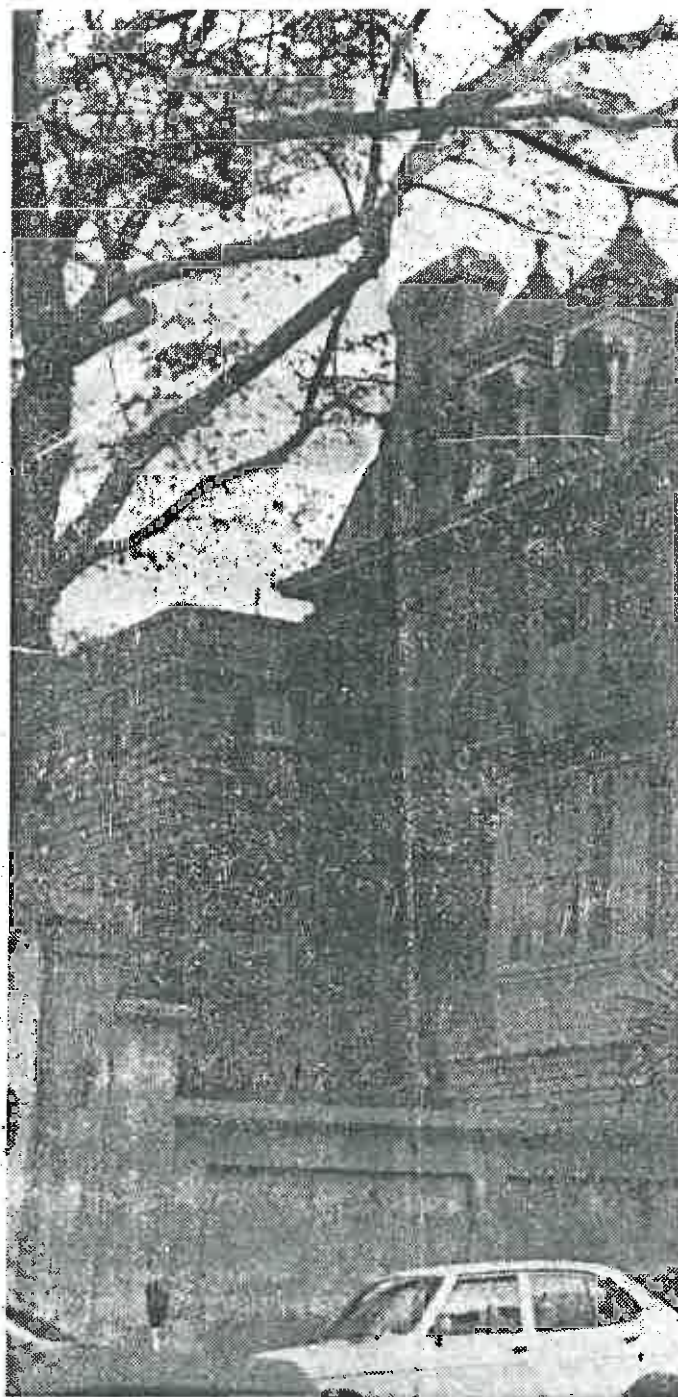
Those dates are compatible with the Federal style mantels and woodwork found in the front section of the building.

On his death, the easternmost residence or tenement went to his widow, Mrs. Sophia Chalmers, who sold it in 1810 to John Geddes, an attorney who had married Chalmers' daughter, Anne, who inherited the westernmost of the two residences.

On the death of Anne Chalmers Geddes, John Geddes gained control of both portions of the property and sold them, along with two houses which he had evidently built on Chalmers Street, to Thomas Fleming, a merchant, on Dec. 10, 1825.

A plat accompanying this deed shows, fronting on Broad Street, Chalmers' "Brick Double House of 2 Tenements," with the passageway, 50 feet long, between the two tenements. The plat also shows the two houses on Chalmers Street, evidently built by Geddes, and assorted outbuildings.

(See Page 13-B, Column 1)



(Staff Photo by Bill Murton)

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...Confederate Home

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Stewart, the proprietor of the famous Carolina Coffee House, moved his establishment from Tradd Street, expanding its concept and naming his establishment the Carolina Hotel.

Stewart conveyed the property in 1842 to the Bank of the

State of South Carolina. Subsequently, Archibald McKenzie acquired the property and continued to operate the Carolina Hotel.

McKenzie was adversely affected by the Confederate War and in 1867 he rented the Carolina Hotel to the Home for the Mothers, Widows and Daughters of Confederate Soldiers, otherwise known as the Confederate Home.

The Confederate Home purchased the property in 1874.

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turned up was that the middle section of the building, with its famous cantilevered piazzas, which had been assumed to be part of the antebellum hotel, appears to be of later construction.

The middle section appears neither on an 1852 survey, in the S.C. Historical Society collection, nor on the "Bird's Eye View" map of 1872. It does appear on the Ward Map of 1882, in the City Engineer's Office.

It is apparent, from examining these maps that the middle section, despite its ancient appearance, was built expressly for use by the Confederate Home, sometime after 1872 and before 1882.

The Broad Street facade was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1886 and the eclectic mansard roof was added. The only other major change in the complex was the construction of the northwest wing on Chalmers Street in 1908.

EP NOV 24 Preservation Groups Seek Public Funding

MARGARET LOCKLAIR
Evening Post Staff Writer

Two Charleston preservation groups have requested public funding for the first time.

Representatives of the Historic Charleston Foundation and the Preservation Society of Charleston made requests for revenue-sharing allocations during a hearing conducted by Charleston City Council Tuesday night.

Henry F. Cauthen Jr., executive director of the Preservation Society, cited the 56-year struggle by his group to preserve the city's heritage.

He said the society has operated with volunteer help and with contributions until now, but suggested that the city allocate \$100,000 to the two preservation groups.

He said a preservation group in Columbia receives about \$40,000 annually in city and county funds, and a group in Seattle, Wash., receives \$600,000 in city funds.

Cauthen said the \$100,000 would be put into a revolving fund for the preservation of areas south of Calhoun Street that date to before 1800.

Mrs. Frances Edmunds, executive director of the Historic Charleston Foundation, echoed Cauthen's sentiments. She said her group has been at work since 1947. She asked for a \$50,000 allocation, but said she would agree to a joint allocation for the two preservation groups if council preferred that.

City council made no decision on the requests Tuesday night. Hearings are held at regular intervals to gather requests and suggestions on the use of revenue-sharing funds.

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