



## **SARAH JANE CLIFFORD HOUSE**

**1999**

**28 Charlotte Street**

**c. 1905**

**Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Willis**

This property was part of the lands held by the Mazyck family before 1803. In the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this area was chosen for residential development by wealthy Charlestonians who were seeking the peace and quiet of a suburban area. However, this house fronting on Charlotte Street was not constructed for another century, during the early 1900s. A few years before, in 1875, a very simple two story frame cottage was constructed in the rear of the property. Two small dependencies, a kitchen and a privy were also located there. These latter two are gone but the cottage still stands and has been converted into two one-bedroom apartments by the current owner.

This solid, comfortable two story clapboard house was occupied in by Sarah Jane Clifford for a short time. Subsequently, it passed through the years in the careful hands of only a few families.

The house was constructed using the "balloon frame" method. This was done at relatively low cost using mass produced, light-weight framing and did not require skilled artisans. It was developed in the early settlement of the prairies, and its simple, strong construction led to its use throughout the country for buildings of every class. The house could be quickly constructed with the roof put on before the interior floors were begun. All the framing and exterior of this house is heart pine.

Note the noble marble steps leading up to the porch. This house sits much higher off the ground than its neighbors which allows for a full 9 foot basement ceiling, most unusual in Charleston.

### **HALL / LIVING ROOM / DINING ROOM**

The hall newel post lamps are original to the house and were made by an artisan associated with the Tiffany Company. The stained glass window is also part of the original decor of the house. Note the handsome parquet floors throughout. The herring-bone pattern with darker inlaid borders denote the important rooms in the house.

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The current owner removed all the Victorian era style wallpaper from these rooms. The interesting color of the walls is the remaining wallpaper paste which had been originally applied to wet plaster. A finish coat of plaster was never added. Apparently, the builder intended to paper the walls immediately. The textured walls point up the woodwork around the windows and doors which add bold architectural detail to these rooms.

The family who occupied the house from 1935 to 1940 installed the matching pair of chandeliers in the living room and dining room. They were brought from Italy by the owner who was in the maritime trade.

Grand piano, Mason-Hamlin, 1915, American

The living room furnishings are family pieces acquired by the owners over the years. There are seven working fireplaces in the house, all designed for burning coal. And the living room mantel is the most elaborate with neo-Adamesque design and white glazed ceramic tiles decorated in gold tracery.

Mirror, with highly ornamental gilt frame, above the mantel, was in the house when the owners purchased it.

The dining room mantel is tiger oak.

Bronze statuary, on marble base, art deco, in style of animal sculpture seen at

Brookgreen Gardens

Coffee and tea services, three, family sets, silver

Sideboard, art deco

Pair of chests, one simplified Georgian style and the other mid-19th century style with carved wood pulls

Dining table, double pedestal, Hepplewhite-style, with period side chairs

Portrait, 19th century, oil, reproduction of an earlier French one

Tripod plant stand, ornamentally carved with gargoyle heads, owner found this at a house sale

## KITCHEN / FAMILY ROOM

This area, though within the original footprint of the house, has been completely rebuilt. The floor boards indicate where the family room/kitchen stopped and a rear porch began. The pull-up door in the floor leads to the full basement. The north side of Charlotte Street is the highest point in the peninsula and allows for the 9 foot ceiling height in the basement. It originally contained a large cistern which supplied water for the house. In today's world it's a convenient wine cellar.

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**KITCHEN/ FAMILY ROOM  
(Continued)**

The family room mantel is also of oak, not quite as elaborate as that in the dining room. Also the floor, though still with marquetry trim is not as elaborate either. The hi-tech entertainment center adds a millennium look to the room.

All the kitchen cabinets are new. The bases are mahogany and the upper cupboards are maple stained mahogany color.

Ceramics, done by contemporary English ceramist, Mary Rose Young, three large pieces in the middle (non-floral) were done by an Atlanta artist.

Return to hall and exit through front door.

**IF SECOND FLOOR IS SHOWN (ASK OWNER)**

The second floor hall is spacious enough to serve as the family library with comfortable seating furnishings.

**GUEST BEDROOM**

Four poster bed  
Easy chair, Eames (contemporary furniture designer), with ottoman

**MASTER BEDROOM**

It is away from the noise of the street with its own recently completed modern bath room. The bed and furnishings are a comfortable mixture of furniture styles.