

The Sarah Jane Clifford House
at
28 Charlotte Street



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Fall 2010

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank my father, who introduced me to the built environment with enthusiasm and vigor. Without a profound love for buildings and their history, I wouldn't be here to compile this information. Second, thank you Otto for your forgiveness. It was not in my original plan to leave you in Pennsylvania.

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I. Introduction

Historic houses impact those who live in them, but also those who are just passers by. They possess exactly what their title implies, history. Very often houses are visited or lived in without any knowledge by the visitor or homeowner of what happened in that particular place across time. Students of historic preservation understand that the history behind a house can often times be more powerful than the visual impact of a building, regardless how beautiful. Would the Taj Mahal be as famous if it was not also a symbol of eternal love? It is out of the need for more property histories that this project was developed, as part of a Fall 2010 Research Methods class, taught by Katherine Saunders, adjunct professor at the Clemson University/College of Charleston Masters program in Historic Preservation. The assignment was predicated on an exploration into military fortifications on Peninsular Charleston. This paper focuses on 28 Charlotte Street, where historic maps suggest there may have been Revolutionary War fortifications associated with the siege of Charleston. While no physical evidence of fortifications has been found, a general history of the property has been compiled.

II. The Neighborhood

Isaac Mazyck was born on the Île de Ré in France. As a French Protestant, or Huguenot, he and his family faced religious persecution with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Issued by Henry IV of France in 1598, the Edict of Nantes opened a path for religious tolerance. During the reign of Louis XIII, however, the power of the edict fluctuated. Isaac Mazyck, being fearful of religious persecution, fled France for England in 1661, just 4 years before Louis XIV revoked the edict entirely.¹

In England, Isaac Mazyck entered into the business of trade with Jacques LeSerurier. Together they traded with South Carolina and Barbados. Following his partner westward to America for business and pleasure, departing for South Carolina in 1686. After arriving in Charleston along with many other French Huguenots, Isaac married Marianne LeSerurier, daughter of his business partner. Apparently Isaac did not ask his partner Jacques for permission to marry Marianne, as a record of the Rev. Robert Wilson from October 12 1693 states that a petition was filed to refuse a marriage license to Isaac Mazyck and Marianne LeSerurier. The couple got around this by holding their marriage in a house of the Church of England and on October 16th Jacques LeSerurier appeared to cancel the petition.²

Isaac Mazyck became a successful merchant and influential Huguenot in Charleston by expanding his trade business beyond England to Portugal, Madeira and the greater West

¹ Charles Knowles Bolton, *The Founders: Portraits of Persons Born Abroad Who Came to the Colonies in North America Before 1701*, Vol. 1 (Boston, MA: The Boston Athenaeum, 1919).

² Ibid.

Indies. He acquired the land on which the property in question sits by grant on October 14 1696, his third wedding anniversary.³ This parcel, known as Mazyck's Pasture, remained in the Mazyck family for the next ninety years until Alexander Mazyck, grandson of Isaac Mazyck, hired Joseph Purcell to lay out a suburban neighborhood.⁴

Chapel, Elizabeth, Calhoun Streets, the boundaries of Mazyckborough, are named for the children of Joseph Wragg who also hired Joseph Purcell to lay out Wraggborough, the neighborhood directly adjacent to Mazyckborough. It is unclear to the author how the Wragg and Mazyck families interacted during the development of Wraggborough and Mazyckborough. While Alexander Street is explained as being named for Alexander Mazyck, Charlotte Street is explained as being named for one of Joseph Wragg's children.⁵ Further research is required to determine how a street in Mazyckborough was named for one of the Wragg children.

The development of both Mazyckborough and Wraggborough share one major similarity, they were both designed with large lots to accommodate large houses for the aristocratic plantation owners to have a place to host social gatherings on the peninsula. The area is now known as the Garden District. While many plantation owners built these

³ Henry A. M. Smith, "Charleston and Charleston Neck: The Original Grantees and the Settlements along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, January 1919: 3-76.

⁴ Charleston County Public Library, *Wraggborough and Mazyckborough*, Inc. Slicker, <http://www.ccpl.org> (accessed November 29, 2010).

⁵ Margaret H Moore, *Complete Charleston; A Guide to the Architecture, History, Gardens and Food of Charleston and the Low Country*, Third (Charleston, SC: TM Phototgraphy, Inc, 2005). p. 96

kinds of houses, the neighborhood was also home to newly moneyed merchants. The earliest owners of the property were Charlestonians of this type.

III. Architectural Description

The building that sits on 28 Charlotte Street now was built around 1905. Facing southward just west of the intersection of Charlotte and Alexander Streets, the two-story porch, decorated with Greek revival details, dominates the front of the house. The marble stairs, situated on the western side of the street side of the building, are substantial in size to match the mass of the porch. The stairs are necessary as the basement is full size, creating a half story above ground. Beyond the porch, the house is a fairly simple clapboard house with irregular fenestration.

Because Charlotte Street is nearly the highest point on the peninsula, the Sarah Jane Clifford house can have the full nine-foot high basement that it does. What used to be the cistern is now a successful wine cellar because there is little threat of flooding. The parquet flooring found throughout the house is finished in a herringbone pattern with contrasting inlaid borders, a style typical of the period it was built.⁶

⁶ Historic Charleston Foundation House Description

IV. First Residents

Samuel Ham, a native of New Hampshire, was a ship carpenter who also owned Ham's Wharf, near Mazyckborough at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁷ Ship building at the end of the eighteenth century had become a respectable business. Both merchant vessels and warships in America had come to be viewed as of the same quality, if not better quality than those built in other colonies and abroad.⁸

Samuel Ham purchased Lot 40 from the Mazycks on December 15 1803. At the time of purchase, the lot was eighty feet wide and roughly four hundred feet deep, with frontage on both Charlotte and Chapel Streets. Mr. Ham did not own the property for very long, in fact no records exist that he built on the property. It was sold on May 29th 1805, shortly before his will was finalized on August 5th 1805. In Mr. Ham's will he describes himself as "being weak in body but of sound mind and memory."⁹ Death records state that he died in October 1807 at age 38, seventeen years after moving to Charleston.¹⁰

George Parker purchased Lot 40 from Samuel Ham in 1805 for \$760.50. Living with his wife, children and the widow of his brother John, George remained on the property until

⁷ James W. Hagy, *City Directories for Charleston, South Carolina, Years 1803, 1806, 1807, 1809 and 1813* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, Inc, 1995).

⁸ Brenda Lynn Harris, *Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 2002).

⁹ Will Samuel Ham

¹⁰ Brent H Holcomb, *Marriage and Death Notices from The Charleston Times 1800-1821* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, 1979).

his death in 1818. George was a "planter" (often a euphemism for plantation owner), but he and his brother John also owned a brickyard. Brick making was a lucrative profession at the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. Charleston gray brick because the persons listed as "brick makers" were in fact only businessmen. They were not involved in the labor of brick making. Advertisements for slaves being sold sometimes listed "brick stower" or "brick maker" as descriptive terms for the men and women being bought and sold.¹¹ Slave ownership on behalf of the Parker family is confirmed in George Parker's will, as well as in his brother Benjamin's will, who took over the brickyard after John and George died. In his will Benjamin Parker complains about the burden he has suffered caring for both the businesses and estates of his late brothers.¹²

¹¹ Lucy B. Wayne, *Burning Brick; A Study of Low Country Industry* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Florida, 1992).

¹² Will Benjamin Parker

V. The Women

Charleston is unique in that its property rights laws, as they pertain to women, were quite progressive in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many states practiced coverture, as was common with English common law. Coverture established that married women as legal subordinates of their husbands. Anything women possessed became legal property of her husband at the time of their marriage.¹³ In Charleston this was not the case, which is somewhat surprising considering Charleston was originally controlled by England. It is probable that the sea-fairing nature of commerce in Charleston necessitated the ability for women to control property and form legal contracts. The first of the Married Women's Property Laws was passed in Connecticut in 1809 but Samuel Ham's will, mentioned earlier, predates this legislation. In his will he specifies that Mrs. Hawkes is to be the sole recipient of his property and explicitly excludes her husband's right to claim anything for himself.¹⁴ Some of the women who owned 28 Charlotte Street are part of this group of independent women operating outside common law coverture. For 173 years only women owned 28 Charlotte Street, beginning in 1819 and continuing until 1993.

The first of these women was Mary M Faber. Mrs. Faber was the widow of John Christopher Faber, a savvy businessman. According to John C. Faber's will he owned a brick store on East Bay Street bounded by Gaillard Street to the north and Faber Street to

¹³ Encyclopedia Britannica, *Married Women's Property Acts*, 2008, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/366305/Married-Woments-Property-Acts> (accessed December 1, 2010).

¹⁴ Will Samuel Ham

the South all the way to the water. John C. Faber left his wife the rights to both "Faber's North Range" and "Faber's South Range" which were brick stores. A brick store was a kind of early general store, usually specializing in dry goods. Historic brick stores can still be found in Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Illinois, to name a few. John also left his wife the dividends of stock worth twenty thousand dollars.¹⁵ All of this inheritance left Mary Margaret Faber a very wealthy woman, enabling her to purchase Lot 40 in the fashionable "Garden District" of Mazyckborough on January 10 1819. Mary M. Faber lived to be 58 years old, but it is unclear how long she lived on Charlotte Street. What is clear is written in the will from 1853 and confirmed by the deed record is that she left the property to her daughters Maria C. Faber and Catharine E. Bennett.

Catharine took possession of 28 Charlotte Street on June 7, 1873 and although Catharine E. Bennett was married, she is the person listed on the deed as the owner of the property. She can also be credited with building a two-story cottage in 1875 can still be found on the property today. No record was found of whom she was married to or what her husband's profession was, but that does not mean no record exists. A deed for the property from 1882 states that Anna H Bennett is the executor of Catharine's estate and that Sarah Jane Clifford is the purchaser.

Sarah Jane Clifford is the person for whom the current house is named. A house description from the Historic Charleston Foundation states that a small, two-story frame cottage was built at the rear of the property in 1875, shortly before the Bennett's sold the property to Ms. Clifford. The 1902 Sanborn map previously mentioned shows no street

¹⁵ Will John Christopher Faber

front dwelling. It can be inferred that at the time of the Sanborn map survey the property was under construction because the deed that conveys the property from Anna H Bennett to Sarah Jane Clifford states that there were two buildings on the property, neither of which are there in the 1902 Sanborn map.¹⁶

By the time Mary E Lea purchases the property, in 1906, there is the clapboard house we see today was the main dwelling. Mary E Lea was the wife of Captain Hampton K. Lea. ¹⁷ Because her husband was a ship captain and also ten years her senior, it makes sense that the house would be placed in Mary's name.

Ida Belle Limehouse lived at 28 Charlotte Street for only five years, with her husband Christopher. Mr. Limehouse owned a grocery store at 430 King Street and another off the peninsula, according to the 1938 city directory. Their grocery store is still a retail space today in the area now known as "upper King."

The Limehouse's were not the only residents of 28 Charlotte to own a business on King Street. In 1940 when they purchased the property Selma Faress and her husband also owned an arcade, or "shooting gallery," as they were called , at 338 King Street. These early arcades were popular with young men looking to impress their dates by winning a prize, not unlike arcades today. Selma and Fred had five children by 1942, so one can assume

¹⁶ April 25,1882 Deed of Conveyance between Anna H Bennett and Sara Jane Clifford

¹⁷ 1934 City Directory

business was good, as children are expensive.¹⁸ Their lot on King Street was vacant as of July 1957, so perhaps their prosperity was short lived.

Although all of the women who owned 28 Charlotte Street were married, it is significant that so many women's signatures appear on so many consecutive deeds for this property. It seems fitting then that Sarah Jane Clifford, the only single woman to purchase the property, is the namesake of the house.

¹⁸ 1942 City Directory

VI. Contemporary Residents

Frederick L. Willis III purchased 28 Charlotte Street in 1993, the first man listed on a deed for this property in 173 years. Transferred to the Fred Willis Trust in 2008 for five dollars, Fred Willis still lives there, with his wife, earning his living as a real estate agent for Disher, Hamrick and Myers.¹⁹ His familiarity with property exchanges, historic tax credits, zoning and the Board of Architectural Review is reflective of his interest in design and renovation projects. Acting as Vice President for the Mazyck-Wraggborough Neighborhood Association, he contributes to the character of the neighborhood both as a resident and as a bureaucrat. Recent renovations are happening on the property, as Mr. Willis is relocating and expanding the two-story cottage from 1875 previously mentioned.

¹⁹ Fred Willis, *Disher, Hamrick & Myers*, 2010, <http://www.charlestonrealestate.net/agentbio.asp?AgtNum=74> (accessed December 1, 2010).

VII. Statement of Significance

This property is part of the larger neighborhood known as Mazyckborough. The north side of Charlotte Street traverses some of the highest ground on the peninsula. Records indicate that this high ground was critical to military campaigns of both the British and American troops during the Revolutionary War and also that 28 Charlotte Street may have had one of the fortifications captured by the British prior to the siege of Charleston in 1780. As with most colonial fortifications, destruction came quickly after the war ended. Planning began in 1786 to create a suburban neighborhood, Mazyckborough, where the lots were quite large. Other than the potential for military fortifications, this property is significant for the women who owned it. For 173 years ownership by women was uninterrupted. While none of these women are particularly significant but when viewed as a group they become significant.

VIII. Conclusion

The original impetus for this project was to try to find out if the grounds of 28 Charlotte Street was the scene of the most significant Revolutionary War battle fought in Charleston. Although no evidence has been found to confirm this hypothesis, other fascinating things about the property have been discovered. Samuel Ham and George Parker were successful business men involved in two major aspects of Charleston commerce, ship building and brick making. The first women who owned 28 Charlotte Street were progressive in their homeownership at a time when married women did not have legal rights to ownership. Further investigation is necessary to determine whether fortifications existed here and hopefully, if such an endeavor should be started, this research will provide a platform to leap from.

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Appendix

Chain-of-Title Record

Lauren Golden HP 611

Property Address: 28 Charlotte Street

Date: 12.3.2010

Parcel ID 4591301098

Date	Book & Page	Grantor	Grantee	Type	Lot Size	Plat	Comments
Apr. 4 2008	W655-733	Frederick Willis III	Fred Willis Trust	Will	40 x 212		Transferred for \$5
Nov. 11 1993	J235-033	Evelyn F Sadler	Frederick Willis III	Conveyance	40 x 212		Sold for \$235,000
Jul. 6 1993		Selma Faress	Evelyn F Sadler	Will	40 x 212		
Oct. 23 1940	F42-153	Ida Belle Limehouse	Selma Faress	Conveyance	40 x 212		
Mar. 18 1935	N38-011	Mary E Lea	Ida Belle Limehouse	Conveyance	40 x 212		Sold for \$7000
Aug. 15 1906	D22-218	Sarah J. Mather	Mary E Lea	Conveyance	40 x 212		Mather (formerly Clifford) Sold property for \$2000 including 2 wood buildings
Apr. 25 1882	O18-437	Anna H Bennet	Sarah J Clifford	Conveyance	40 x 212		2 buildings
Jun. 9 1873	K16-040	Isabella C Faber, Exr	Catherine E Bennet	Conveyance	40 x 212		Isabella sold property on behalf of Mary M Faber for \$1500
Apr. 15 1819	B9-277	Commissioner of Equity	Mary M Faber	Conveyance	40 x 212		Benj. Parker sold for John Parker's children (Peter and Sarah), legal minors
May 29 1805	B8-076	Samuel Ham	George Parker	Conveyance	80 x 212		1/2 Lot 40 sold for \$760.50
Dec 15 1803	B8-076	Nathaniel and Christiana Mazyck	Samuel Ham	Conveyance	80 x 425		

Annotated Chain of Title

Parcel ID 4591301098

December 15, 1803

Grantor: Christiana Mazyck

Grantee: Samuel Ham

Book & Page: B8-076

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 80' on Charlotte Street x 80' on Chapel Street, 416' to the west, 432' to the east

Alexander C Mazyck, Paul D Mazyck, Mary Mazyck and Christiana B Mazyck, wife of Nathaniel B Mazyck conveyed to Samuel Ham Lot 40, third lot west of Alexander Street.

May 29, 1805

Grantor: Samuel Ham

Grantee: George Parker

Book & Page: B08-77

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 80' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Samuel Ham divides Lot 40 in half, selling the new Charlotte Street Lot 40 to George Parker. The \$760.50 payment for this property is included in the record of the original deed with Christiana Mazyck as payed directly to the Mazycks but is listed as occurring after Samuel Ham's initial purchase.

April 15, 1819

Grantor: Commissioner of Equity

Grantee: Mary M Faber

Book & Page: B9-277

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 80' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

George Parker died and left the property to Martha, the widow of his brother John Parker and their children. Peter and Sarah being minors at the time could not take possession of the property. Benjamin Parker, executor of the Parker family brick yard, took on the responsibility of selling the property on behalf of the minors although he has no power to do so under the will, thus the Commissioner of Equity is listed as the Grantor. Deed lists this property as one half of Samuel Ham's purchase from the Mazycks.

June 9, 1873

Grantor: Isabella C Faber, Exr

Grantee: Catherine E Bennett

Book & Page: K16-040

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Isabella C Faber, unknown relation to Mary M. Faber, oversaw the inheritance of the property by Catherine E Bennett, daughter of Mary M. Faber. This transaction was completed as per the will of Mary M. Faber. The Faber family is also responsible for dividing the property in half again, to its current dimensions.

April 25, 1882

Grantor: Anna H Bennet

Grantee: Sarah J Clifford

Book & Page: 018-437

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Anna H Bennet sold the property for \$1400 after inheriting it from her mother, Catherine E Bennet via will.

August 15, 1906

Grantor: Sarah J Mather

Grantee: Mary E Lea

Book & Page: D22-218

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Sarah J Mather, formerly Clifford, sold the property for \$2000.

March 18, 1935

Grantor: Mary E Lea

Grantee: Ida B Limehouse

Book & Page: N38-011

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Sold for \$7000

October 23, 1940

Grantor: Ida B Limehouse

Grantee: Selma Faress

Book & Page: F42-153

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

July 6, 1993

Grantor: Selma Faress

Grantee: Evelyn F Sadler

Book & Page: N/A

Type: Will

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Selma Faress died on June 27, 1993. She willed the property to her daughter, Evelyn F Sadler, who took possession of the property in trust.

November 11, 1993

Grantor: Eveylyn F Sadler, Executor

Grantee: Frederick Willis III

Book & Page: J235-033

Type: Conveyance

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Sold for \$235,000.

April 4, 2008

Grantor: Frederick Willis III

Grantee: Fred Willis Trust

Book & Page: W655-733

Type: Will

Lot: 40' on Charlotte Street x 212' northward

Frederick L. Willis III is still the owner of the property, it was merely transferred to the the Trust for a fee of \$5.



ISAAC MAZYCK
1661-1735/6
Miniature

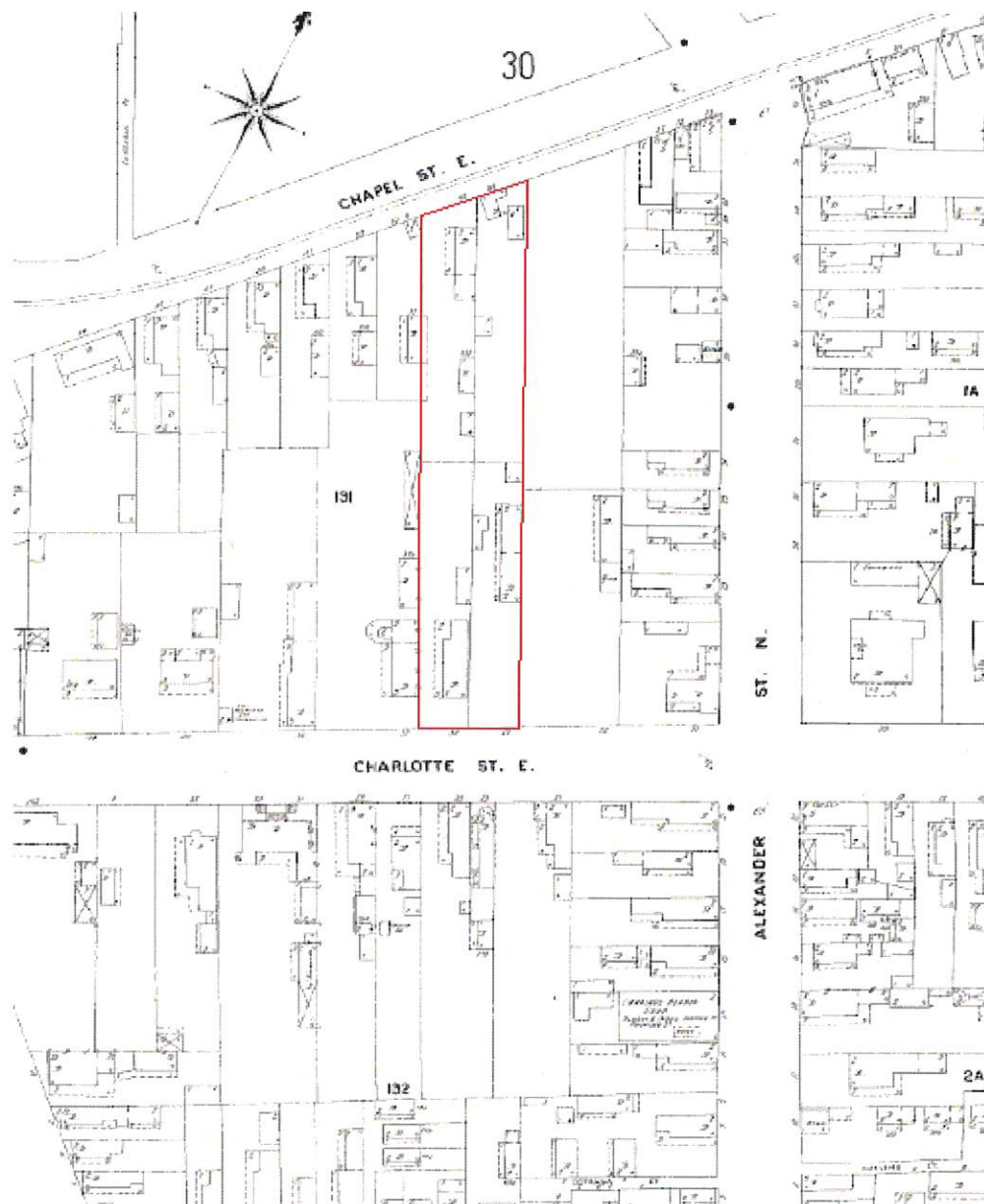


ISAAC MAZYCK
1661-1735/6

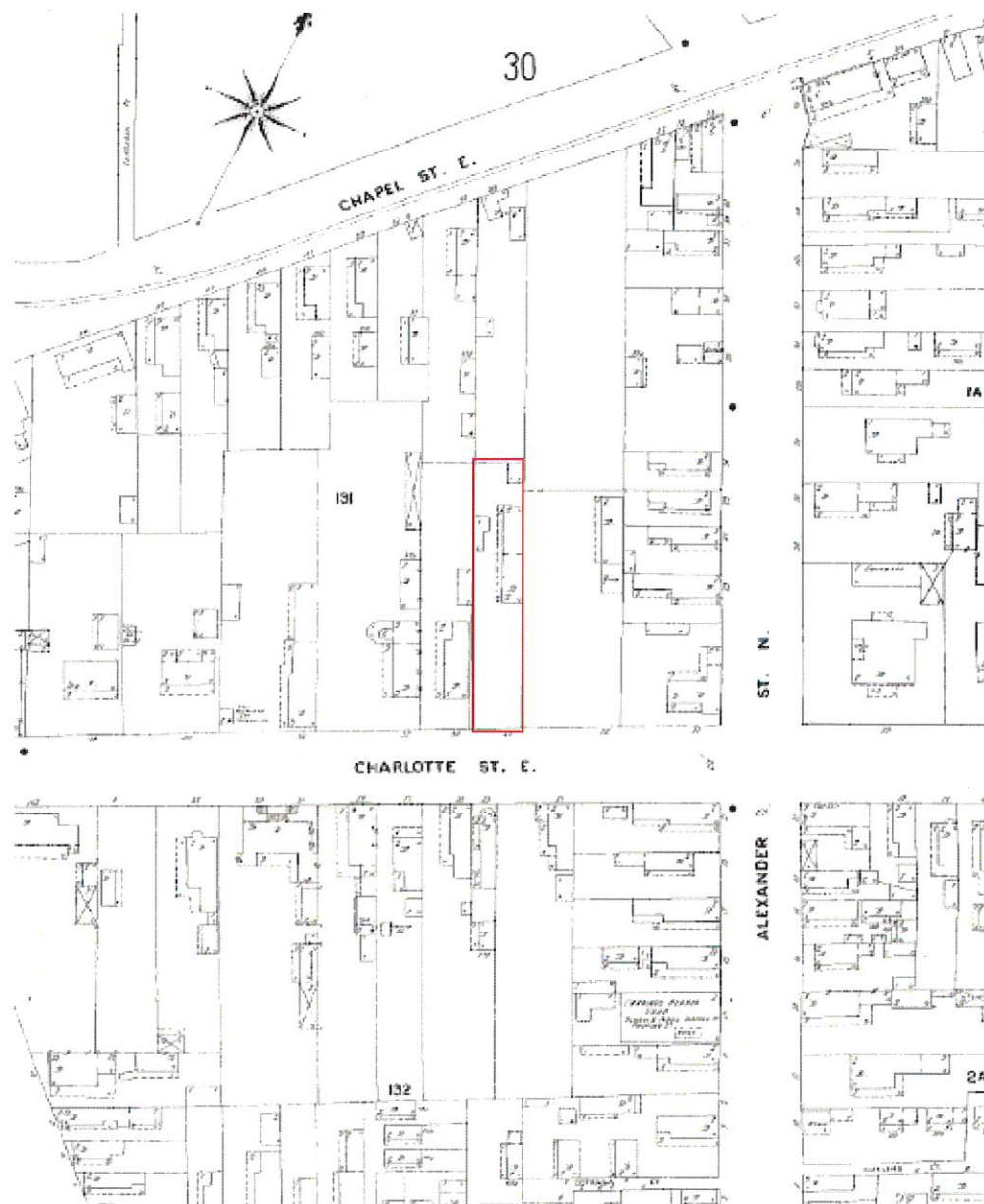
Portraits of Issac Mazyck



1872 Birds Eye View Map of Charlotte Street



Original Lot 40 as purchased by Samuel Ham in 1803



1902 Sanborn Map of property during ownership of Sarah Jane Clifford

