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45 Amherst Street
Charleston, South Carolina

HP 611
Research Methods
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Introduction

45 Amherst is an excellent surviving representation of everyday people within Charleston. Most tourists come to see only the beautiful homes South of Broad. But there is so much more to Charleston than that. Many working class, average Joes lived and worked and flourished in this tiny suburb off the Cooper River.

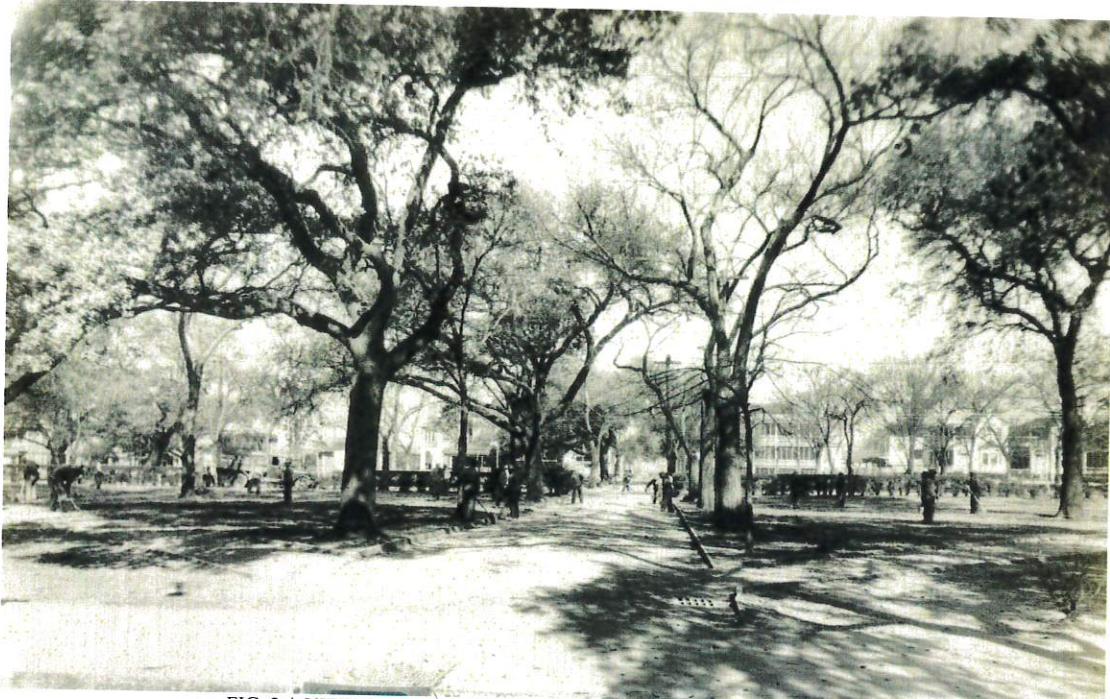
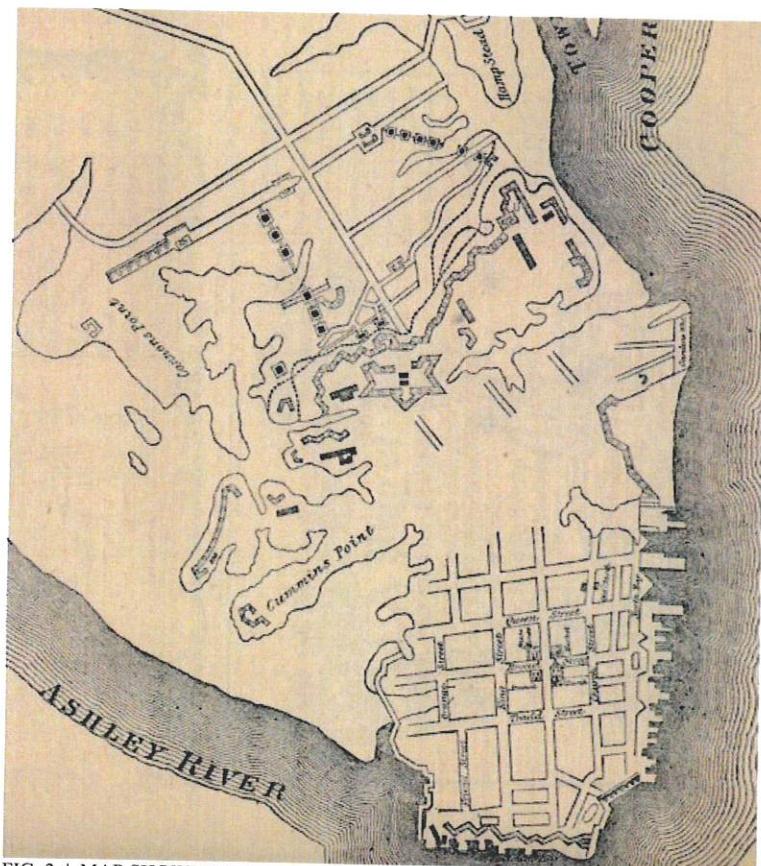


FIG. 2 | VIEW OF HAMPSTEAD SQUARE FACING HAMPDEN COURT

Located in the Hampstead Village neighborhood of Charleston, 45 Amherst is a block away from the original city garden space, set up by Henry Laurens. This property is situated in the middle of the Amherst block between America and Hanover Streets. The original building is still in use today, showing that the people that have owned the house throughout time have taken pride in it and maintained. Even though this house has not changed hands much over time, the people that did own 45 Amherst were hardworking immigrants and freed slaves, who clearly took pride in their possessions.

History of Eastside

Amherst Street and its surrounding blocks comprised make up the Eastside of the city of Charleston. Once Hampstead Village, this ninety-nine acre area was designated as a retreat from the dirty smelly city that was historic Charleston. Purchased by Henry Laurens, a wealthy merchant, in 1769, the original suburb was planned with a central garden space (see Fig. 2), similar to ~~London's new city layout after the fire of 1666~~. Many of the Charleston elite bought lots in Hampstead to escape the dust and grime of the city. But what makes Hampstead so special is that many artisan and working class people moved in as well.



The Revolutionary War halted Hampstead's growth. During this time, the American and English both occupied parts of Hampstead Village. No battles were fought in this area, but the British said to have been "furnished with eighty cannon[s] and mortars (Charleston City Year Book 1884)." The British battlement was located between Blake and Columbus Street (Fig. 3). Hampstead Village was on higher ground compared to the rest of the Neck, making it the perfect spot for the British to see incoming attacks from American forces. This area was said to be the same spot where Fort Washington was set up during the War of 1812, near present day Trident Technical College.

The growth of Hampstead was slow and steady from its beginnings, but there was a slight boom in the 1850's (Rosengarten 25). Many structures were being erected at the time of the Revolutionary War as temporary shelter from shellfire that reached as far North as John Street below the neck.

The early to mid 1800's saw a big residential construction boom in the Hampstead area. The Cigar factory is built around this time and the city starts to fill in the low spots in this part of the Neck. But the 1886 earthquake put a halt to many building projects. Many citizens of Charleston were displaced, while their homes were being repaired. Many camped in tents set up in Hampstead Square (Butler, Ph. D). By 1905, Columbus Street was extended through the square because of the trolley lines.

Architectural Description: 45 Amherst

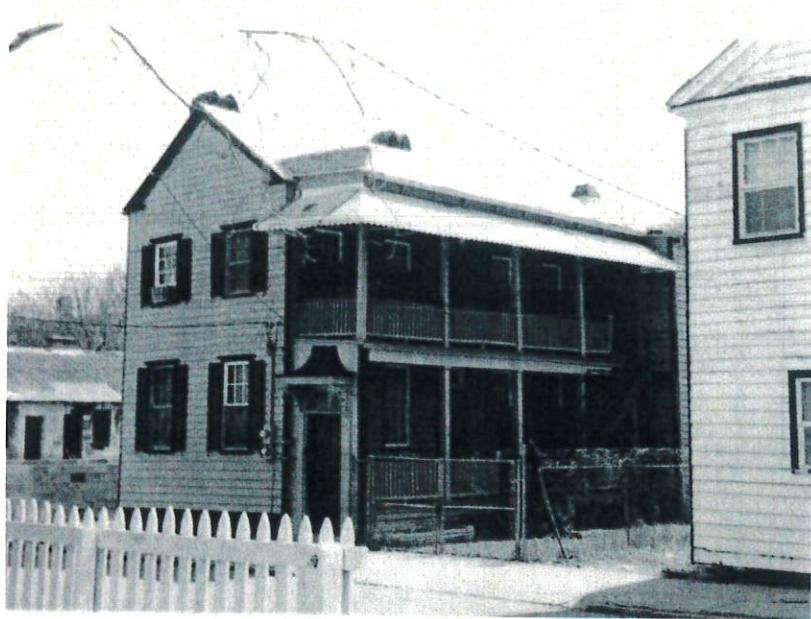


FIG. 4 | 1985 PHOTO

Built around 1860, 45 Amherst has stood the test of time. It has been through a massive earthquake and survived more than a handful tropical storms, including one devastating hurricane with little to no reported damage. Even the exterior is almost the same as when it was first built. Needless to say, this house was built to last. It does its job, and nothing more.

The current lot size is 35'-6" across the north and south property lines and 95' along the east and west. This Charleston single house is situated in the northeastern portion of the lot; its gable end faces Amherst Street. The piazza screen on the porch is right off of the sidewalk. It is double story with a parapet facing the street. The piazza runs parallel to the driveway on the west side of the property, but does not run the full western length of the building. The porch stops when it meets 45 Amherst's late 1800's two-story addition. An 1950's metal awning further articulates the two-story piazza.

Above the door of the piazza screen in a bracketed hood and a “2-light transom window (S.C Dept. of Archives and History). These, along with wooden pilasters are gothic revival in nature, probably added around the same time as the two-story addition in the rear of the house. Modern asphalt shingle roof and green painted flush board round out this simple residence. Currently zoned as a duplex, 45 Amherst has a total of four bedrooms and two full baths. At some point, in order to meet code, metal fire stairs were added to the rear of the building. All of the building additions survive in relatively good condition to this day except for the standing seam roof reported in the 1985 South Carolina Department of Archives and History survey.

45 Amherst in Context

It is hard to tell when 45 Amherst was built, but it has to be sometime around the 1860's or 1870's. The Bridges and Allen map from 1852 shows a plot of land in the general area of modern 45 Amherst, but no houses on this stretch of land. The 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that there is a house on 45 Amherst. That being said, it is hard to determine who owned what around this time. Best guess is that a man named Albert Elfe owned a larger chunk of land between American and Hanover to the east and west, and between Amherst and Reid to the north and south (see Fig. 5). The next deed I could find for the area that was thought to be 45 Amherst was Charles R. Carroll to William Aiken in 1834. Although no house numbers were given, the general location described was in the general area of 45 Amherst.

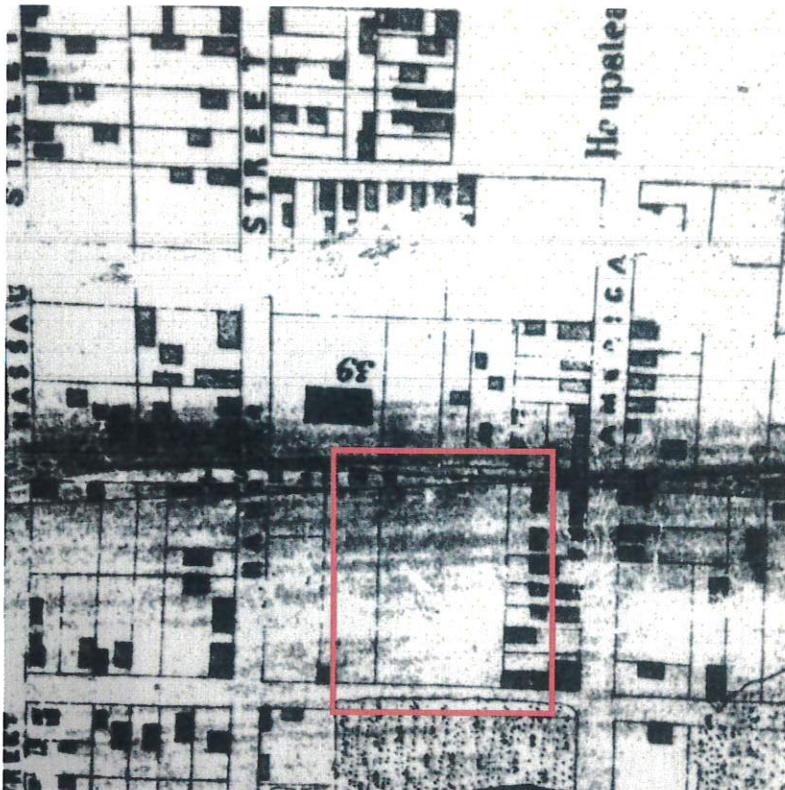


FIG. 5 | 1852 BRIDGES AND ALLEN MAP WHERE 45 AMHERST WILL ONE DAY BE

Catherine Palowski was the next owner of 45 Amherst. Believed to be widowed, Catherine owned the property for at least twenty years. There is an earthquake voucher in 1888 with her name, reporting minimal damage to the house. Catherine also took out a mortgage in 1877. She was to pay \$1060 in two installments. A note over the original mortgage stated that she paid her debts by May 22, 1879. Catherine and her husband, Stanislaus, had a daughter named Jennie who died in 1876. Stanislaus died only five years later. There is a document stating that Catherine collected her husband's pension in 1882 (see Fig. 6).

NAME OF SOLDIER:		Palowski, Stanislaus			
NAME OF DEPENDENT:	Widow, Minor,	Palowski, Catherine			
SERVICE:	Pvt. 2nd C. N. & I. C. U. S. Inf. Sgt. Ord. Dept. 2d S. A. & O. W. A.				
DATE OF FILING:	CLASS:	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED	
11/2/1948	Invalid, Widow, Minor,	294173	401499	D.C.	
ATTORNEY:					

FIG. 6 | CATHERINE PALOWSKI CLAIMING HUSBAND'S PENSION

In 1894, Catherine sold the land and house to the Thomas Liddy family. Under their ownership, 45 Amherst gained a two-story addition, adding a room onto each floor, near the back of the house. This addition cost the family \$300 dollars in total (Bank of Charleston). According to the 1920 census, both Thomas and his wife, Mary, are of Irish descent. They lived with many of their extended family in 45 Amherst into the 1940's (U.S. Federal Census). Mary was reported to have made minor repairs in March of 1922 (Evening Post, pg. 9). Thomas and Mary had one son who worked and lived at the Charleston Naval yard with his family.

The Capers family has owned 45 Amherst since April 29, 1948. Siblings Bertha, Isaac, Virginia and James all purchased one quarter interest in the property. Brother James lived in 45 Amherst until his death, around 1959. Virginia then bought the rest of her siblings shares for \$5 each, making her the sole owner of 45 Amherst. In 1992, Virginia passed along the property to Allen Capers Sr.

Conclusion

The Eastside may not have the best reputation presently, but that does not mean its buildings and people should not be studied. This part of town has a rich and colored past, representing the working class people of Charleston. Without these people of the Eastside, the city of Charleston would not have been as successful over time. These people cared about their belongings and took pride in their ownership. 45 Amherst is evidence of that. It is over one hundred and fifty years old, survived a devastating hurricane and an earthquake, and has stood the test of time even when the Charleston community did not see this part of town as being worthy of calling itself part of the city of Charleston.

Appendices

A. List of Illustrations/Images

Fig. 1 | Google Image of 45 Amherst

Fig. 2 | Image of Hampstead Square from Hampden Court, Charleston County Public Library

Fig. 3 | Map showing British battlements near Hampstead Village, Discovering Hampstead

Fig. 4 | 1985 Photo from South Carolina Department of Archives and History Survey, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library

Fig. 5 | 1852 Bridges and Allen Map, South Carolina Room

Fig. 6 | Catherine Palowski claiming husband's pension

B. Annotated Chain of Title

December 10, 1834

Grantor: Charles R. Carroll | Grantee: William Aiken (Negro)

Book & Page: H10 482

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 102' x 53'

William Aiken purchased this property for \$235. The description of the property is in the general area of 45 Amherst, but there is no mention of street numbers. I am not certain that this is my property. On the deed from C.C. Bowen, Sheriff to Catherine Palowski (mentioned below), a B.W. Aiken amongst others were listed. Looking in the indexes for any of these names, William Aiken was the only one with an Amherst address.

1852 Bridgen & Allen Map

The house is not on the map. But the general vicinity south of Amherst, where the property should be shows a larger property, made up of what are today four or six lots.

1861 Charleston City Census

45 Amherst is not listed. Albert Elfe seems to own a good chunk of Amherst Street property, so maybe he is who owned what is now the 45 Amherst lot. So the aforementioned conveyance between Carroll and Aiken is still in repute.

1872 Birdseye Map

Modern day 45 Amherst is the sixth house in from America Street. This map only shows five houses. Building was still not built yet.

December 24, 1877

Grantor: Sheriff C.C. Bowen | Grantee: Catherine Palowksi

Book & Page: Z17 27

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 102' x 53'

Catherine purchased property for \$795. She mortgaged the property and paid it off in two payments of \$532 (\$1060 in total) by May 22 1879. Shown in H17 284. There is no mention of a house being part of the deed, so I believe it is just the

1886 Earthquake

Catherine Palowksi is on record for earthquake damage and vouchers, but Catherine's listed address is 66 Drake Street.

1888 Sanborn

45 Amherst finally shows up. It is the sixth house from America Street.

May 15, 1894

Grantor: Catherine Palowski | Grantee: Thomas Liddy

Book & Page: W21 344

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 95' x 35'

Liddy purchased for \$5 with love and affection.

July 21, 1905

Grantor: Thomas Liddy | Grantee: Mary Liddy

Book & Page: W24 107

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 95' x 35'

April 29, 1948

Grantor: Mary Liddy | Grantee: James E. & Virginia T. Capers

Book & Page: E49 399

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 35' x 95'

45 Amherst was purchased for \$5,000. "Same property deeded to Thomas J. Liddy by Catherine Palowski, May 15, 1894 W21 244 and Thomas Liddy to Mary Liddy, July 21, 1905 W24 107."

October 20, 1959

Grantor: Isaac Capers | Grantee: Virginia Capers

Book & Page: T68 448

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 35' x 95'

"ALL of that undivided one-fourth (1/4) interest IN ALL THAT LOT, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings there-on situate, lying and [] the south side of Amherst Street, in the City of Charleston, County of Charleston, state aforesaid." Virginia purchased Issac's 1/4 share for \$5 with love and affection.

October 20, 1959

Grantor: Bertha Capers | Grantee: Virginia Capers

Book & Page: T68 448

Type: Conveyance

Lot Size: 35' x 95'

"NOW ISAAC CAPERS, and BERTHA CAPERS, desiring to convey to VIRGINIA CAPERS, their undivided one-fourth (1/4) interest in the herein below described property." "ALL of that undivided one-fourth (1/4) interest IN ALL THAT LOT, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings there-on situate, lying and [] the south side of Amherst Street, in the City of Charleston, County of Charleston, state aforesaid." Virginia purchased Bertha's 1/4 share for \$5 with love and affection. "WHEREAS, JAMES E. CAPERS, who last dwelt in Charleston County on the 11th day of September, 1959, seized and possessed of one-half (1/2) interest in the herein below described property leaving as his sole heirs and distributions at law, his wife, VIRGINIA CAPERS, brother ISAAC CAPERS, and sister BERTHA CAPERS."

1989 Hurricane Hugo

No reported damage to 45 Amherst that I could find.

July 8, 1992

Grantor: Virginia Bolton nee Capers | Grantee: Allen Capers Sr.
Book & Page: X215 362
Type: Conveyance
Lot Size: 35' x 95'
Allen bought property for \$39,000.

November 11, 2012
Grantor: Allen Capers Sr. | Grantee: Allen Capers Jr.
Book & Page: O293 597
Type: Conveyance
Lot Size: 35' x 95'

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