

# Similarities And Differences Mark Trio Of Charleston Residences

Perhaps nowhere in Charleston is the similarity — and the differences — in its "single houses" so evident as in this trio of old dwellings on lower Meeting Street.

Each has its end to the street, but the ends differ in shape, width, height, architectural decor and color.

Each is a three-story building but two have garrets and one has a basement.

Each has a second-story balcony over the sidewalk. The wrought iron-supported platforms are of different size and shape, alike in that they open onto spacious drawing rooms but different because of small details.

Each has its wrought iron gate that affords the passerby a peek into shaded patio gardens that widen spaciously where the narrow outbuildings and rear flanks begin.

One of the houses — No. 23 — has Victorian "eyebrows" hooding its deep-set upper windows. It and its neighbor, No. 25, maintain the traditional Charleston habit of blinds on the first floor windows and louvered shutters above that level, a practice designed to prevent peeping by passersby. No. 27, however, has a low basement that lifts its first floor windows well above eye level of all but big league basketball stars and rendering blinds unnecessary.

No. 25 is thought to be the oldest of the trio, dating to about 1760. The post-Revolutionary house at 27 Meeting has an unusually lovely wrought iron gate of recent vintage but designed to fit perfectly into the old Charleston scene. Date of construction of No. 23 is not certain but probably before 1788.

In the early days of the port city, this section of Meeting Street was called "Meeting Street, Extended." At first it was separated from the main street which began just above the present site of Water Street where the old walled city had its southwestern corner. At that point a small marsh creek ran westward. It was an extension of Vanderhorst's Creek, the estuary that fronted the city's south wall. The marsh is now Price's Ailey. Meeting Street consists of several layers of materials reflecting the roadway construction of different periods.

In descending order, one finds asphalt, brick, oyster shell, wood and a mixture of sand and shell. Also covered in modern years were two sets of trolley tracks, one wood and the other iron. The latter often plagues unwary waterworks crews when they try to lay new water mains.

The houses form one of the more picturesque groupings in Charleston. Viewed on a spring morning with sunlight funneling down between the trees, their soft colors, charming facades and trim appearance do much to delight the eye.

An even prettier view is on a cold winter's night with a high-riding moon pen-



23-25-27 Meeting — A picturesque, colorful grouping.

etrating the shadows, spraying lacy patterns of limb shadow on the pavement and blending the pastel-colored walls into a sort of midnight magic. In that light, the spacious rooms, soft-lighted and dim, from across the street have the appearance of artificiality.

But they are very real and the two northerly ones represent two of the more affluent eras of Charleston's past. No. 25 was built when the colony was enjoying a boom under the status of a Royal Colony, having recovered from the troubles that beset it until the Lords Proprietor were displaced in the 1720s.

Its roof has a belled eave, the tip-tilted effect being carried out in the facade parapet. This slight upturn was devised to

send rainfall cascading away from the sides of the building and is found usually on fairly steep roofs.

The northernmost house has a hip roof that is almost invisible above its severely decorous front. Its elegantly spiraled balcony ironwork and decorative buttress combine to soften the austere front.

The "eyebrows" over the windows at No. 23 probably were put on much later, possibly following the 1886 earthquake. At that time, a great many houses suffered heavy damage and late Victorian decorations were substituted because the original items could not be replaced.

Each of the graceful trio of houses is a single-family dwelling now, serving the purposes for which they were constructed nearly two centuries ago.



18 Meeting — House wa

## Declaration Signer Lived

Thomas Heyward, signer of the Declaration of Independence, lived in some brick dwelling at 18 Meeting Street.

He also is believed to have been a person to parody the words of the national hymn, "God Save the Queen," Heyward's version did not gain popularity of "My Country 'Tis a later author.

He probably built the house after 1803, the year he bought his brother, Nathaniel. Heyward had been living on lower Church Street, to the Grimke family house, which is now known as the Washington House because He and his friend, fellow revolutionist Washington, stayed there during a tour of the nation in 1803.

Information for Guides of  
Historic Charleston

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23 Meeting St. -- This three and one-half story single house is believed to have been built c. 1750 by Albert Detmar.

(Stoney, This is Charleston, 71. \_\_\_\_\_, N&C, April 6, 1958.)

25 Meeting St. -- A three and one half story stuccoed brick single house, this is believed to have been built c. 1750 by William Hull.

(Stoney, This is Charleston, 71. \_\_\_\_\_, N&C, April 6, 1958.)

26 Meeting St. -- This three story stuccoed brick, Regency style structure was built c. 1822 by William Mason Smith, son of the Rt. Rev. Robert Smith, South Carolina's first Episcopal bishop. One tradition attributes the design to architect William Jay of Bath, England, who came to Charleston by way of Savannah. A parallel tradition attributes the design to the Charleston architect Robert Mills. The designer, to make a formal facade, masked the piazza with a screen of masonry, with windows. The three tiers of the piazza have the "correct" sequence of orders: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian. The interior has a curving stair.

(Ravenel, Architects, 115. Smith & Smith, Dwelling Houses, 204. Stoney, This is Charleston, 72. \_\_\_\_\_, N&C, April 6, 1958. \_\_\_\_\_, Charleston's Historic Houses, 1949, 46-47.)

27 Meeting St. -- This three story stuccoed brick house on high brick basement is presumed to have been built after the Revolution. The cast iron gates to the yard were added in the 20th century.

(Stoney, This is Charleston, 72. \_\_\_\_\_, N&C, April 6, 1958.)

30 Meeting St. -- The site of this house was purchased in 1769 by Thomas Young, who sold it the following year to Col. Isaac Motte, a planter. Tradition says Young

# A Stroll With Sam Stoney



## Meet 'Mr. Charleston'

Samuel Collard Stoney, historian, architect, author and reminiscence, James Courier, in 1921, that the title "Mr. Charleston" was applied to him years ago. And it has stuck.

He is a diligent custodian of information on Charlestonians. He has lived here 50 years, and now resides in an attractive little apartment in a back yard in Trident Street.

"I come from a middle-class family," he says. "My first ancestor to come to Charleston had a lot in 1681 across the street from this one. For the last 200 years, his family has owned less than an acre of six acres a year.

"That's all right," he adds, "if you begin in Charleston."

## Stoney Pauses In Front Of Scots Church

### A Foremost Authority On Charleston History Offers A Verbal Tour



St. Michael's Church Built In 1752-61

(Staff Photos By J. Richard Burdage)

#### By SAMUEL C. STONEY

It is as hot as you can, but don't walk too fast. That was my rule until half past the hour.

Such a rule is good for Chastleton, author and historian, to the members of Meeting Street, from the history to St. Michael's. This is roughly half of one of the best-known places I had ever been to. It is the author of South Carolina, and the Whig Party, being a soldier, he fought John Mumford, started everything well-known. He should, I think have, disappeared, suddenly called. He had said "great streets" or some such other in an apple-peel place, at the turn-of-the-century and all, I usually think quarters that were further subdivided by lesser streets.

Here, in what was called

Master Paul, the streets running in from the Ashley and the Cooper intersected, many, says Stoney's ideal, but Stoney had Street of 1800 made an attempt to split the wide part of the point in a north and south direction, while Bond Street did the same from east to west.

Look up in the "bend" in Meeting before you leave the Ashley and you can see approximately where the turn was first run.

There is an old story that the "bend" was really put there to keep Up-country and down towners from getting too much of each other's groceries. If there was any such intention it was perfectly valid.

Meeting Street looks its name from the 18th century, Spelling, House of the Independence, who have come down to us as the Congressmen of the Circular Church.

Probably after the Seven Years' War that the stately hall, several rooms, it was for a while occupied as the Meeting Street that launched from the Author to the Journal.

When the first building of St. Michael's was erected where St. Michael's now stands, in a corner of the Market Place, the street became Church Street.

That name was carried off to its present situation when the second St. Michael's was built, where the Bond Street today, and this should become Old Church Street.

After that it switched to its present name.

We will have to pitch and choose houses in question, but you should look at all of them. Notice a pair standing opposite each other, to begin with. No. 11 is big, modern and white. Opposite it, No. 12 is solid, simple, however, like a Gothic hall, the first sheet print. A hand or two later the other was built by George W. Williamson. However they differ, they will show you that the part of Meeting Street has been turned for excellent residence for two hundred years.

The Edwards house is well established historically; the Williamson house must rank its turn. Already it has started by acquiring the name of the Calhoun mansion. The Edwards house is a typical example of what Charleston calls a "House House" — meaning one that has at least four rooms to the floor and parts them down the middle with a hall and stairs.

The house is typical of the time when it was built — the days of prosperity between the War of the American Revolution, and the Revolution.

With the fire 1848 last week of the past, the house was unburned, the platform with the supporting carved eaves, and the tall gable end.

Now, it is the turn of No. 13.

It is a fine old gray

and will be. Charleston is a fine

Reynolds' model. Note that the architect, to make a formal facade, worked compulsory

porches, with a screen of necessary

enclosure with windows. Who he was is a subject of debate. Some think it was William Jay of Boston, who came here by way of Savannah, others attribute it to

Robert Mills, Charleston's

designer of the

Architectural

27 MEETING STREET

1888 SANBORN MAP

212

LADSON'S

COURT

## MEETING

~~WATER~~

32 1/2

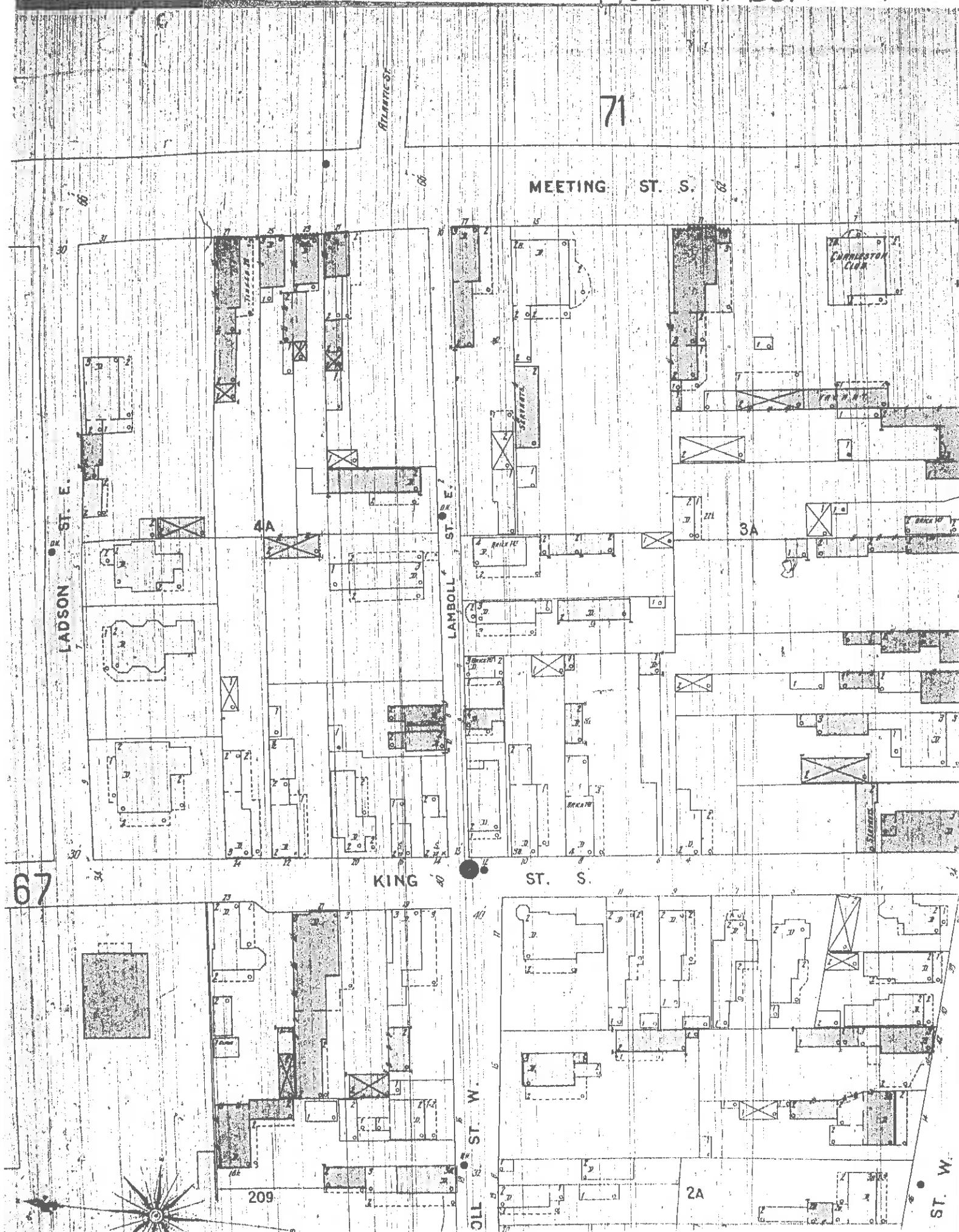
1000

~~FIREWALL~~ **LIGHTWOOD**

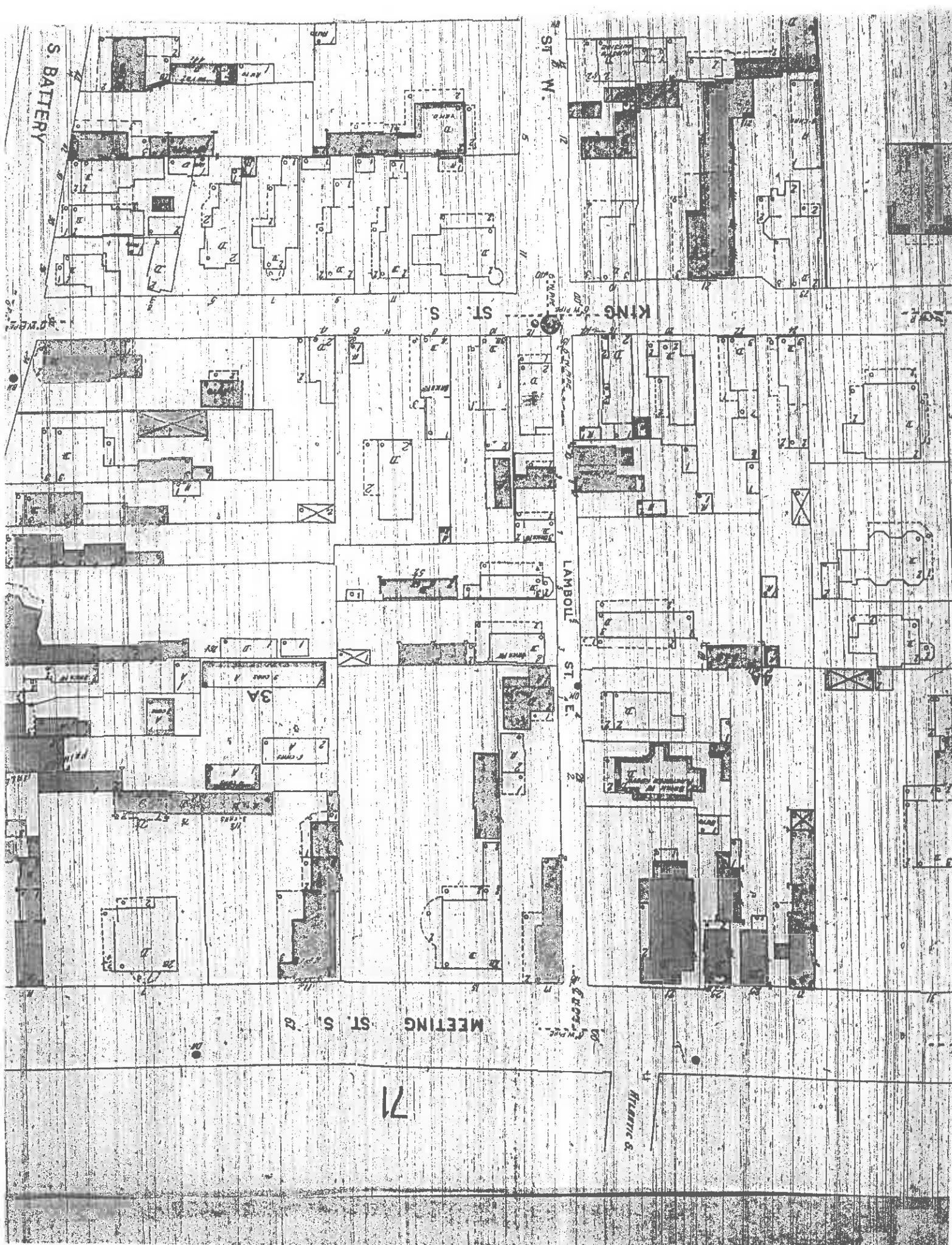
131 21

27 MEETING STREET

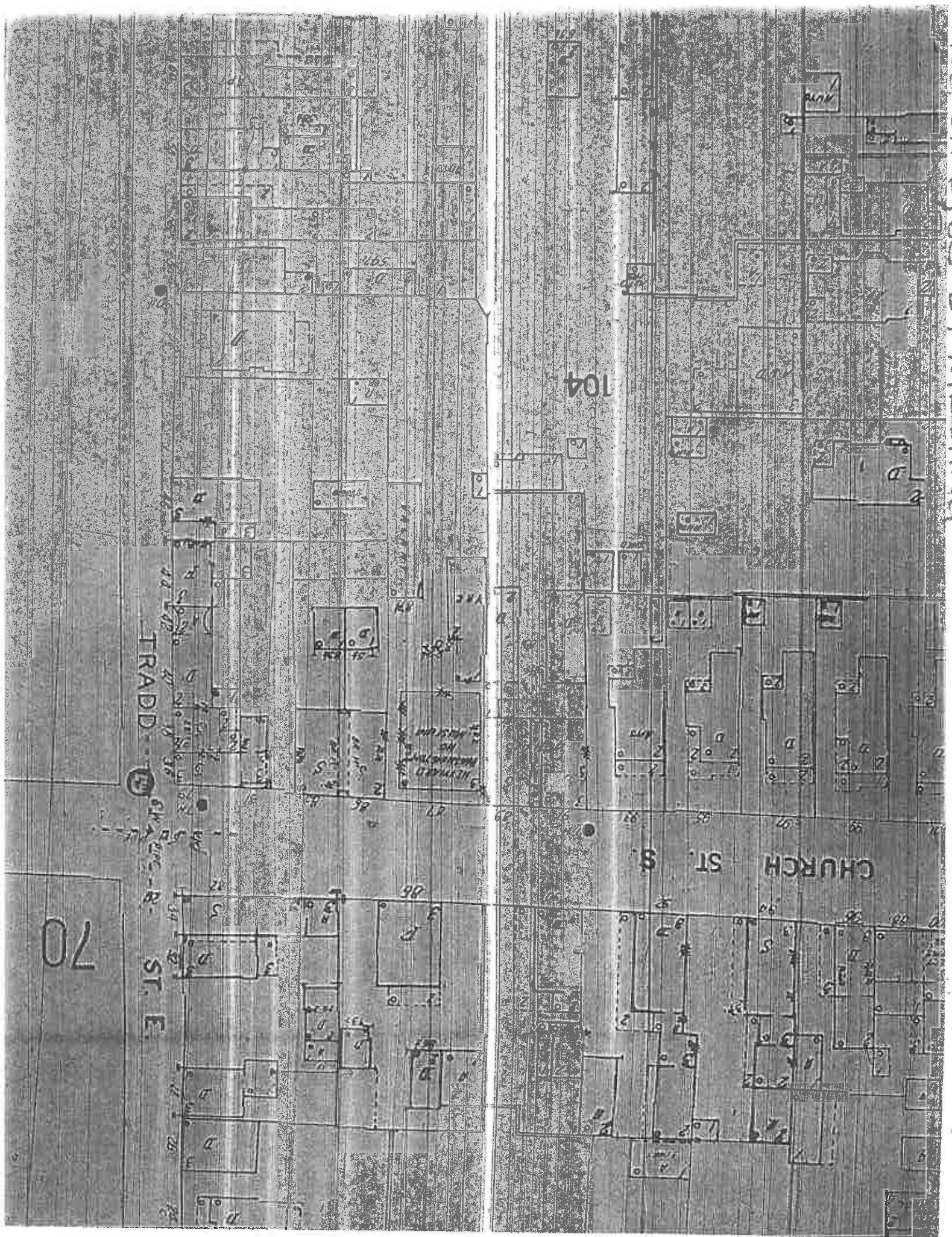
1902 SANBORN MAP



1944 CHAS 27 MARCH



1955 CHAS, SC 27 MEETING





27 Meeting St.

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27 Meeting Street T.M. No. 457-16-2-31  
Lavinia H. Maybank 10/9/39 H41 p235  
Darrell Ferguson 5/28/99 K 321 p424  
Clorane, LLC 12/11/00 B 3100 p138  
McIernon, Lawrence A 3/7/01 T3105 p001

37 x 235 x 30 x 236

[1939 - 2001]





