

It is easy to see how legends, so long established as to acquire a patina of historical "fact," should surround such a romantic piece of real estate as the Sword Gates House.

Situated a discrete distance from the street and screened from the thoroughfare's comings and goings by a high brick wall, and also obscured from the gaze of passersby by the lush foliage of its avenue of magnolias, the house invites invention of romance and legend.

This history is an attempt to separate legend from truth, romance from fact, regrettable as it may seem to destroy such a charming legacy of the imagination.

The property's history begins with the Grand Modell of Charles Town, a plan for laying out the capital and port city of Carolina on the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Ashley and Cooper rivers. The plan, with wide streets (for the time) and numbered lots, may have been drafted as early as 1672, two years after the founding of Charles Town on the current site of Charles Towne Landing. However, settlement of the new town site did not officially begin until 1680. The original Grand Modell no longer exists, but a copy, dated 1725, and a list of grantees for the various lots, have survived in the possession of the South Carolina Historical Society.

According to the late Charleston historian, Judge Henry A.M. Smith, "Many of the lots (especially those first granted) appear to have been granted and then regranted as if the first grantee had abandoned." Thus the grants for lots 264 and 224, from which the Sword Gates property has evolved, are dated as late as 1694.

According to the list of "original" grantees, Lot 264, at the southeast corner of Tradd and Johnson's (now Legare) streets, was granted on June 19, 1694 to James Laroche (LaRoche), the adjacent lot to the south, Lot 224, was granted on May 9, 1694 to J. Lardant. The total original width of the lots was about 210 feet, and their depth extended some 320 feet, to a point opposite the intersection of present-day Orange Street with Tradd.

A warrant (the legal document preceding the actual grant) for Lot 264 was given to James LaRoche (LaRoche) on April 18, 1694. The lot is described as bounded "Eastward on the Lott of Derick Hoglant to the Westward upon a New Street to the Northward upon the Street that leadeth from Cooper River by Mr. Trads to Geo. Kooling and to the Southward upon the Lott of James Lardon (Lardant)."

James Lardant's warrant for Lot 224 is apparently no longer in existence, as is the case for many records of the 17th and early 18th Centuries.

The next extant record on Lot 224 finds it in the possession of Thomas Holton, chairmaker, who on June 21, 1720, gave John Stone power of attorney to sell Town Lott No. 224 "Joyning to the Southward on Mr. Legarees Land."

"Mr. Legaree" could be none other than Solomon Legare, goldsmith and Huguenot immigrant ancestor of all the South Carolina Legares. He is believed to have arrived in Charles Town about 1696. Born in France, he came to South Carolina via England, perhaps stopping first in Massachusetts.

Soon after arriving, he began acquiring land and became one of the colony's most wealthy citizens. He took part in the Church

controversy of 1702, which led to the granting of political rights to the Huguenots by the Lords Proprietors, but seems otherwise to have led a very private life.

Among the lands he acquired, although the documents attesting that he did so are missing, were Lots 224 and 264. He acquired the lots some time before August 27, 1740, on which date he conveyed them to his son, Solomon Legare Jr. According to the deed, the elder Legare's "Dwelling house, outhouses and Garden" were situated on "the Westernmost half of the Lott 264." Thus, Solomon Legare Sr.'s residence was somewhere in the vicinity of the present Sword Gates House. The deed granted him leave to continue to occupy that part of the property "During his Natural Life."

Solomon Legare Jr. operated a tanning business on the property. His will, dated January 30, 1772 and probated in 1774, ordered that, after the death of his wife, Amy, the two lots were to be divided into three lots by drawing lines from north to south across them. The three lots would then be devised to his sons, Solomon Legare the Younger, Thomas and Daniel. The "dwelling house in which I now live" was on the westernmost third of the property, near the new dividing line between the westernmost third and the middle third. The house and the westernmost third of the property (measuring 100 feet eastward from the corner of Tradd and Legare) were to be devised to Solomon Legare the Younger. The tannery buildings were on the middle third and were to be devised to Thomas Legare, although the land in the middle third was to be devised to Daniel Legare. The middle third measured 118 feet along Tradd Street. The easternmost third, measuring 102 feet along Tradd Street, was to be devised to Thomas Legare. It would appear that the present front garden area of the Sword Gates

property was part of the westernmost third, that of Solomon Legare the Younger, while the site of the present Sword Gates House was part of the middle third, that of Daniel Legare.

The third of Solomon Legare the Younger was inherited by his daughter, Elizabeth. The third of Daniel Legare was divided and sold, but that entire third was reacquired by 1780 by Elizabeth Legare's second husband, Isaac Holmes.

Elizabeth was the last of the Legare name to own the property now known as the Sword Gates property. She was married first in 1777 to Dr. James Air, a young physician with a promising career. He was born February 16, 1752, a son of William Air of Charles Town. He received his medical degree at Leyden in 1775 and returned to Charles Town, where he became assistant physician at the General Hospital and later served in the Continental line. He died in 1777, in the 26th year of his life, and two months after his marriage to Elizabeth. His posthumously born son, James, also became a physician.

The widow Air next married, in 1779, Isaac Holmes of Charles Town. Holmes, who was born in 1758, a son of Isaac Holmes and Elizabeth Stanyarne, was at the time of his marriage to Mrs. Air an officer in the Continental Line. In 1780, he was among Charles Town Patriots exiled to St. Augustine by the British. After the Revolution, he served in the South Carolina General Assembly for five terms, representing the Parish of St. John's Colleton. He was lieutenant governor of South Carolina in 1791-92, and also custom collector for the Port of Charleston from 1791 to 1797.

According to the South Carolina historian, George C. Rogers Jr., in his book, "Evolution of a Federalist," Holmes was removed from office as collector "because of his inefficiency in collecting

As we shall see, he was afterward held accountable for considerable debts to the Port.

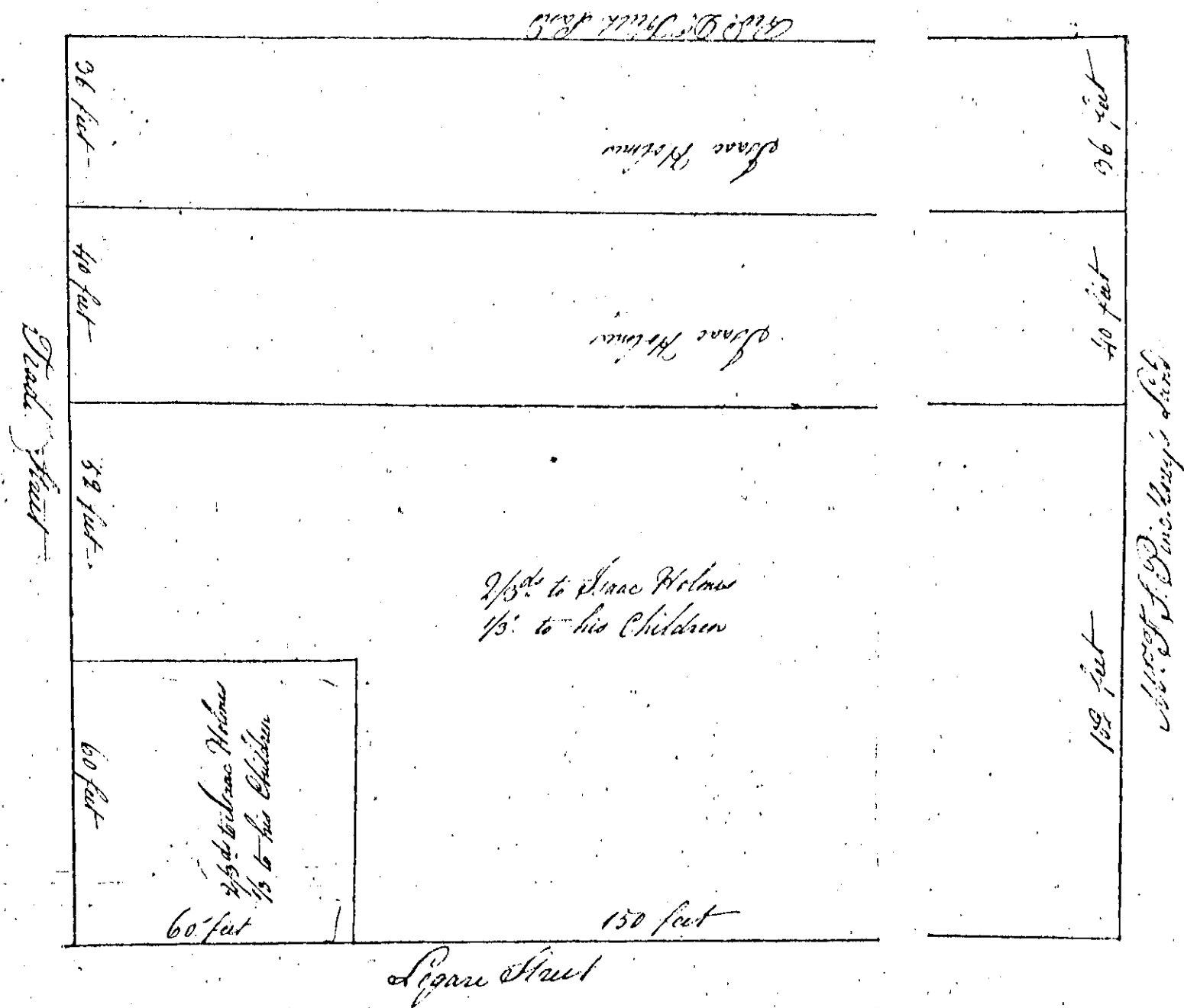
Elizabeth Legare Air Holmes died in 1796, leaving her property at Legare and Tradd streets to her husband and their four children and to James Henry Air, her son by her first husband. Holmes subsequently bought Air's interest in the property.

On December 4, 1802, Holmes, acknowledging a debt to the U. S. government of "One hundred thousand Dollars and upwards," conveyed to his successor as collector of the Port, James Simons, his two lots on Tradd Street, one measuring 36 feet by 210 feet, the other 40 feet by 210 feet. He also released to Simons his interest in the property he held jointly with his children, including a lot about 60 feet by 60 feet at the corner of Tradd and Legare streets, and a lot measuring 52 feet on Tradd Street, 102 feet in depth from Legare Street and 210 feet in depth from Tradd Street. All this property is contiguous and is shown on the accompanying plat.

In May, 1803, Simons filed a petition in the Court of Equity, seeking a partition of the property between himself and the children of Isaac Holmes. The court, in April, 1803, decreed that the property be sold at public auction. The property was surveyed and subdivided in June, 1803 by Joseph Purcell, public surveyor, in preparation for the auction which was held on August 2, 1803.

Purcell's plat, attached here, plus the advertisement of the public auction, which appeared in the Charleston Times on June 23, 1803 and in several subsequent issues of the newspaper, give a comprehensive picture of the property at the time.

27. Ad in Book 11 No 9 page 192
 24th day of December 1802 Examined
 Charles Glover Registrar



First described are Holmes' two lots, including:

"The LOT with the HOUSE thereon, numbered 51, being 35 feet front on Tradd-street, by 210 deep. The house contains four rooms, and two in the garret; a pantry and cellar under the house, with a kitchen containing four rooms. Also, a stable and chair house, with a well of excellent water in the yard."

Also, "The LOT, with the HOUSE thereon, numbered 52, being 40 feet front by 210 deep. -- The House contains four Rooms, and two in the Garret; a Pantry annexed to the house, a Kitchen with four Rooms, also a Stable and Chair-House; a Well of water, a neat Garden in front. The very great depth of these two Lots, furnishes ground for good sized vegetable Gardens."

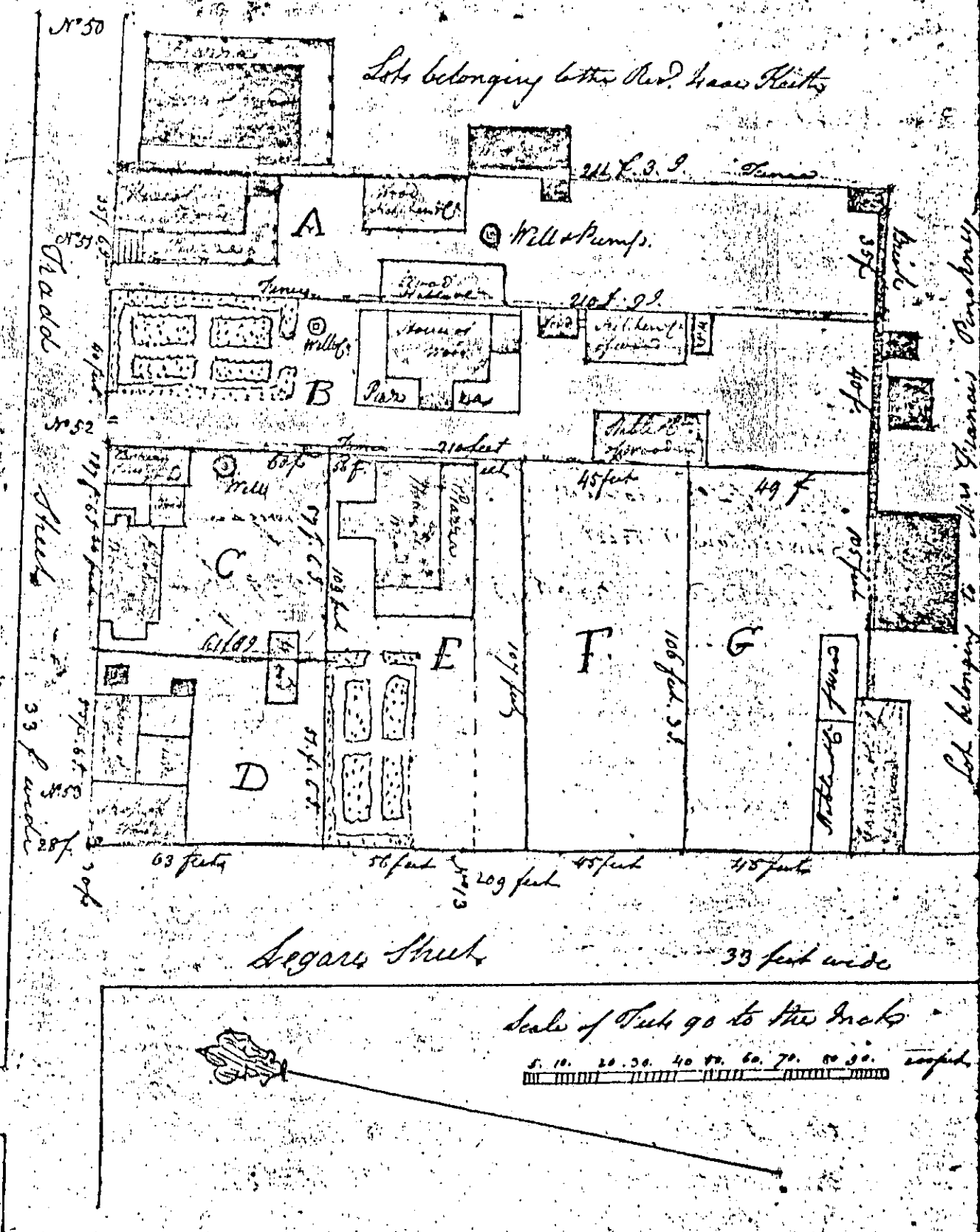
The land which had been held jointly by Holmes and his four children is next described:

"A Space of GROUND, which contains an Area of 110 feet on Tradd-street, and 209 on Legare-street -- To be sold in the following Lots:

"One LOT on Tradd-street, 54 feet or thereabouts, by 60 feet deep. On this Lot is a Kitchen and Wash House, Carriage House and Stable; with a fine well of water.

"One other LOT adjoining, forming a corner lot, 57 feet or thereabouts on Tradd-street, and 60 feet on Legare-street. On this Lot are a Dwelling House and Grocery Store, and is a remarkably good situation for the business.

"One other LOT, 60 feet front on Legare-street, and about 107 feet in depth; on which is the Dwelling House wherein Mr. Holmes resided; so pleasantly situated, so comfortable a dwelling, and so well known, as to require any particular description unnecessary.



Plan of a Body of Land in the City of Charleston, situated at the South
East corner of Tradd Street and Legare Street in Ward No 10/26.
Lots the Property of Isaac Holmes Esq. assigned by him to James
Simmons Esq. Collector for the benefit of the United States said
120 out subdivided into Seven Lots viz A. B. C. D. E. F. & G.

"One other LOT, 45 feet front on Legare-street, and 106 feet deep.

"One other LOT, 45 feet front on Legare-street, and 105 feet deep, on which is a range of wooden stables."

A comparison of Purcell's plat and present-day property lines reveals that the wooden portion of the present Sword Gates House occupies the site of the house described on Lot No. 52, with the garden fronting on Tradd Street. Holmes' residence was "pleasantly situated" in what is now the front yard of the Sword Gates House, fronting on Legare Street.

The house on Lot. No. 52 appears to have been a predecessor of the present Sword Gates House, as it is of a more rectangular shape than the original portion of the present house, which is basically square in shape.

At the public auction, on August 2, 1803, Lots Nos. 51 on Tradd Street, designated "A" and "B" on Purcell's plat, were bought by the merchantile partners, Steinmetz and Lorent. Lot "C" in the plat was purchased by Peter Kennedy, a grocer. Lot "D" on the corner was bought by Malcolm McKay, another grocer. Lot "E," containing Isaac Holmes' house, was bought by Major Thomas Simons, a factor, who also bought half of Lot "F." James Carson, merchant, bought Lot "G" and the remaining half of Lot "F."

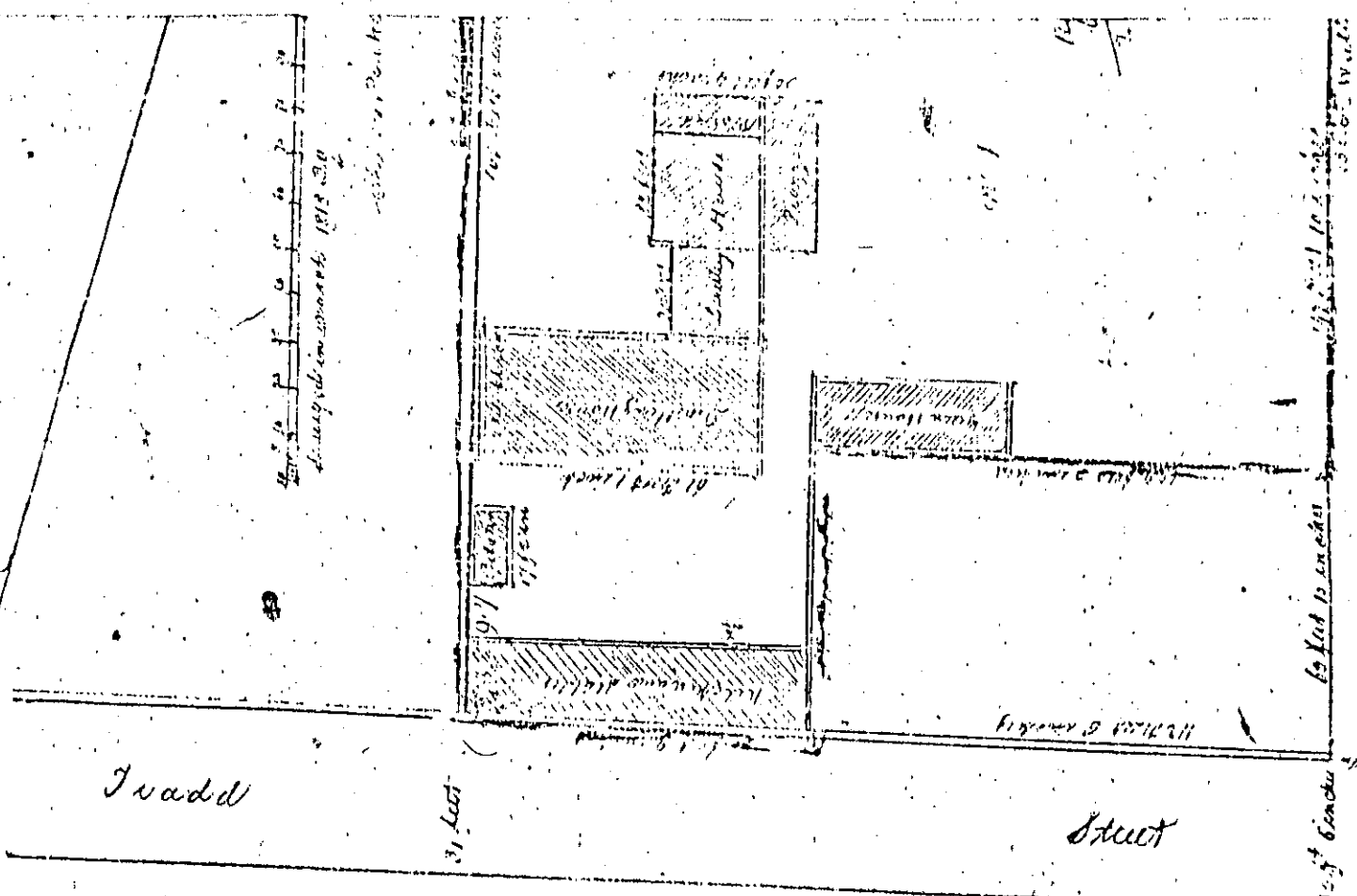
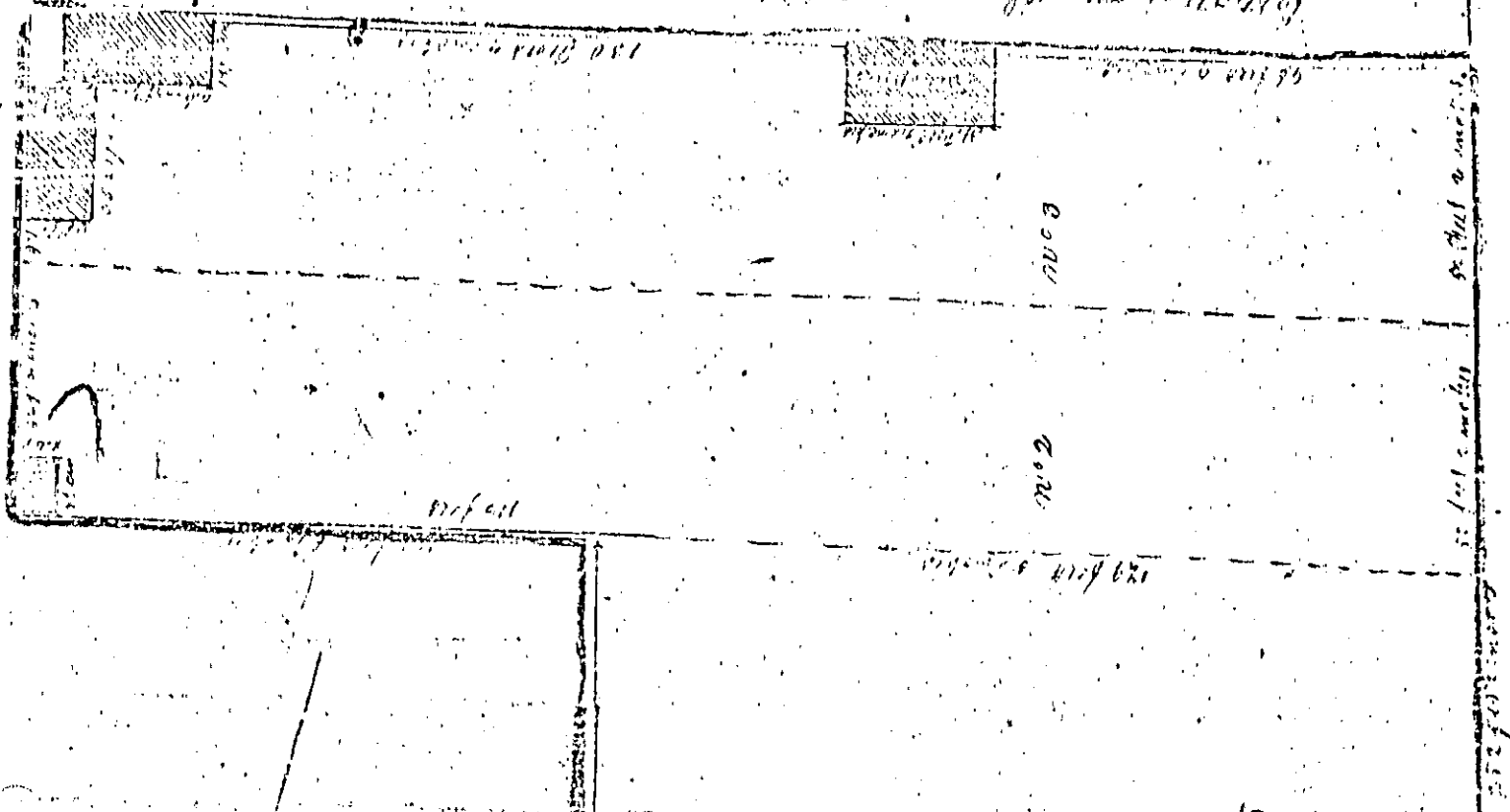
In succeeding years, the German-born merchants, Jacob E. A. Steinmetz and Paul Emil Lorent preceeded to buy back most of the former Legare-Holmes property, beginning with Lot "G" and half of Lot "F," which they purchased on March 20, 1805 from James Carson. Maj. Simons died in 1805 and at the public auction of his estate, on July 2, 1805, Steinmetz and Lorent bought Lot "E,"

containing the former Holmes residence, and the remaining portion of Lot "F." They also added to the former Legare-Holmes land by buying, on December 3, 1810, property bordering it on the south. They paid Mrs. Frances Susannah Pinckney, widow, \$11,000 for this property, which was historically Lot 225 of the Grand Modell and measured 105 feet by 289 feet.

Steinmetz and Lorent also demolished old structures on the various lots and built new ones. It is obviously they who built the original square frame portion and the masonry portion of the Sword Gates House, as well as a frame portion connecting the two. Since both Steinmetz and Lorent are listed in the city directories of 1803, 1807 and 1809 as living at 52 Tradd St., it is possible that the frame portion was built as the residence of one of the partners and the masonry portion for the other partner. In the 1813 and 1816 city directories, although the partners continued in business at an East Bay Street address, Steinmetz alone is listed as residing at the Tradd Street address. This raises the possibility that Steinmetz, who was the Prussian consul in Charleston, had both original portions of the house and built the frame connecting portion to combine them into a single residence.

In any case, it is certain that these three portions of the house were completed by March of 1818, as they appear on a plat of that date by Charles Parker, surveyor. The connecting frame portion was not then as deep as is now, demonstrating that the portion was extended at a later date to accommodate the present staircase. This is also demonstrated by the fact that the staircase covers a door leading into the brick portion. Also, according to Henry T. Gaud, previous owner of the house, there is a

Survey of Mr. Thomas C. Miller



walled-up Palladian window in the brick portion, approximately at the location of the staircase in the frame connecting portion.

The 1818 plat also shows the former kitchen and stable building, now owned and occupied by Henry T. Gaud. It was built across the entire front widths of former Lots 51 and 52 ("A" and "B"), undoubtedly after Steinmetz and Lorent purchased the Legare Street property of Maj. Simons in 1805. The plat also shows, on the present site of a carport, a greenhouse which continued to exist at least as late as 1893, when it appears on the Sanborn Insurance Map.

The greenhouse was undoubtedly built in conjunction with the small formal garden which was laid out in front of the house, as according to Loutrel W. Briggs, in his book, "Charleston Gardens," published in 1951, this garden, "with four circular beds, is very evidently the earlier, probably about the date of the house." The design of this garden and that of a larger one adjacent to it, are illustrated in Briggs' book. The larger garden, he said, "designed in the form of a great daisy, reflects a somewhat later fashion, being both intricate and more completely geometrical. Several large and lovely camellias adorn the gardens, although they have grown quite out of proportion to the small plots. The many magnolias which were part of the original arrangement have also gained considerable size and cast long shadows. Recently the gardens were restored and the beds again made colorful with flowers." Both the famous gardens are now gone, though the avenue of magnolias remains.

"Legend," according to Briggs, "has connected Phillipe Nolsette, a French florist, with the designing of the grounds, but no foundation of fact has been found. It is known that Nolsette

came to Charleston from San Domingo around 1800 and established a nursery, and so it is not improbable that he laid out some of the garden patterns of the period. He also was in charge of the Charleston Botanic Society's garden for several years."

Another item of interest on the 1818 plat is the brick wall shown then existing across the Legare Street front of the property. This evidence lays to rest the legend that Madame Talvande, who later operated a girls' school on the property, had the wall built to prevent her students from eloping! The plat proves the wall existed before Madame Talvande occupied the property. The brick wall which still exists on the north side of the property, running from Legare Street to a point near the brick portion of the house, is also shown on the 1818 plat, as is the brick wall still existing on the east or back line of the property. The brick wall on the south line is of a later date.

The 1818 plat was drawn to accompany a deed of conveyance from Steinmetz and Lorent to James Miller Sr., a merchant, who bought the property on April 8, 1818, for \$26,100. The conveyance included the former Pinckney property on the south, designated Lots No. 2 and No. 3 on Parker's plat.

Miller, on June 11, 1819, sold the tract, minus the former Pinckney property, to Andrew Talvande for 17,000. Andrew, or Andre, Talvande and his wife, Ann Marsan Talvande, were among the numerous refugees who came to Charleston in the 1790s and early 1800s, having fled from the bloody slave revolution on San Domingo. They operated the boarding school for young ladies which became popularly known as "Madame Talvande's." According to Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel, in her book, "Charleston: The Place and the People," two schools "were long thought the most

fashionable 'ecoles de demoiselles' that had ever been in Charleston. They were kept by Mademoiselle Daty and her niece Madame Talvande... The Charleston 'jeune fille,' educated at one of these schools, learned, besides her lessons, a careful demeanor and an absolute submission to the will of her teacher, which would astonish the young people of the present day."

Mrs. Ravenel did not mention the often repeated legend of the elopement that is supposed to have inspired Madame Talvande to build a brick wall in front of the property. According to the story, Col. Joseph Shaley, the Edisto Island planter, objected to the courtship by George Morris of his young daughter, Maria. Morris, though a planter, was also a Yankee, and therefore ineligible. To break up the romance, Col. Whaley sent Maria to Madame Talvande's. However, on the night of March 8, 1828, Maria slipped away from the school and met Morris at St. Michael's Church, where they were married. Maria then returned to the boarding school. The following morning, Morris came to the school and announced that he had come for his wife. Madame Talvande, according to the story, lined up the girls and ordered the new bride to step forward. Maria did so and left with her husband. To prevent recurrence of such an incident, Madame Talvande is supposed to have had the convent-like wall built. That part of the story, however, is disproved by the 1818 plat.

The story of the elopement itself, however, may have some basis in fact. It is true that Col. Joseph Whaley of Edisto had a daughter named Maria Evans Whaley, who according to the Whaley genealogy in the South Carolina Historical Society collections, was born in September, 1813 and was married on March 8, 1828, to George W. Morris of New Jersey. According to Charleston County

land records, Morris owned property in New York State and in South Carolina, including a plantation on the Pon Pon River, as the Edisto was then frequently called.

Returning to the Talvandes, an interesting aspect of their occupancy of the Sword Gates property is the fact that, because Andrew Talvande retained his French citizenship, his widow's right to own and sell the property had to be confirmed by an act of the South Carolina legislature. At the time, that tradition in English common law which prohibited aliens from owning land, prevailed in South Carolina. Under the law, the Sword Gates property was subject to seizure by the state. Therefore, on December 19, 1835, the General Assembly adopted "An Act to vest in Ann Marsan Talvande the right of the State in certain Real Estate in the City of Charleston." According to the act, "all the right, title and interest of the State of South Carolina, in the real estate of Andrew Talvande, deceased, in the city of Charleston, be, and the same is hereby, vested in Ann Marsan Talvande, her heirs and assigns, forever."

Also of interest is that Andrew Talvande once sold the property, then bought it back again. He sold it on April 5, 1825, to Anthony (or Antoine) Barbot, for \$15,000, and bought it back on May 5, 1826 for the same amount. Barbot was one of many French-born merchants who settled in Charleston in the early part of the 19th Century.

Madame Talvande sold the property on November 22, 1849, to George A. Hopley for \$15,000. Hopley, born November 24, 1802, received a full preparatory and commercial education before joining the merchantile firm of Charles LeCaron on East Bay Street, as a clerk. He was admitted as a partner in the business in 1837 and

on LeCaron's death in 1839 continued the business in his own name. He became very rich, was named British consul and was distinguished socially by "an elegant hospitality," according to his obituary in the Charleston Courier, June 17, 1859.

A legacy perhaps of his hospitable nature is the so-called Game Room, a one-story rear addition to the Sword Gates House, which he is said to have built. This is plausible, as the addition shows evidence of having been constructed about the time of his ownership, and originally had a white marble mantel in the Empire style. He may also have created the graceful staircase in the frame connecting portion. However, the legend that he created the ballroom in the brick portion out of space formerly used for classrooms, is not likely to be true. The entire decoration of the ballroom, including the Adam woodwork and the white marble mantel with its Roman figures, is in the style of the period (pre-1818) of the construction of the house.

Hopley is also credited with having installed the Sword Gates from which the property takes its name. The gates are described by Alston Deas, in his book, "The Early Ironwork of Charleston,"

According to Deas, "The 'Sword Gates,' which owe much of their quality to their setting -- the overthrow, with its octagonal lantern, the high brick wall and posts, and the great, empty garden within -- are said to have been a part of the grill work ordered for the New Guard House in 1838, and rejected as having been in excess of the amount contracted for. The plan of the Guard House, which building was subsequently ruined in the earthquake of 1886, was furnished by one "Mr. Reichardt," who in all probability designed the grilles and gates as well with the martial accent of spears and Roman swords." If this is true, the

gates were more than 10 years old when Hopley had them installed.

Reichardt, architect of the Guard House which stood on the present site of the U. S. Post Office, may have designed the Sword Gates. However, they were made by Christopher Werner, the German-born iron worker who worked in Charleston through the 1870s. He made the palmetto tree, of iron, copper and brass, which stands on the State House grounds in Columbia; is thought to have made the fence to Hibernian Hall; and is thought to have made the gates to the William Aiken House on King Street, which gates now stand between the gardens of the Charleston Library Society and the Gibbes Art Gallery, on Gateway Walk.

Hopley did not keep the property long, as he moved to France, married a Frenchwoman, and lived in Paris until his death in 1859. His attorney, David C. Seixas, acting in Hopley's behalf, sold the property on May 14, 1853, to William Adger, for \$25,000.

William Adger, born in 1816, was the fourth son of James Adger, Irish immigrant and merchant, who founded James Adger and Co. and was owner of the Adger wharves and of the first steamship line between Charleston and New York. William Adger became a member of his father's firm, and for 12 years was a director of the Planters and Mechanics Bank. He was a ruling elder of the Second Presbyterian Church, president of the Eagle Volunteer Fire Company and a member of the Board of Fire Masters of the City of Charleston. He died in New York of smallpox on December 14, 1853, having owned the Sword Gates House exactly seven months.

Before his death, he added to the property by buying, on August 12, 1853, from Henry Sollee, for \$5,500, a lot to the east on Tradd Street, measuring 50 by 210 feet.

His widow, the former Margaret Hall Moffett, after his death

went to live with her son, Andrew M. Adger, at 14 Legare St. She sold the Sword Gates property on May 2, 1856, to Robert Adger, her husband's brother and partner, for \$31,000.

Robert Adger, who is said to have planted the avenue of magnolias leading from the Sword Gates to the house, replacing a double line of sweet oranges, was a "subscribing proprietor" to the Southern Quarterly Review, a notable literary magazine edited by William Gilmore Simms.

Adger's firm was the original owner of the USS James Adger, a side wheel steamer, three masted schooner rigged, which was bought in New York on July 26, 1861, for \$85,000. When Fort Sumter was fired upon, the vessel happened to be in New York and was seized by the Federal government and used throughout the War Between the States as an armed transport. The vessel which began existence as the pride of Adger's line, ended its days as a coal barge in New York Harbor.

Robert Adger added to the Sword Gates property by buying two lots, on January 26, 1880, for \$3,975, from the heirs of Charles Schwing. The two lots, shown in red on the accompanying plat, drawn on May 4, 1875, by William Hume, surveyor, measured, respectively, 36 feet, seven inches, by 61 feet, 10 inches, and 54 feet, two inches, by 61 feet, 10 inches. Part of the original Legare-Holmes property, they fronted on Tradd Street to the west of the kitchen-stable building of the Sword Gates property.

On November 1, 1879, the Sword Gates property, along with other real estate owned by the individual partners of James B. Adger and Co., was assigned to Ellison Adger Smyth, a cousin and partner of Robert Adger. On November 8, 1879, at a meeting of the firm's creditors, J. Ellison Adger, Robert Adger's brother and

partner, was elected agent of the creditors. On February 15, 1881, Ellison A. Smyth, as assignee, and J. Ellison Adger, as agent for the creditors, conveyed the Sword Gates property, for \$11,000 to Mrs. Ella Simonton, wife of their cousin, Judge Charles H. Simonton.

The property then became the residence of that distinguished jurist and his family. Charles Henry Simonton, son of Charles S. Simonton and Elizabeth Ross, was born in Charleston on July 11, 1829. He was graduated from South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina) in 1849 as first honor graduate. He studied law in Charleston in the office of William Munro, afterwards judge of the Appellate Court of South Carolina. He began practicing law in Charleston in 1852 and served in the General Assembly in 1858-60. He served as colonel of the 25th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, during the Confederate War and was captured in 1865 near Wilmington and confined in Fort Delaware until the surrender. After the war, he returned to law practice in Charleston and was elected to the state legislature in 1865, during which term he was Speaker of the House. He returned to the legislature when Carpetbag rule ended in 1876 and served until 1886. In 1886, he was appointed by President Grover Cleveland as U. S. District Judge and in 1893 was appointed U. S. Circuit Judge of the Fourth Circuit and a member of the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He was the author or co-author of several books on South Carolina courts and on the Federal courts. He died April 25, 1904 in Philadelphia, at age 75, while still an active Federal judge. On his death, resolutions commemorating him were submitted in the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the U. S. Circuit Courts for the districts of Maryland and South Carolina and the

South Carolina Supreme Court. His obituary in "The State" newspaper called him "one of the most useful men that ever sat in either branch of our General Assembly."

Simonton's widow died on March 18, 1905, leaving the Sword Gates property to their daughter, Mrs. Caroline Simonton Alston, wife of Benjamin F. Alston, Charleston insurance executive.

The Sanborn Insurance Map of 1888 shows the appearance of the property during the Simonton occupancy.

The Alstons continued to live in the house until 1929.


William Hervey Allen Jr., better known as Hervey Allen, author of the best-selling novel, "Anthony Adverse," was their tenant in the winter of 1921-22, when he was a professor at the High School of Charleston. Allen lived in Charleston from 1920 to 1924, first as a teacher at Porter Military Academy, then at the high school. While in the city, he collaborated with DuBose Heyward, author of "Porgy," on the book, "Carolina Chanson."

The widowed Mrs. Alston sold the property on July 31, 1929 to Mrs. Mary W. Parsons, wife of Edwin Parsons, then bookkeeper at the Citizens and Southern National Bank. The total price was \$40,000.

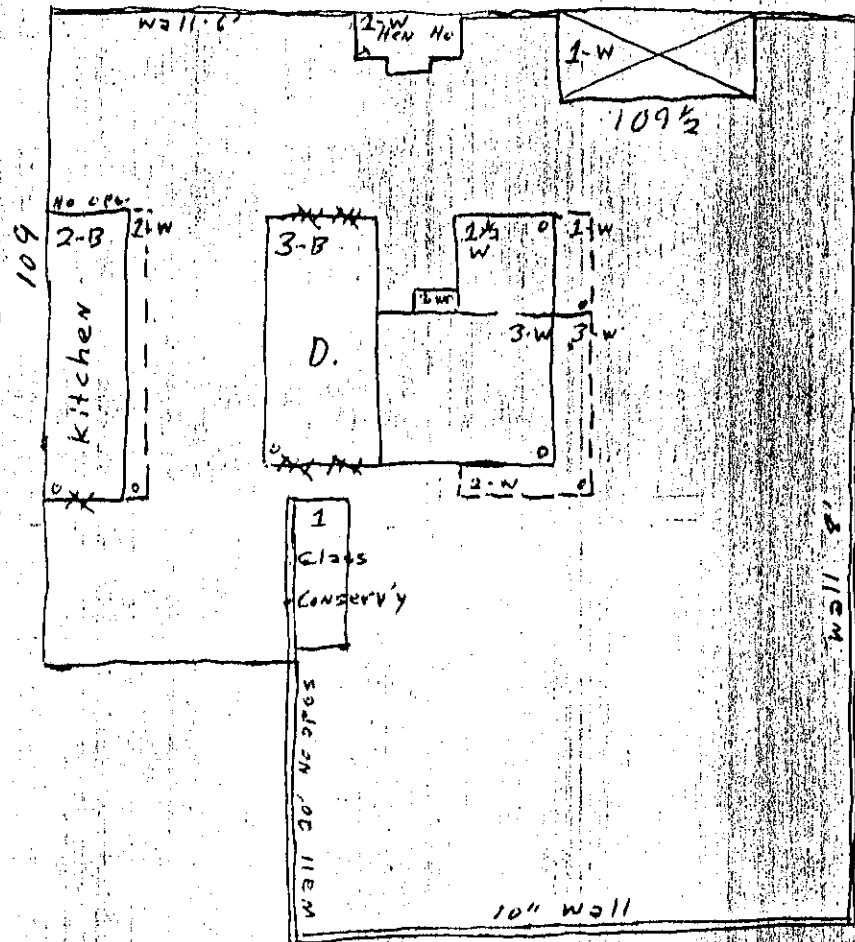
Mrs. Parsons sold the property on May 19, 1930, for \$75,000, to Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Randolph of Washington, D. C., granddaughter of President Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Randolph never lived in the house, and it remained vacant for nearly 20 years. On October 29, 1934, she conveyed it to her daughter, Mrs. Mary Lincoln Beckwith of Washington, D. C.

On April 7, 1949, Mrs. Beckwith sold the property, for \$25,000, to Henry T. Gaud.

Henry Taylor Gaud was born in Charleston on March 19, 1909, a

No. of Stories - 3
 Brick - B
 Frame - W
 Shingle Roof - X
 Slate or Tin Roof - O
 Dwelling - D.
 Windows - X + H
 Stable - 

TRADD ST.



32
LEGARE ST.

Sanborn Map - June 1888

son of William S. Gaud, Canadian-born founder of Gaud School and Mrs. Isabel Cleland Williams Gaud, a Charleston native. He received his B. S. degree from Yale University in 1931 and his LL.B. degree in 1939 from the University of Virginia. He has practiced law in Charleston since 1943. He was one of the founders of the new Republican Party in South Carolina.

Soon after purchasing the property, Gaud began restoring the house and its famous gardens.

The house was opened to tourists and in the spring of 1951, the first of several annual "antebellum" balls was held there. In 1951, Gaud transformed the kitchen-stable building on Tradd St. into four apartments, designed by architect Douglas Ellington. The exterior of the former outbuilding was left intact except for the addition of windows and construction of entrance stairs at the ends. Subsequently, four motel units were installed in the brick portion of the house, and the famous Sword Gates Inn was opened.

On June 24, 1959, Gaud filed a request with the city engineer, asking to subdivide a portion of the property into two building lots. The property at the time constituted one of the largest lots in Downtown Charleston. Gaud's proposal was to create a new lot on the southeast portion of the property, to the rear of the house, measuring approximately 47 feet by 105 feet, with a 20-foot wide access to Tradd Street, and to create two new lots on the southwest portion of the property, to the south of the gates, measuring 48 feet by 96 feet. Historic Charleston Foundation registered its objection to the subdivision, in a resolution contending the change would "detract from the aesthetic and historic values of the property, of the neighborhood and of the city." Gaud said the portions to be subdivided were "extra, unproductive

land and subdividing that portion into three building lots will not only relieve the burdens of the entire property but give some relief to the current housing shortage in the city."

Over the objections of the foundation and several neighbors, the Board of Adjustment approved the request to create the lot on The property's southeast corner. The two proposed lots on Legare Street, however, were disapproved as below the 6,000 square foot minimum required by the zoning ordinance.

On October 14, 1959, despite objections from the foundation and the Preservation Society of Charleston, the Board of Adjustment approved a modified plan for subdividing the front of the property, with two lots, approximately 67 feet by 90 feet each, the northernmost one including the Sword Gates and the avenue of magnolias. A new access, 14 1/2 feet wide, was to be provided from Legare Street to the house.

Gaud noted that he had "reached the point of exhaustion" in ten years of attempting to keep up the expense of maintaining the house and grounds, and called for suggestions of ways to maintain the property intact. He said he would hold up sale of the property until December 1, 1959.

In May, 1960, Gaud, still retaining all the property, applied for subdivision of the property again. His proposal was to create another lot by sealing off the doorway between the brick and wooden portions. The wooden portion would have the proposed new entrance on Legare Street; the brick portion would have an entrance on Tradd Street, to whence the Sword Gates would be moved. The Board of Adjustment approved the subdivision on June 6, 1960.

The subdivisions are shown on the accompanying plat.

HENRY T. GAUD



BY Joseph F. Needle C.E.

I certify this to be a part of a true and correct answer made on the ground, and that the facts herein are as shown, and there are no other matters of substance, evidence, defense, fact or other matters affecting the justice, integrity, or honor.

Joseph J. Scalle
Registered Nurse

On June 30, 1960, Gaud sold one of the new lots, designated No. 28 on the plat, to Mrs. Mary S. Wilson, wife of Dr. James M. Wilson, for 12,600. She sold the lot on June 30, 1961, to Mrs. Dorothy B. Shackelford for \$6,300 in cash and assumption of a mortgage to Gaud, with a balance of \$6,300.

On August 29, 1960, Gaud conveyed to Mrs. Shackelford the frame portion of the house and its grounds and the new lot, designated No. 32 on the plat. According to the deed, Gaud retained interest in the Sword Gates. He released his interest in the gates to Mrs. Shackelford on November 8, 1963.

Mrs. Shackelford, wife of realtor Harry C. Shackelford, made several changes in the wooden portions of the house. Photographs in the possession of Gaud show the appearance of the house before the changes.

The front entrance formerly had a Victorian rain hood very similar to that still over the main entrance to the brick portion of the house. Mrs. Shackelford removed the hood and installed the graceful fanlight and sidelights, in the Adam style, which now surround the door.

On the interior, Mrs. Shackelford replaced the black marble, Empire style mantel in the drawing room and Hopley's white marble mantel in the "game room," with Adam style mantels. The game room was also cut into two portions, to create a dining room and a library.

On the second floor, a portion of the front piazza had been enclosed before Gaud acquired the property. Mrs. Shackelford extended the enclosure to include the southwest corner of the piazza.

Mrs. Shackelford also removed Victorian French windows which gave access from the drawing room to the south piazza, replacing

them with sash windows in the style of the house's period.

Mrs. Shackelford sold the frame portion on November 8, 1963 to Mrs. George E. Roosevelt of Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York. The contract for the sale stipulated that the house lot and the two lots in front of it were to be combined into a single lot of record.

Mrs. Roosevelt sold the house in January, 1966, to C. E. Graham Reeves of Annandale Plantation near Georgetown and of Summit, N. J. The Reeves family took up the formal gardens and replaced them with the present lawn.

On August 1, 1967, Reeves sold the property to Mrs. Nancy L. Griffin, wife of William W. Griffin, attorney and manager of the Charleston office of Courts and Co., investment brokers.

The Reeves bought the lot which Gaud had created on the northeast portion of the property and built the residence there.

Gaud subdivided the property again, to separate the brick portion of the house and the former kitchen-stable building, in 1961. He sold the brick portion of the house in 1967 to Dr. E.J. Dennis, physician. It was subsequently bought by Dr. and Mrs. William H. Cain, who reside there and operate the Sword Gates Inn. Gaud retained the kitchen-stable building for his residence.

Mrs. Griffin sold the wooden portion of the house in 1974 to Dr. James B. Jackson, pedodontist, and his wife, Mrs. Carol A. Jackson.

The Sword Gates House has worn well its 150 or more years of existence, surviving the tests of time and the changing tastes of its owners. It remains one of Charleston's most charming houses.

Approached from the famous Sword Gates via the brick walk line with venerable magnolia trees, the house presents a somewhat secluded, but very hospitable aspect to the visitor.

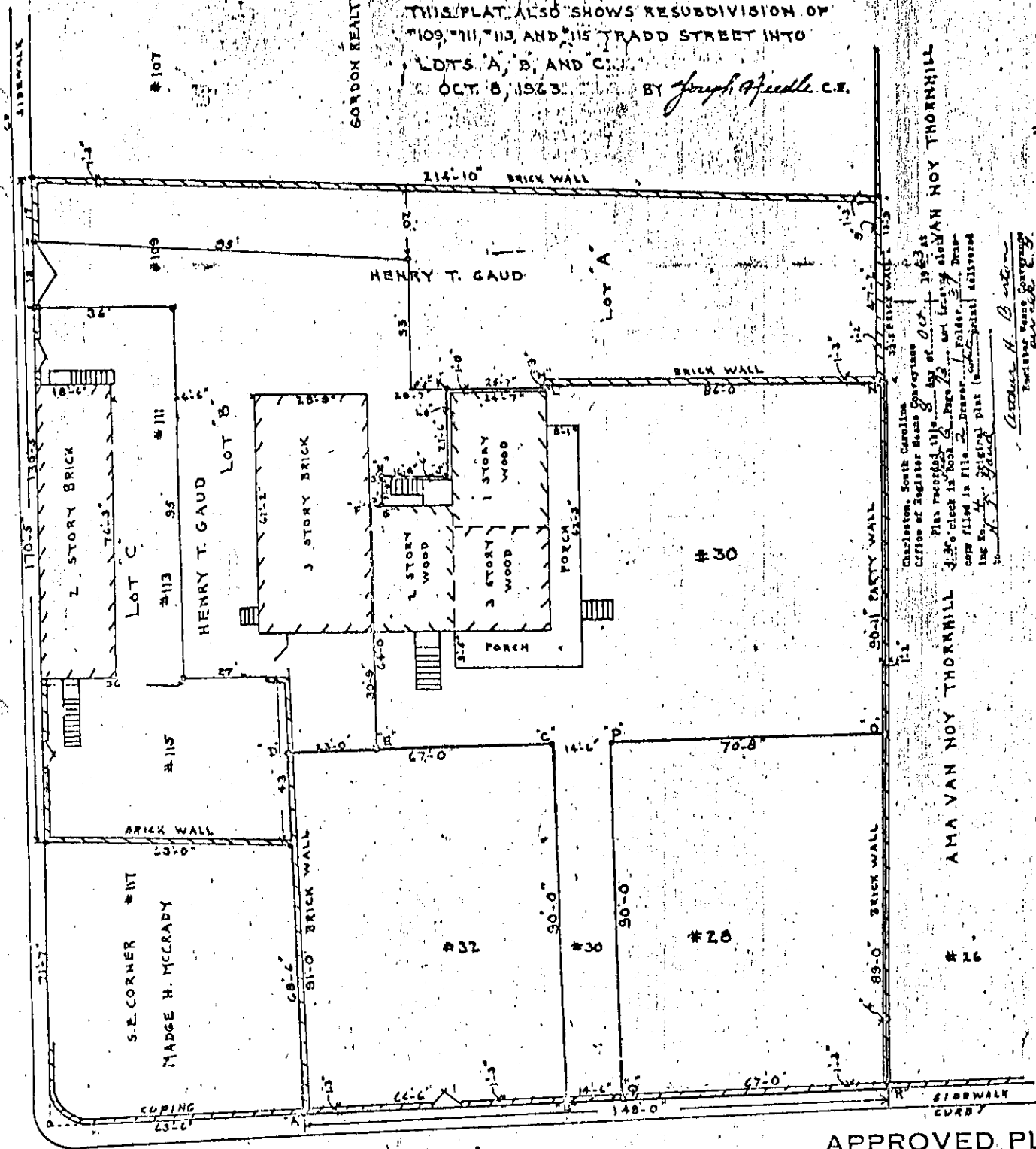
GORDON REALTY CO.

THIS PLAT ALSO SHOWS RESUBDIVISION OF

LOTS 109, 111, 113, AND 115 TRADD STREET INTO

LOTS A, B, AND C.

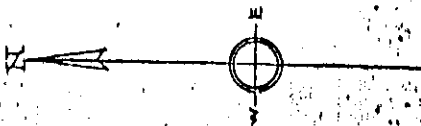
OCT. 8, 1963 BY Joseph H. Feidle, C.E.



APPROVED PLAT

DATE: 10.8.63

LEGARE ST.



William B. Hood
CITY ENGINEER
CITY OF CHARLESTON

BY ORDER AND DIRECTION
OF THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Charleston, South Carolina
Office of Registrar Means Conveyances
Plat recorded this day of Oct. 1963 at
4:30 p.m. in Book 2, Page 12, and being also
now filed in File 2, Drawer 1, Folder 3, Deed
ing to the original plat (which plat) delivered
to the Registrar.

AMA VAN NOY THORNHILL

Arthur H. B. Burt
Twining Means Conveyances
and 200 E. 9

PLAT SHOWING SUBDIVISION OF SWORD GATE

PROPERTY ON LEGARE STREET, CHARLESTON S.C.

THE PROPERTY OF HENRY T. GAUD

SCALE 1" = 20'

JUNE 21, 1960 BY Joseph H. Feidle, C.E.

Entering the beautiful "period" doorway, one gains access to the entrance hallway. The ceiling medallion here is Victorian, a legacy either of Robert Adger or his Simonton cousins. To the left is an arched doorway, in the Regency style, cut originally to link the wooden and brick portions of the house, but now sealed. In the "L" of the foyer, the gracefully curving staircase rises.

To the right of the foyer is the drawing room, which the Gauds formerly used as a dining room before the house was divided. This room contains beautiful woodwork and moulding of the period of the house's construction, and probably original. An ornate medallion of plaster acanthus leaves, surrounded by a floral ring, graces the ceiling. An identical medallion is found in the ballroom of the brick portion of the house, another in the dining room to the rear of the drawing room. The dining room medallion may be a reproduction. Those in the drawing room and ballroom may date from the construction of the house or may have been added by Hopley. The drawing room mantel, in the Adam style, is not original. It replaced a black marble mantel, in the Regency style.

The dining room is of recent creation, having been carved from Hopley's game room. The library, to the rear of the dining room, retains original features of the game room, including the substantial plaster cornice. The Adam style mantel is a replacement of Hopley's white marble mantel of circa 1850.

On the second floor, the master bedroom retains a black marble mantel of the Regency period. The child's bedroom contains a mantel in the Eastlake style of the 1870s, with stencil-like decorations. A fine Federal style mantel is found in the attic room.

25
The high basement reveals handsome old brick walls laid in Flemish bond under the original portion of the house, and dungeon-like rooms and passageways created by the additions to the house.

The house also contains one and perhaps two ghosts.

The ghost story most often told is that of the figure of a man who enters the front door, hangs his hat on a non-existent hat rack on the wall, and walks up the stairs. Another version says he enters the arched doorway, now sealed up, instead of climbing the stairs. The story has been told for at least 55 years, since Gaud was a small boy. The Gauds claimed to have heard the ghost on several occasions.

Margaret Rhett Martin, in her book, "Charleston Ghosts," tells of a female ghost who walks the halls, comes into the south bedroom upstairs, and disappears.

It's all part of the romance of the Sword Gates House.