

380 Race Street

380 Race Street is located on the north side of Race Street between King Street and Rutledge Avenue, just three doors west of the Greek Church's property. 380 Race Street contains 2, one story, frame Charleston cottages. This small vernacular building type has been called a Freedmen's Cottage and more recently a Charleston Cottage.

This area, prior to the 1850s was still undeveloped farmland and was well north of the city limits. The Bridgens and Allen map shows that by 1852 Race Street had been laid out but remained almost totally undeveloped. Race Street was also formerly known as Gadsden Street. In 1861 there were 10 white persons living on Race Street but no people of color or slaves (City of Charleston 1861 census)

In 1880 Sarah H. Averill conveyed the family farm to Caleb Averill (deed Book K19 p.171) Two years later C.N. Averill subdivided the farm land into residential lots. A plat was made for Mr. Averill by A. DiCardeuc in March 1882 (This is listed as being in Charleston Co Plat Book C p.36 and is also known as McCrady Plat #0508). The parcel that was to become 380 Race Street was the western half of parcel #21 as indicated on that plat. Parcel #21 was 50' along Race Street and 144' in depth. In 1882, Catherine Aiken purchased the eastern half of parcel 21 and built a 2 story wood building on that section, and Frank Aiken purchased the western half and built two, one story wood buildings. In the 1882 Deed T18 p.193, that transaction between the Averill's and the Aiken's lists Francis Aiken, Catherine Aiken and Isaac Aiken, identified as "colored." It seems clear from genealogical research that Catherine and Isaac Aiken were the parents of Francis (Frank) Aiken.

The City Tax Assessment Ward Books list Frank Aiken as the property owner from the 1880s until 1930. Interestingly, from @1898 onward, Mr. Aiken's property is shown as having two, 1 story wood buildings on his 25' by 144' property. **This strongly suggests that the current freedmen's cottages were constructed between 1895 and 1898.** This early date might be confirmed by a close inspection of the building's construction and materials.

Frank Aiken was born in Charleston during the Civil War in 1861 or 1862. He was a carpenter like his father Isaac according the 1880 federal census. His mother was named Catherine and he had two younger sisters Lizzie and Sarah who attended school that year when they lived on South Street. Frank would have been a young man of 20 when he purchased the property at Race Street. He seems to have married his first wife Miss Sarah Robinson of Goose Creek in 1885 (marriage certificate Ancestry). It is unclear when Frank married his wife Phoebe but by the 1920 census they were married and living on Race Street. Frank lived at 380 Race Street until his death. (1880 and 1920 census and death certificate on Ancestry.com).

Frank Aiken was listed as a widower at his death in 1930 (Will DD p.140). In his will, he mentioned that he had been cared for in his last years by his son William R. Aiken. As a result, he left the Race Street house and property to William to use for the remainder of William's life. After that – it was to revert back to Frank's estate and parceled out to his three children – William, Isaiah Aiken and Jennie Mack. In

1941, William bought out the interests of his siblings (deed books K42/ 383 and T42/ 107) and he also paid \$126 to the city who had seized the property for unpaid taxes. He paid \$300 to his sister Jennie Mack who by that time lived in New York.

The next mention of the property comes in 1982 and the will of Helen Jenkins Aiken (will 82/ 857?) In 1995 Mary Wright purchased the property (deed book V261/ 169). It remains in the Wright family.