In Complete Order: Social Control and Architectural Organization
in the Charleston Back Lot

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Abstract

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, white slaveowners living in Charleston, South Carolina organized the spaces immediately behind the main dwelling in response to changing political, religious, and social values. During this time Charlestonians constructed ell additions that connected the principal house to back buildings. This urban landscape stood in contrast to the eighteenth-century back lot where back buildings were separate and distinct from the main house.

This thesis examines how and why Charlestonians chose to shape the urban back lot in terms of the rear ell during the antebellum period, particularly between 1820 and 1850. By constructing additions, often in the form of pantries and storerooms, city dwellers expressed the social relations that existed between members of white and black households. On one hand, these interactions were considered reciprocal, even familial. One the other hand, they represented an hierarchical community based on a rigid sense of social order.

Time, like space, was an important factor in mitigating the prevailing social order. Whether time was defined according to a clock or watch or in terms of natural sequences of the day and night, morning and evening, temporal landscapes in the city affected the way in which areas immediately behind the main dwelling were perceived and used by members of both white and black households.

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Illustration

Introduction

During the first half of the nineteenth century the arrangement and contents of domestic back lots in Charleston, South Carolina expressed civic, religious, and social attempts to create an American republic which nevertheless was socially stratified. By identifying each person in terms of his or her position in an impartial yet hierarchical community and household, wealthy, white Charlestonians defended and solidified the status quo. Back lots were mundane, work-a-day spaces. Thus their careful arrangement of enclosures were forceful representations of a culture which fostered individuality and equality within a carefully structured social order.[1]

In nineteenth-century Charleston the back lot, an area behind the main dwelling which contained out buildings, structures, yards, and gardens,

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[1]Several scholars of architectural history argue that structural changes similar to those in Charleston back lots express changing social and economic values in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Camille Wells suggests that architectural changes in early nineteenth-century Virginia houses reflected new yet still rigid views of domestic slavery. In part, her work is based on Henry Glassie's seminal analysis of *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*. Glassie maintains that Virginia houses became more symmetrical after 1800 due to a process of social distancing which served to isolate individual households while presenting a facade of physical and social order. In "The New England Farmhouse Ell: Fact and Symbol of Nineteenth-Century Farm Improvement" Thomas Hubka maintains that rear ell additions in rural New England resulted from the economic shift to a more commercialized form of agriculture. Camille Wells, "From Power to Propriety: The Domestic Landscape of Slaveholding in Antebellum Virginia," New Perspectives on Virginia Architecture Annual Symposium, Charlottesville and Richmond, Virginia, 14 November 1992. Also "Accommodation and Appropriation: White and Black Domestic Landscapes in Early Nineteenth-Century Virginia," Institute of Early American History and Culture Annual Conference, Boulder, Colorado, 1 June 1996. Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975). Thomas Hubka, "The New England Farmhouse Ell: Fact and Symbol of Nineteenth-Century Farm Improvement, "Perspectives *in Vernacular Architecture, II*, Camille Wells, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 161-166.

stood in contrast to its eighteenth-century counterpart. Eighteenth-century plats of domestic lots depict a distinct separation between the main dwelling and auxiliary, or back, buildings (fig. 1). Traditionally the main dwelling stood on or near the street while back buildings clustered behind, toward the opposite end of the urban lot.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century spaces in the Charleston back lot no longer contained a cluster of out buildings. Instead, some of these former out building functions were lined up in an ell which was attached to the main house (fig. 2). On the surface, this ell structurally and visually unified the components of the urban lot--mediating the separation between served and service spaces. Yet the construction of pantries and/or storerooms encompassed this addition further enforced the hierarchical layers of black and white, service and served spaces extending from the main house.

These shifts in architectural form and content in domestic back lots between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expressed Charlestonians changing civic, religious, and social values. On one hand, nineteenth-century wealthy, white Charlestonians were concerned with a powerful local government that protected the right to own enslaved Africans and African-Americans. One the other hand, religious leaders spoke of the importance of a moral society in which everyone, white and black, were members of the Christian family. A shifting and sometimes inherently contradictory combination of these new ideas effected the ways city officials and residents shaped and perceived the architectural landscape.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, white Charlestonians began looking at the South and their city as a distinctive society not fully tied to the country's republican ethos based on the universal recognition of

human freedom and common civic values but rather as a region of like-minded patriotic citizens separate from yet as powerful as the federal government. Within this movement Charlestonians grappled with the mechanisms for dealing with a society comprised of an unequal classes, one of which involved slavery. By enacting specific civic regulations white citizens in the city sought to codify patterns of public and private life. In turn, black residents sought to mitigate and defy some of the measures which regulated their behavior and movement.

As politicians spoke of an authoritarian government, religious officials preached the gospel of Christian virtue for all members of the urban population. Religious pamphlets and sermons circulating during the first half of the nineteenth century presented a viable avenue through which white slaveowners could conceptualize and rationalize slaves as human beings, even as members of their own families.[2] These writings depicted slaves not just as uncivilized servants and workers, but as members of society worthy of better spiritual and material conditions.

By the mid-nineteenth century, those who were persuaded by current religious rhetoric had developed two powerful convictions. The first is that by rewarding the involuntary labor of slaves with some freedoms, slaveowners could morally justify human exploitation. The second is that by improving the material and spiritual conditions of slaves, masters could increase their physical well being and temper. In turn, slaveowners believed these actions would produce a sense of loyalty among their chattel.

Transforming the environments of the urban back lot into appropriately ordered as well as morally sound places demonstrated, for

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[2]See Eugene Genovese, *The World The Slaveholders Made,*(New York: Pantheon Books, 1969) and *Roll, Jordan, Roll,*(New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

white owners, their achievement as sensitive yet prosperous masters and mistresses. Thus the back lots which white slaveowners oversaw and in which slaves lived and worked were much more than functional realms. They were carefully organized places where changing social values could be daily articulated and reinforced.

The content and arrangement of Charleston's back lots between 1820 and 1850 clearly expresses the workings of these new political and religious values. Mediating the boundaries between the main dwelling and the urban back lot by constructing hyphens to connect white and black households, slaveowners in Charleston revealed their changing attitudes about the organization of the nineteenth-century domestic household. Although the form of these extensions presented an unified architectural presence, the back lot remained a highly stratified social landscape.

Several types of primary documents form the basis for this thesis. Public plats drawn to accompany wills and deeds and private plat assemblages, primarily the McCrady Collection, depict changes in the arrangements of the buildings, yards, and gardens in the Charleston back lot between 1820 and 1850.[3] Family papers including estimate books, commonplace books, sketches, and inventories give accounts of how white urban residents perceived, designed, and continually used their Charleston landscapes. [4] This study of the Charleston back lot is based primarily on a selection of 200 legible domestic lot plats drawn for the city of Charleston

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[3]The McCrady Plat Collection and plats accompanying public documents such as deed or wills are housed at the Register of Means Conveyance of the County of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. The McCrady Collection is the primary source for plats from the post-Revolutionary Period. For more on the function of plats see Louis Nelson, untitled M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, forthcoming.

between 1770 and 1850. As elucidating as this collection of documents is, the quality and number of plats vary according to decade (fig. 3).

Chapter One explains the civic, religious, and social shifts that occurred between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It begins with a description of the civic conscience in the city during this period. The chapter continues with an account of religious attitudes. After these historical frameworks are established and the accompanying literature on southern slavery explored, the chapter closes by examining the way in which these values found expression in Charleston's public architecture.

Chapter Two traces the architectural development of Charleston's back lot between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This Chapter defines the setting and size of urban back lots. In also describes the contents of the Charleston lot.

Building upon historical and architectural histories outlined in the first two chapters, Chapter Three argues that the arrangement, content, and use of the back lot in the nineteenth century result directly from changing civic and religious attitudes. Inspired by these sentiments, owners attached back buildings to main dwellings to further distinguish appropriate relations between slaves and slaveowners. These architectural and social distinctions also redefined the role of masters and mistresses.

The function of back lots during the antebellum period was in no way an unilateral process manipulated completely by white masters of free and enslaved urban families. Control of the back lot varied with the rising and setting of the sun. Chapter Four explores the back lot as a temporal space in which slaves and their owners negotiated access, rights, and activities.

Although this interpretation privileges the plats, diaries, and dwellings of white slaveowners in urban coastal South Carolina, a close reading of these

materials suggests much about the architectural experience of the many less privileged members of their households. By explaining the way in which free and unfree Charlestonians interacted in these spaces, we begin to see a much richer portrait of the perception and configuration of this socially charged landscape.

"we must satisfy the consciences, we must allay the fears of our people. We must satisfy them that slavery is of itself right--that it is not a sin against God. . .In this way, and this way only, can we prepare our people to defend their own institutions."

Columbia Telescope, 1833[4]

Chapter One

The Conscience of Control

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century Charlestonians upheld civic and religious values different from those which prevailed before and during the American Revolution. Although the national government was grounded in democratic principles and notions of a broad common citizenry, the system of social stratification based on class and race persisted.[5] Traditional religious perspectives reinforced these hierarchies. By preaching the moral virtue of one obedient, family under God, southern slaveholders upheld the principles of a republican ethos while justifying a continuance of rigid, although not unyielding, social strata. In Charleston the slaveholder's conflation of these issues resulted in a environment of regimented social control in the city.

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[4]*Columbia Telescope*, April 23, 1833, quoted in William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 328 and in Maurie D. McInnis, "The Politics of Taste: Classicism in Charleston, South Carolina, 1815-1840," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1996), pp. 152.

[5]In *Roll, Jordan, Roll* Eugene Genovese maintains that racial issues were indeed issues of class.

Political Concerns

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, social responsibility meant more than the preservation of national independence. Instead, the expanding markets grafted a new meaning onto the republican ideals established before and during the American Revolution. The traditional concept of republicanism, which involved protecting the greater common good, now favored the economic and social success of the private citizen.

In December of 1782, after over two years of British occupation, citizens of Charleston established a local government consisting of thirteen wardens. These wardens collectively assumed the authority to control the streets, the workhouse--a place where disobedient slaves, drunken sailors, and other indigent were punished--markets, and the poor. In establishing a new municipal body based on the rule of local white males, Charlestonians took steps to reorganize their city. Accompanying the establishment of a powerful local government was the desire to articulate and stratify classes of city residents.

National and local issues concerning slavery threatened the new republican values adopted by Charlestonians. Planters, merchants, and heads of households maintained that without an enslaved labor force the economies on which Charleston and the South thrived would vanish. Events such as the invention of the cotton gin, the Missouri Compromise, the Denmark Vesey slave insurrection, and the Nullification Crisis tested the convictions of Charlestonians and contributed to a social consciousness that favored tightly controlled race relations.

Invented in 1793, Eli Whitney's cotton gin, vastly reduced the hand labor involved in separating cotton bolls from their many seeds. This device

changed the southern economy. Efficient cleaning and baling made it possible for planters to grow and ship more cotton into the booming international textile trade. Planting, cultivating, and harvesting larger cotton crops required more slave labor and thus the scale of the southern planting economy dramatically increased. Port cities like Charleston felt the effects of these changes. Among them was a growing urban population which required the services and labors of more and more slaves involved in domestic and commercial service.[6]

Despite the importance of slavery to the cotton-planting South, the Missouri Compromise, one of a series of political attempts to limit the growth of slavery, threw into sharp relief the fact that Americans from various regions had different--even conflicting--social and political priorities. For Charlestonians the threat of a federal government which could limit or abolish an institution on which a regional economy relied weakened the cohesion of the new nation. One Charlestonian surmised "It is evident that the Missouri Question. . .has engendered feelings that threaten the union of these states."[7] In the end the compromise, which prohibited slaveholding in a portion of the Louisiana Territory, violated the local consensus that slavery was indeed an issue determined by state, not national, governments.

In Charleston the fear of slave rebellions posed a more immediate and potentially violent threat to slaveholders. As memories of the uprising of slaves at the western branch of the Stono River (within twenty miles of Charleston) in 1739 and in the French colony of St. Domingue in 1791 persisted and the number of slaves rose, city dwellers sought greater control

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[6]For more on domestic slavery in southern cities see Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

[7]*Southern Patriot*, 18 February 1820 quoted in Kenneth Severens, *Charleston: Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), pp. 59.

over the movements of chattel. The aborted rebellion planned by Denmark Vesey in 1822, a former slave living in Charleston, made the fear of insurrection vastly more immediate.[8] In response to Vesey's plan to murder white city dwellers and to free enslaved Africans and African-Americans, white Charlestonians tightened control over the movements and actions of urban slaves and free blacks. By establishing curfews and constructing civic buildings such as the Guard House and the Arsenal Charlestonians attempted to control slavery in the public sphere.

The Nullification Crisis of 1828-1834 enhanced political and social schisms within the city. On the surface the controversy began over federal taxes imposed on imported manufactured goods. These taxes, enacted to encourage consumers to support American industry, threatened southerners who relied heavily on imported goods and who operated few industries. Almost all white Charlestonians considered the taxes steep but many disagreed on how they should counter the federal government. On the one hand, the Unionists, led by an older generation of politicians, favored working with the government to find a solution. On the other hand, the Nullifiers, a younger groups of politicians, advocated straight forward resistance. The Nullifiers eventually succeeded in forming a constitutional argument that justified making the tariffs null and void in South Carolina.

The Nullification Crisis pushed Charleston and South Carolina toward a civic identity that was separate from national interests. Charleston was a place where the rights of the state superseded those of the federal government. During the sixteen years following the crisis Charleston became a city consumed with the stratification and control of social classes. As

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[8]For a more detailed history of Denmark Vesey and his trial see John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt*, (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1983).

antislavery sentiment increased throughout the North, Charlestonians developed legal and architectural means for insuring the protection of their lives and slave property in the city.

Religious Conscience

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Anglican missionaries to the South challenged the ethical treatment of African and African-American slaves toiling in the fields and homes of elite whites. Despite these tensions, many southern slaveowners remained skeptical about indoctrinating their slaves with Christian beliefs. They feared that by presenting a religious community where all believers, white and black, listened to only one heavenly master it would undermine their power and control as masters and lead to economic loss.

The urge to transform the way in which colonial citizens treated slaves gained momentum in the 1760s when British officials began to further prod slaveowners to reevaluate relationships among master, slave, and God. The introduction of a governmental voice did not immediately convince slaveowners to make slavery an institution entrenched in morality but instead, served to alienate colonial citizens from the English monarchy.[9] While it is true that a few masters in the colonial South did change the way they viewed slaves a majority of southern slaveholders did not. Visiting Savannah, Georgia in 1752, Reverend Joseph Ottolenghe identified the prevailing attitude when he surmised colonial masters "will upon no Account whatever suffer their Slaves to be instructed in the Christian

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[9]Jeffrey Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Ideological Formation of the Master Class in the Deep South, From Colonization to 1837*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1996).

Religion alleging . . . that a Slave is ten times worse when a Christian, than in his State of Paganism."[10] By resisting indoctrinating slaves with "Christian Religion" southern masters hoped to perpetuate the thoroughly subordinate status of Africans and African-Americans.

Following the end of the slave trade in 1808, slaveholders in South Carolina came to reevaluate relationships between masters and slaves. At this time white slaveowners began to form reciprocal, sometimes familial, relationships with their enslaved servants. Reverend Theodore Dehon, Bishop of the South Carolina diocese and son-in-law of wealthy Charleston merchant Nathaniel Russell, required his slaves to attend "family worship."[11] Charleston resident Gabriel Manigault expressed this sentiment when he asked his wife not to "expose" a sick slave to "bad or very cold weather" for his "fidelity entitles him to every attention."[12] Abiel Abbott, a northern preacher residing in Charleston during this period recorded in his journal:

> He [Mr. Simmons, a Charlestonian] appears to me
> to have studied the negro character with attention
> & candor & assures me that they are not destitute of
> fine feeling of gratitude & attachment. . .A little boy
> is given to a little white master to take care of him,
> keep him out of danger & minister to his wants and
> pleasures. A mutual attachment springs up
> between them; & the younger master always
> reserves a portion of his delicacies, his apple or
> orange, his nuts & raisins to treat his servant. . .this
> disparity is not forgotten on either side; while from

[10]Joseph Ottolenghe to [Samuel Smith], 8 June 1752, in *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777*, John C. Van Horne, ed., (Urbana, Illinois, 1985) quoted in Young, pp. 32.

[11]C. E. Gadsden, *An Essay on the Life of the Right Reverend Theodore Dehon*, (Charleston, South Carolina: A. E. Miller, 1833), pp. 198-199. Citation courtesy of Robert Leath, Principal Recorder/ Archivist and Program Manager Nathaniel Russell House Restoration, Historic Charleston Foundation.

[12]Gabriel Manigault to Margaret Izard Manigault, 6 December 1791, Manigault Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, quoted in Young, 182.

> gentleness on the one part & fidelity on the other,
> they find their several interests promoted.[13]

Southerners who practiced such relations with slaves developed two powerful and complementary convictions. The first is that by rewarding the involuntary labor of slaves, slaveowners could morally justify human exploitation. The second is that by improving the material and spiritual conditions of slaves, masters could increase their longevity and obedience.[14]

Civic Control

The civic landscape constructed by Charlestonians during the first half of the nineteenth century embodied these new political and religious ideologies. By creating a public architecture that symbolized the city's detachment from national political issues and its proslavery sentiment, Charlestonians articulated a social conscience that favored a local government supported by a highly structured class system. Construction of the Arsenal (1830) and the Guard House (1838) visually reinforced the political--and physical--power white Charlestonians wielded in their authority over African and African-American city dwellers and against outside threats to chattel slavery.[15]

Haunted by the Missouri Compromise and provoked by Denmark Vesey's planned revolt, Charlestonians pressed the city government to prepare for any future threat to the institution of slavery. One Charleston planter proposed:

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[13]John Hammon Moore, ed., "The Abiel Abbot Journals: A Yankee Preacher in Charleston Society, 1818-1827, "South *Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 68, no. 3 (July 1967), pp. 129.

[14]See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, pp. 3-7.

[15]For a more formal description of the design of the Arsenal and Guard House see McInnis and Severens.

> the state should grant . . . a military garrison and
> depot of arms and munitions of war, sufficient for
> all emergencies[,] fortified and garrisoned by from
> 150 to 200 troops under the laws of war. . .The
> example of tranquillity or insubordination in the
> metropolis is important to every planter[16]

Located near the city limits the Arsenal symbolized the willingness of white Charlestonians to protect their society at any cost (fig. 4).[17] Designed by local army engineer James Gadsden, the crenelated towers of the Arsenal stood for a city prepared to defend slavery. As one contributor to the *Southern Patriot* described the Arsenal:

> Without an open space in front, where the citizens
> can assemble without confusion to receive their
> arms from the arsenal, and where troops may be
> mustered to be detached--without an open space
> from which an enemy may be driven and within
> which friends may be protected, the citadel
> [Arsenal] will lose much of its efficiency. . .If the
> new citadel [Arsenal] and the square in front of it
> will banish the fears of the timid. . .it will constitute
> one among the many improvements, which. . .will
> add to [Charleston's] wealth.[18]

Unlike the Arsenal, which spoke to those entering the city from the hinterland, the Guard House served as a daily reminder of the physical and social hierarchies embedded in this urban landscape (fig. 5).[19] Designed by German-born Charles F. Reichardt and faced with two imposing Doric colonnades that extended onto city sidewalks the Guard House literally

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[16]*Mercury* ,4 January 1823, quoted in Severens, pp. 61.

[17] Kenneth Severens contributes the design of the Arsenal to Gadsden. See Severens, pp. 62.

[18]*Southern Patriot* ,November 10, 15, 16, 1826, quoted in Severens, pp. 62.

[19]For an in-depth explanation of the Guard House as a statement of "civic destiny" see Severens, pp. 108-109.

sheltered the public domain.[20] In 1837 Charleston mayor Robert Y. Hayne

explained:

> [Charleston's] citizens enjoy a far greater security in
> their persons and property, than can possibly be
> possessed by the inhabitants in any city north of the
> Potomac. It is an important fact. . .that our peculiar
> institutions have a tendency to give a tranquillity
> and security, which cannot be found, where these
> institutions [Guard House] do not exist. Nothing
> but the most culpable negligence, could expose us to
> any danger from domestic insurrection.[21]

The need to placate fears of slaveowners also resulted in a series of

regulations, enforced by city police, controlling the movements of slaves and

free persons of color.

In conjunction with the construction of the Arsenal and Guard House

groups of armed soldiers began to patrol the city streets at night. These men

arrested free and enslaved blacks for walking or working in certain areas of

the city or at prohibited times of the day. The City Guard exercised little, if

any, proscription over the movements of white pedestrians--during the day

or at night. In December 1, 1822 a new law required all free black males over

the age of fifteen to either be sold into slavery or taken by a white guardian.

This law also established the right to enslave any free black who left the state

of South Carolina and then returned. In December of this same year the

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[20]In 1836, while in Charleston, Reichardt was introduced as "a German artist, at present in New York, of extraordinary merit, . . .who has been about two years in America, who was carefully educated by, and was so fortunate as to have been a favorite pupil of the celebrated [Karl Friedrich] Schinkel, who, for public edifices. . .is the best living architect in Europe." Beatrice Ravenel, *Architects of Charleston*, (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1964) quoted in Severens, pp. 97-98.

[21]R. Y. Hayne, *Report of the Proceedings of the City Authorities of Charleston, During the Past Year, Ending September 1st 1837; with Suggestions for the Improvement of the City*, (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1837), 10 quoted in McInnis, pp. 154.

Negro Seaman Act required that all black sailors on board vessels entering Charleston harbor must be confined by lock and key until the ship departed. If the captain of the vessel refused or could not pay the cost of food and lodging incurred by this preventative incarceration, the black sailor--enslaved or not--could be sold in the local slave market.[22]

Another medium for controlling people of color in the city involved established religion.[23] Between 1807 and 1854, the number of churches in Charleston increased from fifteen to thirty-three.[24] One of these was the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.). White Charlestonians believed that the church, organized by free blacks living in the city, had been constructed with funds form northern antislavery societies and, in turn, harbored abolitionists. In 1821 city authorities closed and destroyed the church, forcing many worshipers into facilities run and organized by white city dwellers.[25]

Throughout the antebellum years many free and enslaved blacks attended white churches in the city of Charleston. Most black residents were affiliated with Methodist and Baptist congregations; Presbyterian, Congregational, and Episcopal churches also accommodated slaves and free people of color. During services at predominantly white churches blacks sat on the first floor in the back of main sanctuary, in the galleries, or in the aisles.[26]

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[22]This act was suspended the following year when deemed unconstitutional by a federal court yet in 1823 similar legislation passed.

[23]For more see: Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: the Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979) and Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, (New York: Negroes University Press, 1842).

[24]Severens, pp. 23.

[25]Bernard E. Powers Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885*, (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press), pp. 21.

[26]See Jimmy Gene Cobb, "A Study of White Protestants' Attitudes Towards Negroes in Charleston, South Carolina, 1790-1845," Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1976.

While churches differentiated whites from blacks through seating arrangements, religious officials reminded blacks of their position in society. Bishop Gadsden of St. Philip's Episcopal Church preached that slaves should "fear God, obey the civil authority. . ., be subject unto their own masters, and be contented in that state of life to which God hath called them. . ."[27] In Charleston the church shouldered the burden of dispensing both religious faith, and reinforcing the social order.

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[27]E. Brooks Holifield, *"The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860,"* (Durham, N.C, 1978), pp. 11-12 quoted in Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!,* pp. 204.

"That commodious and pleasant three story wooden house on a brick foundation of five feet situate on the north side of Wentworth St. two doors west of Meeting Street. . .It has lately been painted and put in complete order-- it contains six upright Rooms a pantry and two dry Cellars: on the premises are every requisite out building."

Advertisement
Charleston Gazette
28 March 1829[28]

Chapter Two

Requisite Buildings, Yards, and People

The buildings, yards, gardens, and people that filled eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Charleston lots expressed the social structure of this port city. By constructing buildings such as kitchens, stables, carriage houses, and privies in and around gardens and yards, city dwellers fabricated distinctive domestic landscapes. These private environments represented, on a small scale, ideals of order and control manifested in the civic sphere.

Initially conceived by British officials and investors as the central port of the colony, Charleston began not as a haphazard settlement but rather as a carefully planned and gridded town. In 1671 Anthony Ashley-Cooper, lord proprietor of Charleston, called for:

> the streets [to be] laid out as large, orderly, and
> convenient as possible[e], and when that is done the
> houses which shall hereafter be built on each side

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[28]*Charleston Gazette*, 28 March 1829, pp. 1. South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

> [of] those designed streets, will grow in beauty with
> the trade and riches of the town. . .[29]

By laying out a well ordered grid of wide streets lined with houses,

Charleston's colonial officials attempted to create a well-ordered city that

provided an environment for financial success.

As Charleston grew to become one of the most important and

prosperous port cities in colonial North America, its residents filled the

surrounding marshlands with earth, extending the seventeenth-century grid.

They maintained the earlier structure of the grid and, in turn, encouraged the

development of a highly structured cultural landscape. Within this dense

city framework Charlestonians planned their individual town lots with the

same concern for regulation voiced by Ashley-Cooper in 1671.

In many ways the philosophy of a gridded landscape reinforced the

beliefs of new republican values embraced by Americans at the beginning of

the nineteenth century. As a system for regulating land on the Charleston

peninsula, the grid represented an apparently equal and methodical means of

controlling and endlessly predicting the arrangement of urban lots. Just as

the grid organized the physical landscape, republican ideology encouraged the

development of an ordered society under a representative government. Yet

inherent was an imperative that ultimately enforced and perpetuated

hierarchies both across the landscape and throughout society.[30]

Land distribution throughout Charleston varied according to wealth

and social status. Martha Zierden, curator of Historical Archaeology at the

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[29]Severens, pp. 3.

[30]For other studies of the grid as an organizing system for physical, and social space see: Dell Upton, "Another City: The Urban Cultural Landscape in the Early Republic," in *Everyday Life in the Early Republic*, Catherine E. Hutchins, ed., (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1994), pp. 61-117 and Paul Groth, "Streetgrids as Frameworks for Urban Variety,"*Harvard Architecture Review*, vol. 2, Spring 1981, pp. 68-75.

Charleston Museum, characterizes the difference between the "elite" and

"middle class" according to the size of domestic lots:

> property owners classified as 'wealthy' and 'elite'
> owned their townhouses and at least one
> plantation. They maintained at least eight slaves in
> the city, as well as a larger number on their
> plantation(s), and they held public office at some
> point in their adult life. In physical terms, the elite
> are those with houses in excess of 7,000 square feet
> and urban lots larger than 18,000 square feet. The
> middle class houses averaged 4,600 square feet on
> lots of 6,000 square feet.[31]

Just as middle-class residential lots contained less footage they also supported

fewer domestic slaves.[32]

Archaeological investigations and architectural fieldwork both confirm

that elite domestic compounds in Charleston contained substantial main

dwellings as well as masonry back buildings. The residential lots of the

middle class consisted of less substantial main dwellings with fewer back

buildings and more wood-framed construction.[33] Often middle-class

households shared passageways, yards, wells, pumps, and privies with one or

more of their neighbors.[34] Thirty-eight percent of the two hundred plats

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[31]Martha Zierden, "The Urban Landscape, The Work Yard, and Archaeological Site Formation Processes in Charleston, South Carolina," (Charleston: The Charleston Museum, 1992), pp. 5.

[32]Zierden's study is based on an archaeological survey of seven townhouse sites in the city of Charleston. Five of these sites qualified as elite households while two qualified as middle class households.
Martha Zierden, "Introduction to Historic Landscapes in South Carolina," in *Historic Landscapes in South Carolina: Historical Archaeological Perspectives of the Land and Its People*, Linda F. Stine, Lesley M. Drucker, Martha Zierden, and Christopher Judge, eds., Project sponsored by the South Carolina Council of Professional Archaeologists, 1993, pp. 141.

[33]Zierden, "Introduction to Historic Landscapes in South Carolina," pp. 141.

[34]Ibid.
Plats examined for this study indicate that middle-class households shared service structures and buildings as well as passages (figs. 6,7).

surveyed for this study contained between 2,000 and 6,000 square feet; these qualify as middle-class households. Of this group, the average lot size was 3,967 square feet; the average size of the main dwelling enclosed 1,078 square feet.[35] Thirty-six percent of the plats record elite households and contained an average lot size of 19,902 square feet and a main dwelling of 1,735 square feet.[36] All back lots, regardless of size, contained some assemblage of service buildings as well as an open space for some configuration of yard and garden.

Main Dwelling

"Some . . .houses have a magnificent appearance, many of them having lofty porticoes in front in the Grecian style. . .they convey an idea of grandeur."[37]

As Charleston residents prospered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they built comfortable and even luxurious domestic complexes. The Charleston single house was one of the most popular dwelling forms employed during this period. The larger double house also constituted a large part of the urban landscape. Both single and double houses incorporated architectural elements that created interior hierarchies as well as stratified exterior spaces.

Architectural historians of early South Carolina suggest that the single house emerged as a popular dwelling type during the third quarter of the eighteenth century (fig. 8).[38] The single house was a two- or three- story

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[35]The average size is based on a single story.

[36]Twenty-six percent of these plats either did not include measurements of the lot or the measurements supplied were illegible.

[37]Peter Neilson, *Recollections of a Six Years Residence in the United States of America*, (Glasgow, 1830), pp. 249 quoted in McInnis, pp. 106.

[38]Bernard Herman, "Charleston Single House," in *The Vernacular Architecture of Charleston and the Lowcountry, 1670-1990*, a field guide for the Vernacular Architecture Forum Conference,

structure with a central stair passage flanked on each side by one or two rooms (fig. 9). Many single-house plats depict the dwelling with the narrow end/elevation fronting the street and the long elevation, usually enclosed by an open porch, or piazza, oriented towards the side garden or yard (fig. 10). A visitor entered the piazza through a door aligned with the street. This arrangement created a zone that permitted access to the property from the street while blocking direct entry to the dwelling's main entrance and passage. Other architectural barriers regulated movement inside the single house.[39]

Houses with a central-passage which was oriented perpendicular to the street gained popularity in the antebellum era. These buildings, initially constructed during the eighteenth century and known as double houses, contained four rooms above and below stairs.[40] Built without porches during the eighteenth century, many double houses received piazza additions after 1800 (figs. 11, 12).

For some visitors the single house piazza was space for exchanging conversation, bargaining to buy or sell goods, and transacting business. Slaves or free blacks who gained access to the piazza often were escorted along the porch, past the entrance to the dwelling itself and into the back lot. Privileged visitors, however, received invitations to step directly into the first floor central passage.[41]

Charleston, South Carolina, 1994, Carter Hudgins, Carl Lounsbury, Louis Nelson, Jonathan Poston, eds., 352-353.

[39]For an explanation of the hierarchy of Virginia house interiors see Edward Chappell, "Looking at Buildings," *Fresh Advices: A Research Supplement to the Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter* 5, no. 6, (1984), pp. i-vi.

[40]McInnis describes the plantation house as another dwelling type found in the city during the antebellum period. In plan this form, found predominantly on the Charleston Neck, is similar the single and double house. The plantation house sits a very large lot with numerous outbuildings, orchards, yards, and gardens. See McInnis, pp. 112-116.

[41]During the first half of the nineteenth-century Charlestonians constructed a modified version of the single house. Most notably, this architectural style contained a street entrance.

During the eighteenth century the passage probably functioned as a space where visitors initiated and concluded their exchanges with the head of household or members of the domestic staff.[42] Modestly embellished by contrast with the adjacent dining room, the passage functioned as a zone which buffered a formal entertaining space. During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Charlestonians began energetically constructing single and double houses throughout the city, and the passage became more than just a place for conducting business or making initial contact. It became a living space integrated like the chambers above stairs.

During the eighteenth century the dining room, and sometimes parlor, represented the most elaborate spaces within domestic dwellings across the south.[43] By the nineteenth century, however, the dining room rarely ranked as the most opulent room in the main house. In Virginia, the demotion of the dining room can be attributed to the stagnation of hospitality.[44] In Charleston, however, the business of entertaining continued to flourish after 1800.

Rather than entertaining on the first floor, especially in the dining room, nineteenth-century Charlestonians hosted teas and parties in the

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This pattern circumvented the entrance along the side of the house and under the piazza and served both as commercial and domestic space.

[42]Mark Wenger examined the social significance of the passage in eighteenth-century Virginia. Mark Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, Camille Wells, ed., (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 137-149.

[43]For more information see Edward Chappell, "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1994), pp. 167-232.

[44]For more on the dining room and hospitality in Virginia see Mark Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III*, Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman, eds., (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159 and Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 302-303.

drawing rooms above stairs.[45] *The American Family Encyclopedia of Useful Knowledge* (1858) clarified the mid-nineteenth-century relationship between the dining room and drawing room:

> *Dining-room*: This should be placed so that the way to it from the kitchen is easy, and yet so that it is not in the least annoyed by noise or odour from the latter. If possible, there should be an adjoining room for servants, and to collect dishes and dining apparatus in, that time may not be lost in bringing them in. . .

> *Drawing-room*: This apartment is usually that which is fitted up with greater elegance than any other in the building. The windows are generally made to come down to the floor, with French sashes, and the walls are ornamented in a tasteful manner with painting or rich ornamental papering. The style of the whole should be lively and cheerful; and a well-designed chimney fireplace is most congenial with English habits and feelings.[46]

Architectural boundaries and hierarchies were not exclusive to the main dwelling in a Charleston domestic complex. Back buildings, yards, and gardens also manifested the stratification of social spaces. Composed principally of kitchens, stables, carriage houses, and privies, these building components were used in a variety of ways to define the architectural landscape of the back lot.[47]

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[45]The Miles Brewton House (1768) is an exception to this rule. Constructed as a double house this building apparently always contained a dining room and a drawing room above stairs. Inventories suggest that these spaces were the main entertaining rooms.

[46]T. Webster and Mrs. Parkes, *The American Family Encyclopedia of Useful Knowledge*, (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), pp. 42.

[47]The arrangement of the Charleston back lot can be compared to the processional rural landscape of eighteenth-century Virginia as described by Dell Upton. See Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Material Life in America 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 357-369.

Kitchen

It was considered rather uncivilized for the servants to sleep under the same
roof with "the family," and in every yard there were out houses built to
accommodate them. In the lowest story of one of these was the cook-kitchen,
and wash-kitchen. . .[48]

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries kitchens

constituted an important part of middle-class and elite Charleston back lots.

Located away from the main dwelling, yet within close range of the dining

room, kitchens housed both cooking facilities and living spaces for domestic

slaves. Seventy-three percent of 200 plats confirm the presence of kitchens.

Frame kitchens comprised fourteen percent of this sample. Thirty-five

percent of all plated kitchens were built of brick. In most cases kitchens stood

parallel to the main house and along a fence line or wall that delineated one

of the property lines (fig. 13). Kitchens, unlike main dwellings, varied little in

plan. Generally they consisted of one or two rooms below stairs with an

additional room in the story above stairs. They contained at least one large

cooking hearth on the first floor, but rooms while rooms above stairs

sometimes remained entirely unheated.[49]

Inventories of the antebellum period list iron pots, kettles, toasters,

waffle irons, and tongs as common kitchen "furniture" (fig. 14).[50] Utensils

such as these facilitated efficient cooking over open fires. Despite the

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[48]D. E. Smith, *A Charlestonian's Recollections 1846-1913*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Carolina Art Association, 1940), pp. 63.

[49]Certainly some spaces above stairs were heated. For example kitchen quarters at the Nathaniel Russell House and the Aiken-Rhett house retained heated chambers above stairs for slaves.

[50]Inventory of John Ball, 27 Hassell Street, 17 October 183[4], Inventory of Mrs. Ann Purcell, 17 August 1839, recorded in "Inventories, 1834-1844," Charleston Public Library, pp. 57-59, 179-181. Courtesy of Maurie D. McInnis. Robert Leath, "Furnishing Charleston's Federal Houses: An Inventory Study," unpublished manuscript produced for the Nathaniel Russell House, Historic Charleston Foundation.

introduction of modern devices, such as stoves, during the 1820s, cooking over an open hearth continued to predominate in Charleston until after the Civil War.[51]

In addition to housing materials and fittings for daily food preparation kitchens, also served as laundries. Often plats from the period indicate that "wash room[s]" stood under the same roof as the kitchen. Although less frequent, adjoining "ash room[s]"offered places to store ash for soap-making and for fertilizer.[52]

Kitchens were often the hub of domestic work in the back lot, but they also served as living spaces for slaves. Daniel Elliott Huger Smith remembers the quarters for slaves in his grandmother's Charleston back lot:

> It was considered rather uncivilized for the
> servants to sleep under the same roof with "the
> family," and in every yard there were out houses
> built to accommodate them. In the lowest story of
> one of these was the cook-kitchen, and wash-
> kitchen. . .[53]

A plat recorded in 1850 illuminates the arrangement of an attached kitchen building: within the delineated walls of the kitchen is a staircase, presumably leading to the chambers above, as well as a privy enclosed and separated by a brick wall (fig. 15).

As some domestic slaves worked and lived in kitchens they often developed a proprietary attitude towards these spaces. Neither accounts by slaves nor their owners provide a clear indication of the interaction of slaveowners and slaves in the kitchen building yet it seems that ownership

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[51]Elizabeth Donaghy Garrett, *At Home: The American Family, 1750-1870*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), pp. 101. Personal communication with Dennis Cotner, Director of Historic Cooking, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, 18 November 1996.
[52]Carl Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 13.
[53]Smith, pp. 63.

often overshadowed occupation.[54] For example when twelve-year old Maria, daughter of a Charleston rice planter, was "left in complete charge of the whole household," she carried the "key-basket in hand." In addition to controlling the keys, and access to the spaces they opened, she gave Owen, the house gardener, "his orders for the market." Maria's charge indicates that authority was based on race rather than experience or gender.[55]

Carriage House and Stables

Here are few families who do not keep a coach or chaise. The ladies are never seen to walk on foot. However short the journey, the carriage must always be yoked. Even the men, too, make frequent use of their carriages.[56]

In Charleston carriage houses and stables prevailed among urban back lots throughout the city. More a social necessity than a logistical imperative of urban living, carriage houses and/or stables stood at the far end of city dwelling lots near or on rear fence lines or walls.[57] Like kitchens, carriage houses and stables often enclosed living and working spaces for city slaves.

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[54]Camille Wells, "From Power to Propriety: The Domestic Landscape of Slaveholding in Antebellum Virginia," New Perspectives on Virginia Architecture Annual Symposium, Charlottesville and Richmond, Virginia, 14 November 1992. Also "Accommodation and Appropriation: White and Black Domestic Landscapes in Early Nineteenth-Century Virginia," Institute of Early American History and Culture Annual Conference, Boulder, Colorado, 1 June 1996.

[55]Alicia Hopton Middleton, *Life in Carolina and New England in the Nineteenth Century*, (Bristol, Rhode Island: Privately printed, 1929), pp. 93. Citation courtesy of Robert Leath, Historic Charleston Foundation.

[56]Duke De La Rochefoucault Liancourt, *Travels Through the United States of North America, The Country of the Iroquois and Upper Canada in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797,* (London: Printed for R. Phillips no. 71, 1799), pp. 558.

[57]Fences and walls surrounding Charleston lots were constructed in a variety of forms during both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sometimes pales were driven into the ground to mark lot lines. Sometimes fences were labeled "palisade" and stood atop masonry walls. Often massive brick walls stood as boundaries distinguishing property lines.

Forty-four percent of the plats depict some type of carriage, chair, cart, or coach house and/or stables. Wood-framed carriage houses/stables constituted thirty-nine percent of this group while brick carriage houses/stables stood in forty-five percent of town lots. The first-floor plans of these buildings probably consisted of stalls and storage rooms (fig. 16). If the building contained a second story, as many did, it probably was partitioned into a series of rooms situated around a passage.[58] In 1823, the vestry of St. Philip's Parish, Charleston, constructed a two-story "carriage house and stable" with "two good rooms for servants" on the second floor for the parish house.[59]

It is unclear how slaves living and working in stables and carriage houses interacted with white masters and mistresses. There is evidence however that male slaves who attended to horses and carriages endured a status different from that of house servants. A former slave remembers:

> Dere was just two classes to de white folks, buckra
> slave owners and poor white folks dat didn't own
> no slaves. Dere was more classes 'mongst de slaves.
> De fust class was de house servants. Dese was de
> butler, de maids, de nurses, chambermaids, and de
> cooks. De nex' class was de carriage drivers and de
> gardeners, de carpenters, de barber, and de stable
> men.[60]

Just as hierarchies existed between members of white and black households, they appeared among groups of urban slaves. Cooks and nurses considered themselves, and were regarded by other slaves, as privileged servants with

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[58]Stables at the Nathaniel Russell House and the Aiken-Rhett House contained four rooms and a passage above stairs.

[59]Entry dated 6 August 1823, Saint Philip's Parish Vestry Book, 1823-1831, pp. 4, Charleston, South Carolina. Quoted in Lounsbury, pp. 61.

[60]George Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography:, South Carolina Narratives, Parts 3 and 4*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972) 148.

direct links to the main dwelling. Carriage driver(s) and stable men, although essential to the running of a substantial urban household, ranked lower than house servants and lived furthest from the main dwelling. In other words, social hierarchies in the Charleston back lot were determined and enforced by occupation and living quarters.

Privies

We make our back house front toward the south. The seat is then placed on the north side, so as not to be acted upon directly by the rays of a hot summer sun.[61]

Although perhaps carefully placed so to avoid the sun, privies in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Charleston were lightly constructed and moveable, the most easily dismantled structures in the Charleston back lot. Antebellum plats for Charleston denote privies as small squares or rectangles enclosing circles or privy seats. Privies stood in various locations in the back lot but usually away from the main house and near kitchens and stables. Both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plats indicate that privies often served several lots and households. Other more discriminating Charlestonians constructed two privies for the use of a single domestic lot.

Although plats which depict privies provide information regarding city dweller's disposal of human waste, it is still unclear who used these structures. Perhaps members of both white and black households used privies--sometimes the same privy sometimes different structures. Perhaps only white residents living in the main dwelling used privies while slaves made their own informal arrangements for waste disposal. Among six early

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[61]Phineas Thornton, *The Southern Gardener and Receipt Book*, (Privately printed for author, 1840), pp. 212. Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

nineteenth-century probate inventories taken for members of elite

Charleston families, there is no reference to a chamber pot or close stool.[62] If

material culture is any indication of where city dwellers disposed wastes, then

it is clear that members of Charleston antebellum white households walked

into the back lot and used privies located near outbuildings occupied by

slaves.

Yards and Gardens

[G]ardens present a very pleasing effect particularly at this time when the
foliage is in all its freshness. Some are planted in grass and others in
vegetables, but they are all generally adorned with rose bushes decked out in
their triumphant colors, with fig trees, with native lilacs and with peach trees
blossoming in all their brilliance.[63]

I have a cow yard fenced off & a division made for poultry & a fence running
across the lot meeting these gives us a tolerably sized garden & a square
secured from intrusion for drying clothes.[64]

Throughout the colonial and antebellum periods domestic lots in

Charleston encompassed some form of cultivated garden or uncultivated

yard. Cultivated gardens contained flowers, grass, ornamental trees and

orchards, as well as vegetables, occasionally laid out in geometric parterres

(fig. 17). Uncultivated yards were bare, perhaps swept, grounds where

domestic animals were penned or groomed and heavy household chores

performed (figs. 18, 19). Occasionally paved with brick or stone, utilitarian

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[62]Inventories researched include those of: Alexander Baron, William Blacklock, William
Brisbane, John Splatt Cripps, Lucretia Radcliffe, and Francis Simmons. Robert Leath,
"Charleston Federal Period Inventory Study."

[63]Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, eds., "A Frenchman Visits Charleston,
1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine,* vol. 49, no. 3, (July), 1948, pp.
141.

[64]Ralph Izard, Charleston to Mrs. Alice Izard, Bristol, Rhode Island, c. 1816, Papers, Library
of Congress, Washington, D. C. Citation courtesy of Maurie McInnis.

yards often created walkways from the main dwelling into the back lot (fig. 20). Used by members of both white and black households, yards and gardens served as work and entertaining spaces.

For nineteenth-century South Carolinians gardening was not only everyday household management and provisioning but also a representation fashion and prosperity. In a letter to the editor of the *Southern Agriculturist* "On the want of proper Information with respect to Gardening, in the Southern States" a reader explained:

> You have seen enough of us to know, that a *good garden* is rather a rare sight. . .and such as are seen, generally under the management of an old Negro fellow, (sometimes women,) who is no longer fit for the field, and who never having had any instruction, is ignorant of the business and *he who puts him there, knows very little more* than the poor old fellow!. . .Your readers will then be assured of obtaining monthly, (in a CHEAP and EASY MANNER,) the *best practical management of a garden*; they will be instructed, and then with propriety *can instruct others.*[65]

Many descriptions of gardens and gardening fill the private papers of Charleston residents as well as the travel journals of visitors to the city. In 1833 Edward Barnwell wrote:

> I will begin with the front garden which has been much neglected, but is really arranged with a good many flowers, 3 apricot trees, one nectarine, one Ammar orange, and several flowering shrubs and trees. . .The back garden was once in good condition, but there is nothing left but the grape arbor which is a very fine one and pear, apple, peach, and Fig trees.[66]

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[65]J. D. Legare, ed., *Southern Agriculturist*, vol. 1, December 1828, pp. 540-541.
[66]Edward Barnwell, Jr., Charleston to Mrs. William H. Barnwell, Beaufort, 2 December 1833, Barnwell Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston. Courtesy of Robert Leath, Historic Charleston Foundation.

In 1808 David Ramsay's *History of South Carolina* maintained that Charlestonians gardened "both for use and pleasure."[67] The "use" of gardens in the city was limited to the production of fanciful fruits and vegetables for dining in the main dwelling. Basil Hall, an English captain visiting Charleston, described the ornamental side of their city gardens as "the most brilliant show imaginable."[68]

Unlike gardens, yards defined utilitarian spaces where daily chores took place. Always located behind the main dwelling and next to back buildings, yards were physical extensions of slave work spaces and living quarters. One southerner explained this relationship: "our houses. . .have a very MISERABLE and UNCOMFORTABLE appearance, owing entirely to the *want of some little aid of this kind*. . .to hide a DIRTY looking *kitchen, stable,* and other buildings we usually see stuck up in the 'yard'. . ."[69] In 1816 Ralph Izard wrote: "I have a cow yard fences off & a division made for poultry & a fence running across the lot meeting these gives us a tolerably sized garden & a square secured from intrusion for drying clothes."[70]

Fence lines and walls marked lot, yard, and garden boundaries just as the grid system organized the city. The fences and walls that surrounded Charleston lots defined the perimeters of private land and property within the public realm.[71] Pumps, cisterns, and wells distinguished service areas

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[67]David Ramsay, *Ramsay's History of South Carolina, from its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808,* (Newberry , South Carolina, 1858), pp. 127-130 quoted in George C. Rogers, Jr. "Gardens and Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina," in *British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century,* Robert P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin, eds., (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984), pp. 148.

[68]Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828,* vol. III (New York: Arno Press, 1974), pp. 139-140.

[69]J. D. Legare, ed., *Southern Agriculturist,* (December), 1828, pp. 541.

[70]Ralph Izard, Charleston to Mrs. Alice Izard, Bristol, Rhode Island, c. 1816, Papers, Library of Congress. Citation courtesy of Maurie McInnis.

[71]For more on fences see: Paul G. Bourcier, "'In Excellent Order': The Gentleman Farmer Views His Fences, 1790-1860," *Agricultural History* 66 (October 1984), pp. 546-564. Bernard Herman,

probably attended by slaves.   As a result such tangible and intangible boundaries established and perpetuated the hierarchies established in Charleston society.

"Fences," in *After Ratification, Material Life in Delaware, 1789-1820*, J. Ritchie Garrison, Bernard Herman, Barbara McLean Ward, eds., (Newark, Delaware: University Press of Delaware, 1988), pp. 7-20.

"My father sent word for them [slaves] all to come in before leaving, and when they were assembled in the dining-room, he had the usual family prayers for the last time, reading from the portion of Scripture the chapter containing 'Servants obey your masters.'

Alicia Hopton Middleton[72]

Chapter 3

Ordering the Back Lot, 1820-1850

Starting in 1820 and continuing at least until 1850, Charlestonians began to architecturally construct attached and continuous, yet socially stratified, additions to the rear of their main dwellings. These ells provided useful space for storage and perhaps for food preparation, but they also symbolized the nineteenth-century political and religious values to which white city dwellers subscribed.

The Functional Back Lot

Of the sixty-three plats recorded between 1820 and 1850, twenty-three percent depict back buildings connected, in one way or another, to the main dwelling.[73] These extensions were created either from a series of one- or two-room building campaigns or planned as part of the original configuration of

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[72]Alicia Hopton Middleton, *Life in Carolina and New England in the Nineteenth Century,* (Bristol, Rhode Island: Privately Printed, 1929), pp. 134. Citation courtesy of Robert Leath, Historic Charleston Foundation.

[73]Although this percentage is small it is noticeable because few plats recorded from 1750 to 1800 show any form of attached back buildings.

the house. In 1850 when South Carolina planter Charles Drayton sat down to enter a drawing for a townhouse complex in his commonplace book, he drew a principal dwelling familiar to Lowcountry residents.[74] This three-story building incorporated architectural features which had been characteristic of Charleston dwellings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[75] What was different about his design, however, was the arrangement of auxiliary buildings situated behind the main house.

In elevation and in plan, Drayton depicted a dwelling adjoining at least two back buildings (figs. 21, 22). An external flight of stairs stood between the back buildings and the principal dwelling. In elevation, a series of open piazzas, embellished by fluted and unfluted columns, visually united the elevations of the complex. In plan, the exterior staircase, chimneys, and walls separated and differentiate architectural and social importance of the main house and back buildings.

Drayton's plan of the complex indicates that at least one of the back buildings enclosed a kitchen and wash room, buildings common to almost every eighteenth or nineteenth-century urban lot.[76] The exterior staircase allowed domestic slaves to move from the kitchen and washroom into the main dwelling without interfering on the white household.

As Drayton conceived of his dwelling as an unified and stratified complex, so too did William McMage when he commissioned a design for a dwelling house. In 1844 McMage hired John and Peter Horlbeck to construct a

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[74]Charles Drayton, Commonplace Book, 1850, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.
[75]For a discussion of the Charleston single house see Bernard Herman, "Charleston Single House", *The Vernacular Architecture of Charleston and the Low Country, 1670-1990,* Jonathan Poston, et al, eds., forthcoming and Sally McMurry and Ann Marie Adams, paper presented at the Vernacular Architecture Forum conference in Ottowa, Canada, June 1995, in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture VII,* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), forthcoming.
[76]The placement of fireplaces suggests the location of a kitchen and, possibly, wash room.

townhouse on Society Street in Charleston (fig. 23).[77] The result, probably a single house, extended 21 feet along Society Street and 44 feet along the boundary of the adjoining lot. Attached directly to the main dwelling and measuring 14 feet by 29 feet stood an "Eating Room and Pantry." Located next to this space was a "Kitchen" measuring 15 feet by 29 feet. A "Carriage House & Stable" were attached to the kitchen and oriented at a right angle to the rear elevation of the main dwelling. This structure, only slightly smaller than the kitchen, measured 15 feet by 21 feet. One detached "Brick Building" stood directly behind the carriage house and stables. Set perpendicular to the back buildings yet parallel to the street, this structure was probably a privy.

The main dwelling enclosed the most square footage in this urban lot, followed by the kitchen and the carriage house and stable. While McMage's house and kitchen were planned to contain several hearths, the eating room and pantry contained only two. The carriage house and stable was, as was customary, unheated. This plan, presumably drafted by the Horlbeck Brothers according to William McMage's design, exemplifies the configuration that came to characterize new elite and middle-class back lots between 1820 and 1850.

One explanation for this clear architectural change could involve a reduced size for domestic lots in antebellum Charleston. A steady rise in population between 1820 and 1850 would logically result in a shortage of land on the city peninsula and, in turn, a decrease in the area of urban lots. Yet evidence indicates that urban lots changed in size from the eighteenth and

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[77]Horlbeck Brothers Day Book, 1842-1848, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina. The plan indicates that building contracted by McMage was a single house. We know this from the placement of the fireplaces and the location of the building in relation to Society Street. Although William McMage does not appear in the census records for Charleston District he presumably lives, at least part-time, in the city or has extensive knowledge of well-known builders like John and Peter Horlbeck.

nineteenth centuries. A comparison of plats drawn in the eighteenth century indicate that the average lot size for elite households was 16,992 square feet while middling household lots enclosed 3,875 square feet. In the nineteenth century the average lot size for elite households contained 18,912 square feet. That for middling households was 4,172 square feet.

Another explanation for this architectural alteration to the back lot could have to do with the steady increase of black city residents between 1820 and 1850.[78] A rise in population suggests that the head of Charleston households saw a need to increase, differentiate, and subdivide their back lot buildings in order to accommodate a larger black domestic staff. The interstitial space within kitchens, carriage houses, and stables served as living places for slaves during both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Probate inventories of Charleston kitchens indicate that while the accouterments of cooking and housework filled the first floors of these buildings, the rooms above stairs beds, pallets, and other furnishings associated with sleeping space. The pantries and store rooms attached to the rear of Charleston dwellings between 1820 and 1850 also contained a variety of household items (fig. 24). What was absent from these inventories are beds, pallets, and blankets--items that would clearly indicate sleeping.

At the Nathaniel Russell House (1808-1832) a circa 1840 single story building, probably housing a pantry, stood between the main dwelling and the kitchen (figs. 25, 26).[79] By circa 1857, a second story was added to the

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[78]Peter Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 115.

	Total	White	Free Black	Slaves
1820	25,356	11,229	1,475	12,652
1830	30,289	12, 828	2,107	15,354
1840	29,261	13,030	1,558	14,673
1850	42,985	20,012	3,441	19,532

[79]Willie Graham and Orlando Ridout, V, Architectural investigations at the Nathaniel Russell House, Geddy Conservation Grant Report, forthcoming.

pantry (figs. 27, 28). Accessible only from a second-story bay this room, a nursery, probably served as a chamber for both white children and presumably black nurses--not members of the black household servicing the back lot.

Changes in cooking technology during the nineteenth century may also explain the construction and specialization of additional storage space near the kitchen and outside of the main house. Yet as late as the middle of the nineteenth century most southern households, even in cities, still relied on open-hearth cooking.[80] Nineteenth-century inventories of Charleston households suggest that slaves continued to cook over open hearths in separate--if not detached--kitchens. Recipe and housekeeping books such as *The Southern Gardener and Receipt Book* and *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, available in Charleston during the first half of the nineteenth-century, which still addressed cooking at a an open hearth.[81]

The Metaphorical Back Lot

Described as the "New York of the South," Charleston grew during the antebellum period to incorporate many domestic and public buildings.[82] Neoclassical edifices such as the Arsenal and Guard House were important physical manifestations of the ways Charlestonians envisioned the power of a structured society. Aware of the communicative language of civic

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[80]Elisabeth Donaghy Garrett, *At Home: The American Family 1750-1870*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1990), pp. 101. Personal communication with Dennis Cotner, Director of Historic Cooking, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, 18 November 1996.

[81]Sarah Rutledge, *The Carolina Housewife*, (Charleston, S.C.: W. R. Babcock & Co., 1847).

[82]*Courier*, 20 January 1830, 24 May, 25 June 1834, quoted in Severens, pp. 24.

architecture Thomas Bennett, chairman of the city's building commission, concluded:

> We are fully aware that it is not heaping stone on stone, and attaching block to block, with the lavish expenditure of thousands that is of consequence in effecting their object. . .The materials of Architecture may be compared to words in Phraseology having, separately no power, but which linked together. . .may be so arranged. . .as to effect the mind with the most thrilling sensations or sublime conceptions.[83]

Acknowledging that architecture like words could affect the physical and mental senses, Thomas Bennett characterized buildings as a medium through which to affect the mind. The organization of the urban back lot between 1820 and 1850 was more than an arrangement of domestic convenience. Rather, it was an agent for enforcing civic ideals and the Christian doctrine in the urban household.

The construction of an unified but stratified household emerged out of a national movement toward republicanism and evangelical Christianity which surfaced at the end of the eighteenth-century.[84] On one hand, republicans envisioned a country in which all citizens embraced common values. On the other hand, the notion of equality and a broad electorate was incompatible with long standing social and political hierarchies. In the end, at the turn of the nineteenth century republicans maintained that the

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[83]Secretary's Book, 1 December 1835, Hibernian Society, Charleston, typescript, South Caroliniana Library, quoted in McInnis, pp. 98. In her dissertation McInnis also maintains that the Charleston Library Society owned *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* by Sir William Chambers, London, 1791 and that Bennett borrowed ideas from this text.

[84]For more on architecture as a representation of republican values in the nineteenth-century see Dell Upton, "Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 55, no. 3, (September) 1996, pp. 238-253.

American population did not merit equally sovereign status but instead, involved degrees of political importance and social standing.[85]

While republicans established systems for ordering society, religious leaders promoted ideologies for sustaining this order. Literature such as *Duties of Masters to Servants* and "A plan for giving the Gospel to our Servants" stressed the importance of indoctrinating the slaves with the Christian tradition and providing appropriate housing.[86] Bringing Christ into slaves' lives, living quarters, and work areas had little to do with the benevolent impulses of masters.[87] Rather it permitted slaveowners to justify their subordination of slaves and, in their minds, drastically weaken the accusations of abolitionists.[88]

At the same time slaveowners taught their chattel about the heavenly Father, they began to incorporate their slaves into an extended, hierarchical, biracial family. Not all slaves participated in these paternalistic relations. Those who did, however, bridged some gaps in the sharp social delineation between slaveholding and slavery. For the slaveholder, paternalism represented reciprocity between master and slave. For the slaves paternalism presented a means for challenging and modifying assertions that slaves were racially and culturally inferior. By accepting and participating in paternalistic relations slaves promoted their own humanity as well as their vision of the social order.

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[85]Upton, *Lancasterian Schools*, pp. 244.

[86]Reverends H. N. McTyeire, C. F. Sturgis, A. T. Holmes, *Duties of Masters to Servants: Three Premium Essays*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1851). Also see Paul Trapier, "A plan for giving the Gospel to our Servants," (Charleston: Privately printed, 1848), pp. 14.

[87]Sobel, *The World They Made Together*.

[88]Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, pp. 4.

Although the organization of Charleston society may have been perceived differently through the eyes of whites and blacks, the regulation of society promoted both in religion and in politics at the turn of the nineteenth century contained vestiges of scientific thought which had currency since the days of Sir Isaac Newton and others who developed the notion of a balanced and well regulated universe.[89] Prescriptive literature based on scientific principles flooded urban and rural South, teaching southerners how to efficiently manage land, households, and subordinates.

Journals such as the *Southern Agriculturist* and the *Southern Cultivator* provided Charlestonians--among others--with advice on everything from "embellishing estates" to "constructing potatoe cellars." Cookbooks and housekeeping books instructed women and men in the proper ways of conducting all manner of domestic activities. In 1859 *The Hand-Book of Household Science* proposed that:

> the highest value of science is derived from its
> power of advancing the public good. It is more and
> more to be consecrated to human improvement, as
> a sublime regenerative agency. Working jointly
> and harmoniously with the great moral forces of
> Christian Civilization, we believe it is destined to
> effect extensive social amelioration's.[90]

By representing the household as an environment that could be controlled and regulated through science, prescriptive texts such as these offered white readers in the antebellum South the means for attaining proper order in the physical and social realms of their households.

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[89]Upton, "Lancasterian Schools, pp. 244.
[90]Edward L. Youmans, *The Handbook of Household Science,* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1859), pp. xv.

Formulas for "advancing the public good" and "human improvement," especially when filtered through politics, religion, and prescriptive literature, offered antebellum Charlestonians avenues through which to obtain social stability in the face of troublesome--and troubling--challenges to slaveholding and self government. Charlestonians thought that if they followed the rules for ordering their legislature, churches, and households they would maintain a moral social system that might effectively challenge abolitionism and quell slave unrest.

The presence of ell additions that connected to the rear of the main dwelling expressed early nineteenth century political, social, and religious values. Although functionally these attachments provided additional spaces for storage and perhaps for food preparation, they also--and more importantly--symbolized the new relations between members of white and black households in Charleston. On the exterior these ells were part of an architecturally unified dwelling occupied by one biracial family. On the interior the ell enclosed segmented and stratified spaces that clearly indicated patterns of privilege and subordination which differentiate the household--white and black.

"After the marriage the party assembles together, and, if they [slaves] have tickets of permission from their owner and a white spectator, they may stay until twelve o'clock--if not, the roll of the drum at ten in the summer of nine o'clock in the winter, recalls them to their home."

Caroline Gilman, 1838[91]

Chapter 4

Landscapes of Time

Just as the arrangement of Charleston's back lots expressed the proper order of social systems, cycles of time suggest how this order was enacted, reinforced as well as negotiated and mitigated. On public streets and in private lots white slaveowners attempted to control the movements and actions of their African and African-American slaves. However successful were these attempts during the day, slaves occupied the back lot more or less as they pleased after dark. White slaveholders envisioned the nocturnal movements of slaves as dangerous even life threatening, slaves perceived night as a time when they could enjoy some personal autonomy away from the main house.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, scientific texts on housekeeping and agriculture had circulated throughout the country. In the South, journals such as the *Southern Agriculturist* and the *Southern Cultivator* promoted the use of time as a means of controlling slave labor for efficient production. The notion of rationalizing and civilizing nature

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[91]Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of A Southern Matron*," (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1838), pp. 271.

through an orderly and efficient household or landscape also represented a way for antebellum slaveowners in Charleston to define their relationship with Africans and African-Americans.

The introduction of mechanical clock time by northern industrialists as an efficient means for regulating production prompted southern planters, merchants, and heads of household to imagine time as a viable commodity and its measurements as a device for controlling those who worked on their plantations, stores, and back lots.[92] Scholars have shown that by the end of the Civil War almost 70 percent of white heads of household in the South owned at least one timepiece.[93] Mark Smith has found that in rural Laurens County, South Carolina, slaveowners possessing timepieces increased from 5 percent in the late 1780s to over 75 percent by 1865. Completed by 1834, the 136-mile rail line from Hamburg, South Carolina to Charleston reinforced the importance of schedules and regulated time.[94]

Northern industrial towns stood as models of efficiency and power for the southern planter. Based on highly structured systems of time and labor towns such as Lowell, Massachusetts demonstrated the prosperity of organized communities centered around production. South Carolina planter William Elliott wrote, "I have been to Lowell only to wonder at the unsurpassed manufacturing power. . ."[95] Like northern industrial towns the

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[92]It has been suggested that only slaves working very closely with white masters and mistresses had sense of mechanical time. As James Bolton, a former slave living in Georgia, remembered: "Mistress done larned the cook to count the clock, but none of the rest of our [slaves] could count the clock." While certain slaves were required, by their jobs, to "count the clock" and adhere to mechanically marked systems of time, slaves who could not or would not undoubtedly further stratified the classes of chattel living both in the urban back lot and on rural plantations. Mark M. Smith, "Time, Slavery, and Plantation Capitalism in the Ante-Bellum American South," *Past and Present*, no. 150, (February),1996, pp. 146.

[93]Ibid, pp. 147.

[94]Ibid.

[95]William Elliott, Boston, to "My Dear Wife," Beaufort, South Carolina, 25 August 1836, quoted in Smith, pp. 150.

southern society represented a configuration of space and a confluence of labor and resources to be controlled and regulated.

At the same time southerners attempted to model themselves and their plantations after northern businessmen and industrial towns like Lowell masters remained adamant that slavery as was crucial to southern prosperity. Slaves, they frequently argued, were better off than Yankee wage laborers who, unlike slaves, could expect not attention from their employers when they became sick or old. Slaves were, for the most part, humanely treated, as befitted the Christian society to which southerners believed they belonged. Moreover, closely regulated work days were not inherently inconsistent with benevolent slaveownership. In 1829 the editor of the *Southern Agriculturist* wrote:

> a state of rigid discipline does not require frequent punishment, but on the contrary; that good disciplinarians, that is, men who punctually visit misconduct with the requisite notice, like a good military officer, seldom have occasion to punish at all--while the relaxed, sentimental *covert abolitionist*, first begins by spoiling his slave. . .ending in. . .an unhappy negro; who would have been, under a good master, a valuable labourer, increasing his master's wealth, and the prosperity of the country.[96]

Notions of time hover over this passage: by disciplining slaves "punctually" "like a good military officer" slaveowners expected efficient even grateful service from their chattel. Yet expectations of efficient service and proper behavior from slaves varied greatly from day to night, from town to country, and from city streets to domestic back lots.

At the turn of the nineteenth century a law was passed in the Charleston to regulate the movement of slaves and freedmen on the city

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[96]*Southern Agriculturist*, vol. II, no. 12, (December) 1829, pp. 575.

streets at night. Visitors to Charleston remarked on the curious effect of this law. In 1810 J. S. Glennie, a Scotsman visiting the United States, surmised: "[at] night I was struck by the sudden disappearance of all the negroes in the streets."[97] The Duke of Saxe-Weimar, visiting the city during the winter of 1825, concluded:

> Charleston keeps in pay a company of police
> soldiers, who during the night occupy several posts.
> . .This corps owes its support to the fear of the
> negroes. At nine o'clock in the evening a bell is
> sounded; and after this no negro can venture
> without a written permission from his master, or
> he will immediately be thrown in to prison, nor
> can his owner obtain his release till [the] next day,
> by the payment of a fine. Should the master refuse
> to pay this fine, then the slave receives twenty-five
> lashes, and a receipt, with which he is sent back to
> his master."[98]

By regulating the civic realm with timepieces and bells that signified "night" Charlestonians sought to control the slaves and free blacks they met on the street. Public structures such as the Arsenal and Guard House physically embodied these elements of control. By constructing massive public buildings that in some cases literally took back the streets white Charlestonians displayed their power. Efforts to establish order by means of public architecture and legislation internalized the controlled social systems articulated in the back lot.

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[97]J. S. Glennie, *The United States in 1810-1811: The Original Manuscript Journal of a Tour Through the Atlantic States*, DeCoppet Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, no page noted.
[98]Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach Bernhard, *Travels Through North America during the Years 1825 and 1826*, (Philadelphia, 1828), quoted in George C. Rogers, Jr. *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 147.

The ringing of civic bells meant not only a time to leave the public streets but also a time to return to the back lot. During the night the use of the back lot changed from a space where slaves performed the daily activities assigned by masters to one where they could enact limited versions of individual autonomy. Slaveowners were aware that at night slaves could move about the back lot behind the screen of darkness--away from the watchful eyes of the master or mistress of the households. For some slaveowners this loss of visual control generated to fears about insurrection and the safety of their white families. Englishwoman Fanny Kemble observed that in the evening there is "a most ominous. . . beating of drums . . .and the guard set . . . every night" out of "dread of . . . domestic insurrection."[99] Mrs. Kemble preferred a city where she could "sleep without the apprehension of my servants' cutting my throat in bed."[100] Margaret Izard Manigault expressed her fears of "les vilians Noirs" when she wrote "These horrible ideas [obsess me] at night when nothing interrupts them, & I almost envy those who have already died peaceably in their beds."[101] Margaret Izard Manigault's fear of "les vilians Noirs" may have emerged from collective southern memories of slave insurrections, but clearly night represented a time when slaves, in the minds of their owners, could and did claim some autonomy in domestic back lots.

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[99]Francis Ann Kemble, ed. *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation 1838-1839,* (New York, 1961), pp. 39, quoted in Charles Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!,* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 206.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Manigault Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, quoted in Jeffrey Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Ideological Formation of the Master Class in the Deep South, From Colonization to 1837,* pp. 165.

An entry from Elizabeth Waites Allston's diary illuminates the physical and temporal relationship between white and black households. She wrote:

> Last night we had a dreadful time Nelson was quite drunk Uncle Henry came in. . . stayed a little while. . .after he left Nelson came [and] locked the gate and door without heeding at all the ringing of the bell when he came upstairs I noticed that his clothes were all muddy just as he had fallen on his side [in] the street Mamma told him not to put out the light in the entry for Uncle H[enry] was coming back but he put it out--about 11 o'clock Uncle H[enry] came rang at the bell but mamma was obliged to go down and unlock the door [and] gate for him. . .When Uncle H[enry] left we rang and rang but no one came Mamma went and locked the gate and bolted the door and then went into the pantry to look for Nelson she found him fast asleep in the back door, she tried to wake him up called [but at] last took a stick a[nd] pushed him but all in vain. Then as there was no one to be sum[moned] Mamma wanted to put out all the lights herself and leave him there, but I am ashamed to say I was very much scared and so Lella and I woke up Nannie and sent her to call Joe she went had to wake him up and told him to shut up and so we went to bed it was dreadful felt so miserable.[102]

This explanation of "shut[ing] up" the house and lot is revealing of the social and architectural relationships between black and white households at night in the city. Nelson, a domestic servant for the Allston household, retained the responsibility for locking up the gates and doors securing the main house and lot. Drunk, Nelson failed to unlock the gate and door for Uncle Henry, leaving the duty to the mistress of the house. After Uncle Henry left the premises instead of "shut[ing] up" after him Mrs. Allston woke a female

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[102]Elizabeth Waites Allston, diary entry dated 16 July 1861, Elizabeth Waites Allston Diary 1861-1863, Allston-Pringle-Hill Collections, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

servant, probably sleeping in the house, and sent her to summon a male slave to close up the dwelling. This chain-reaction indicates the Allstons entertained some fear of locking up the house themselves and of moving through the darkened back lot.

Just as bells regulated the movement of slaves on public streets bell systems in the house served to summon domestic slaves. Throughout Elizabeth Allston Pringle's narrative bells play an important tool for enforcing and ultimately resisting the white master. As Nelson, and presumably other domestic servants, could or would not come to the aid of the Allstons they defied the needs of those living in the main house--forcing them to undertake activities assigned to slaves.

Time, like space, was an important factor in the elements of control and negotiation in the Charleston back lot during the antebellum period. Whether time was defined according to a clock or watch or in terms of natural sequences of day and night, morning and evening, temporal landscapes in the city affected the way in which the back lot was perceived and used by members of both white and black households.

"first we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."

Winston Churchill[103]

Conclusion

Architecture not only embodies aesthetic significance, it also expresses and enforces conceptions of social order. White slaveowners in Charleston during the nineteenth century arranged their public and private worlds according to hierarchies of race and class. Civic buildings like the Arsenal and Guard House were venues for the display of the power and prosperity of white slaveowners. Domestic spaces like pantries and storerooms attached to the rear of main dwellings symbolized a unified yet stratified biracial household.

From 1775 to 1850, Charlestonians upheld new political and religious values that directly effected relations between masters and slaves. The popularity of republican values establishing an equal yet hierarchical society appealed to slaveholding city dwellers. The acceptance of the Christian doctrine as a valid system of beliefs for both blacks and whites allowed slaveholders to gather white and black households under one God while reinforcing systems of subordination inherent in chattel slavery.

The social values of white slaveowners coexisted, although not always peaceably, with the households of "les vilians Noir"--black, enslaved women and men. This coexistence is best understood not as a cohesive and regulated

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[103]Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards, "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space and Time," in Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards, eds., *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space,* (London: Routledge, 1994): 3.

cultural landscape or architectural product but as a negotiated physical and mental space where men and women, black and white, established zones of social dominion through architecture and time. In the Charleston back lot spaces such as pantries and storerooms represented just such a place.

In nineteenth-century Charleston rooms and buildings in the back lot expressed relationships between masters and slaves. Eighteenth-century plats of domestic lots depict a distinct separation between the main dwelling and auxiliary, or back, buildings--a clarification of social order. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century Charleston back buildings changed from separate and distinct spaces from to those which extended directly from the principal house. On the surface, this ell addition structurally and visually unified the components of the urban lot--blurring the architectural definition between served and service spaces and, ultimately, social hierarchies. Yet the walls and doors that constituted this addition further enforced the hierarchical layers of communication between black and white spaces extending from the main house.

Urban slaveholders who constructed additions like these expressed their view of society to abolitionists, free and enslaved Africans and African-Americans, and to themselves. Thus, architectural environments formed by spaces such as the pantry and storeroom in the Charleston back lot confirmed to members of white and black households the prevailing, yet negotiable, domestic relations between master and slave. To "put in complete order" meant an organization of architecture, people, and perceptions of society.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.

Eighteenth-century plat depicting separation between main dwelling and back buildings, 11 January 1797.

(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 3736, RMC, County of Charleston).
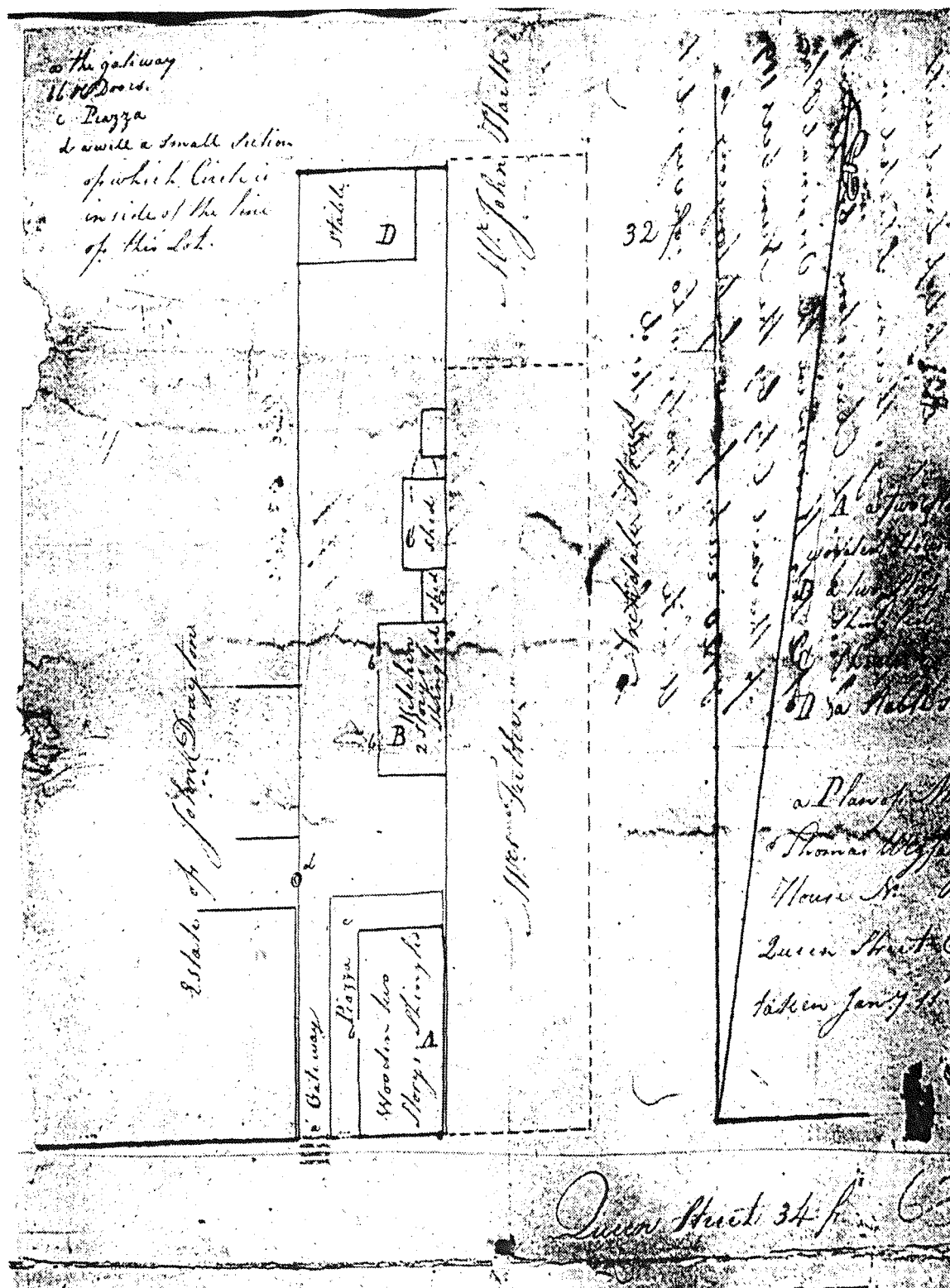
Figure 2.
Nineteenth-century plat depicting rear ell, July 1843.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 3464, RMC, County of Charleston).
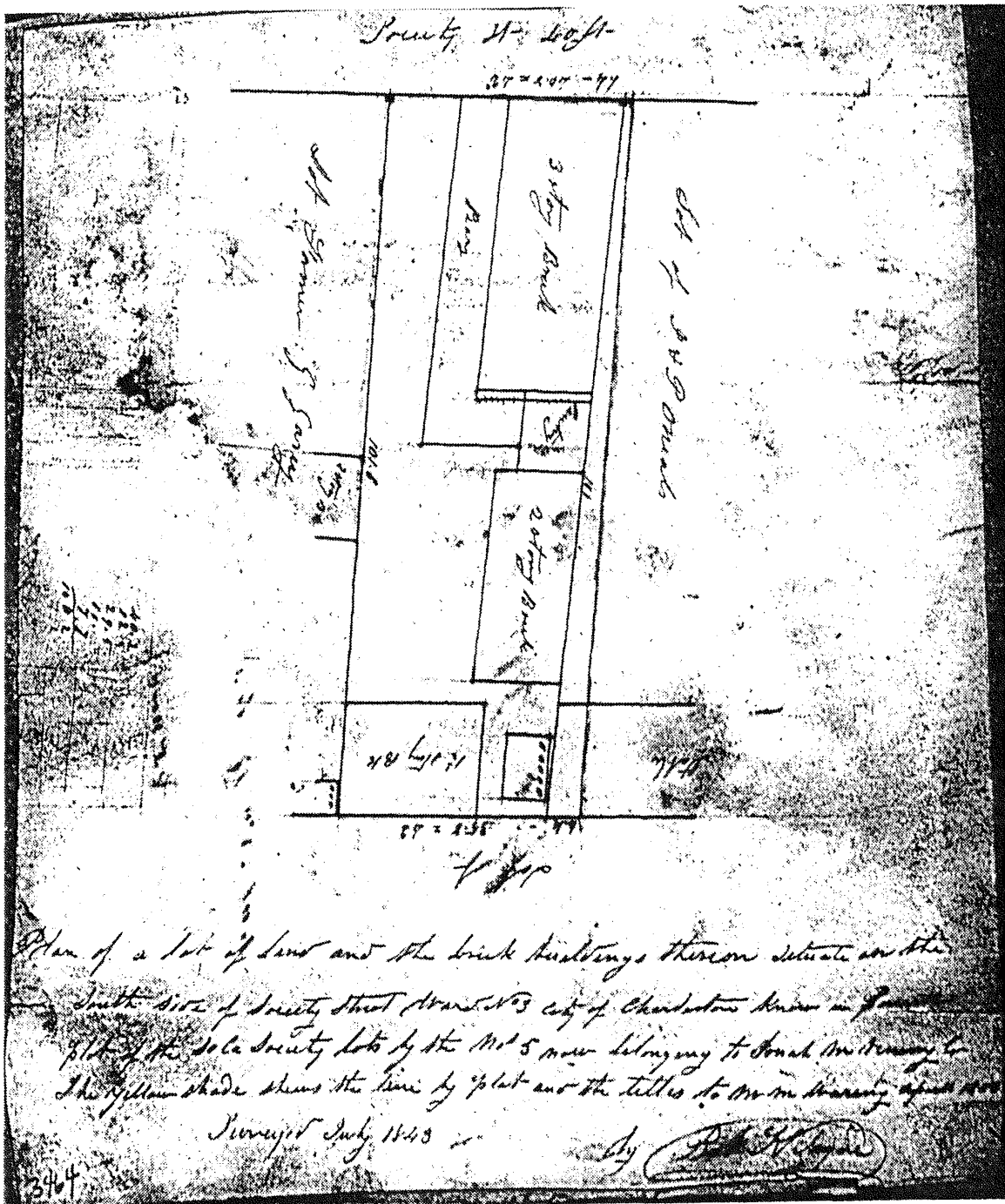
Figure 3.
Chart showing distribution of research plats between 1770 and 1850.
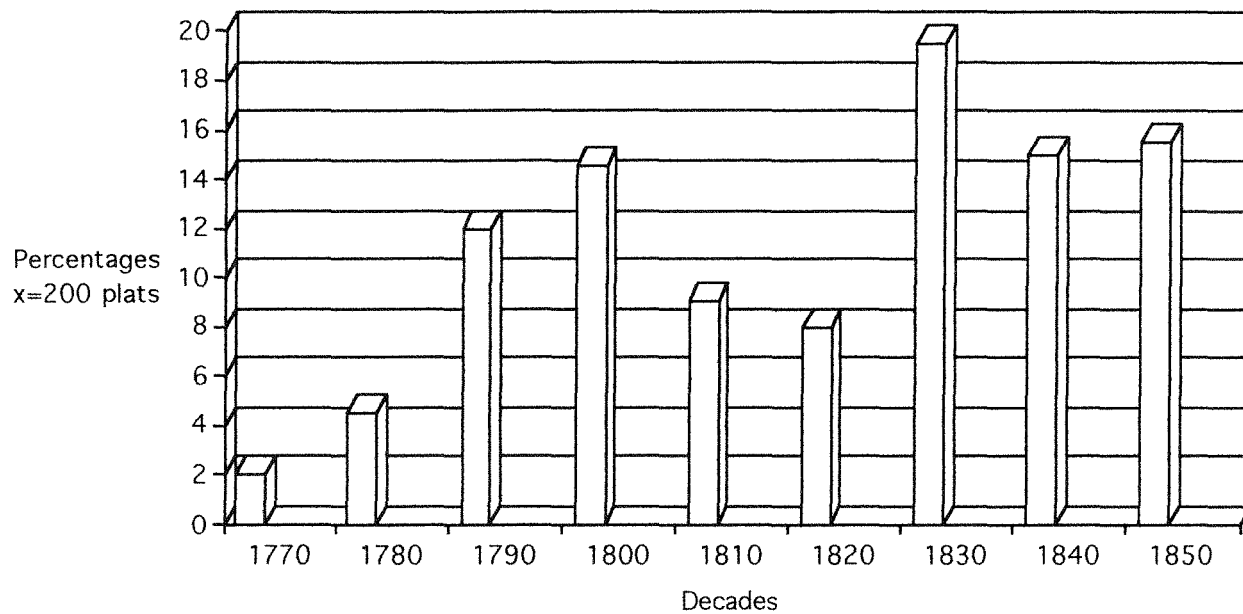
Figure 4.
Charleston Arsenal designed by James Gadsden, 1830.
(Carolina Art Association, Gibbes Art Gallery, reprinted in Severens, *Charleston: Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*).
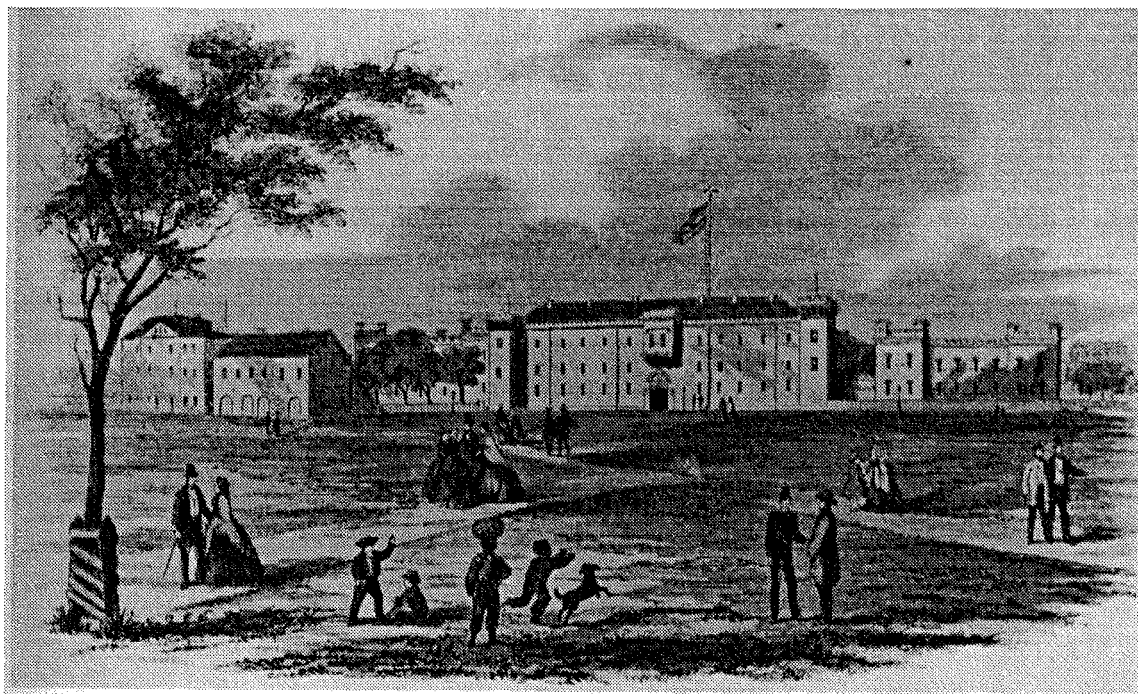
Figure 5.
Charleston Guard House designed by Charles F. Reichardt, 1838.
View dated 1851, drawn by John William Hill and published
by Smith Brothers and Company. (Carolina Art Association, Gibbes Art Gallery,
reprinted in Severens, *Charleston: Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*).
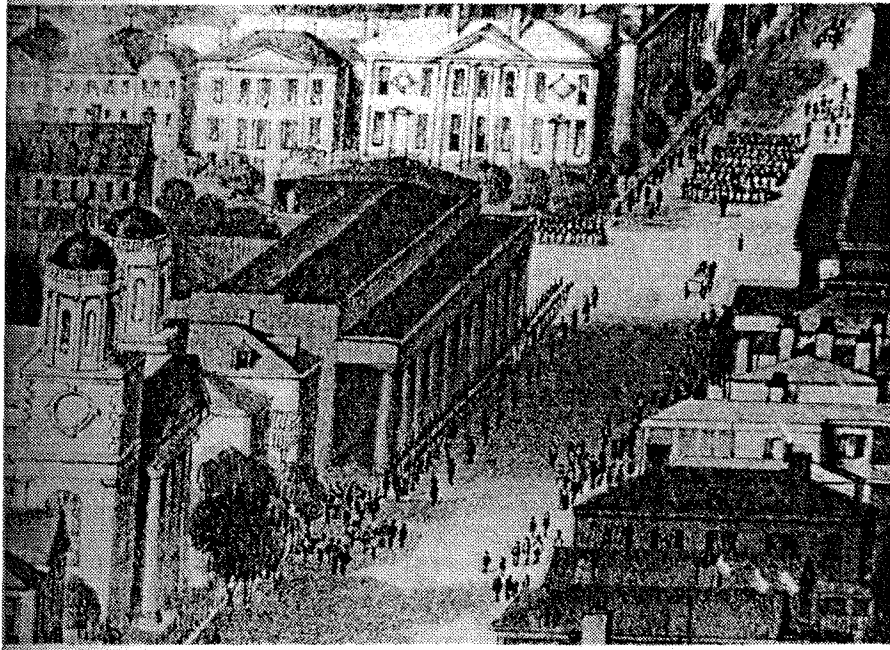
Figure 6.
Plat depicting shared passages, October 1810.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 3690, RMC, County of Charleston).
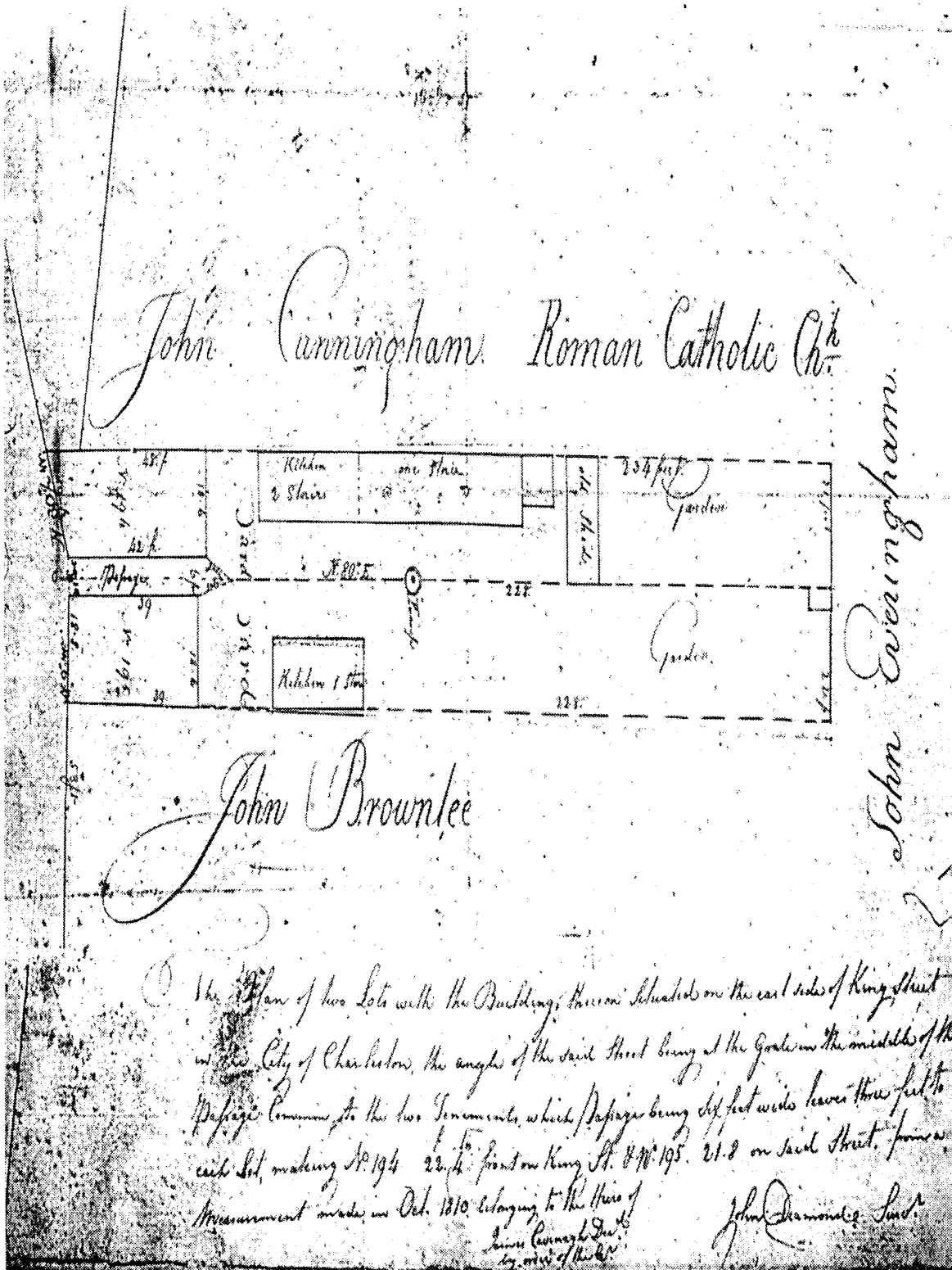
Figure 7.
Photograph of shared passage from back lot, c. 1800.
(Courtesy of Photograph Collection, Charleston Museum, no. 3541).

Figure 8.
Photograph of Francis Simmons House, c. 1800.
(Printed in Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: South Carolina*).
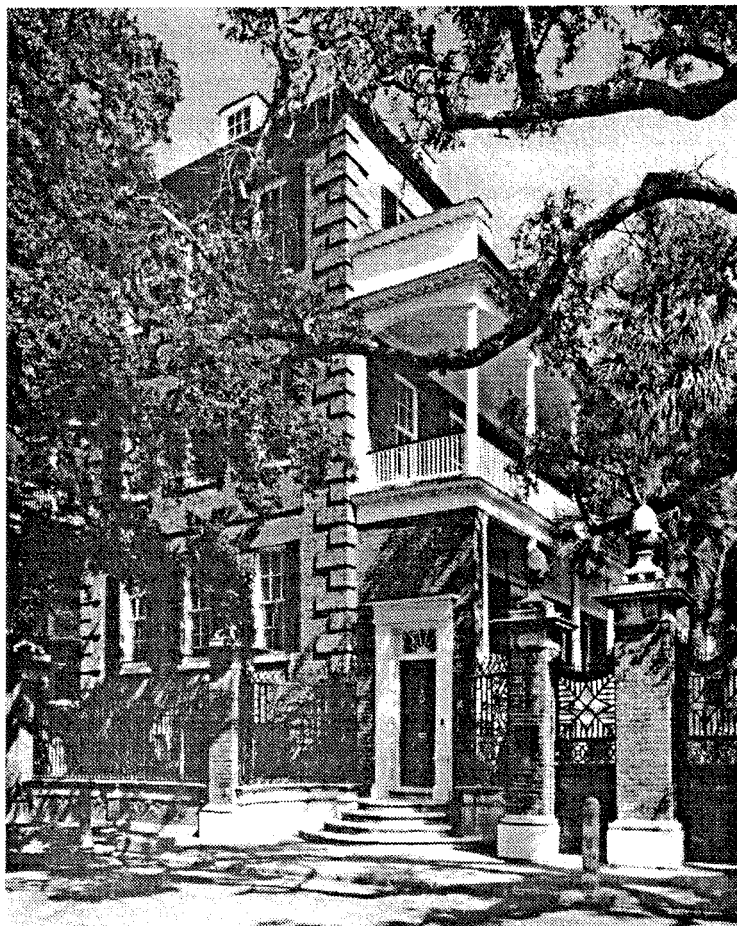
Figure 9.
Elevation and plan of Francis Simmons House, c. 1800.
(Printed in Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: South Carolina*).
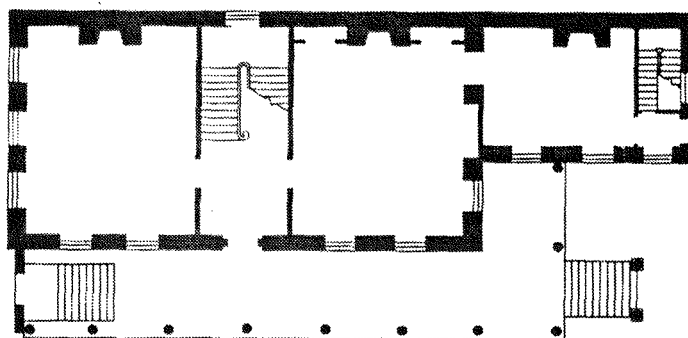
Figure 10.
Plat depicting single house lot.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 515, August 1789, RMC, County of Charleston).
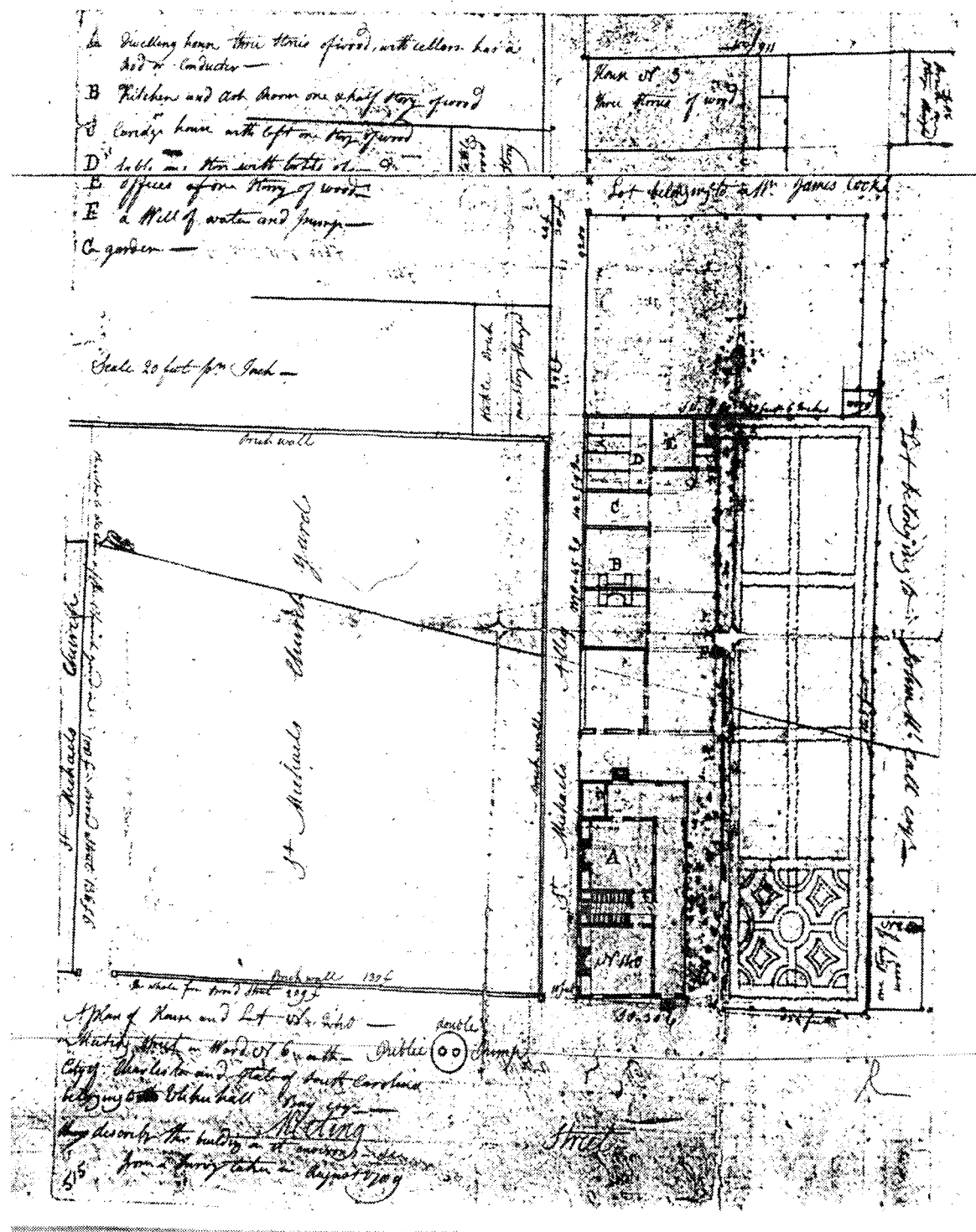
Figure 11.
Photograph of William Branford House, late eighteenth century,
porch added c. 1830.
(Printed in Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: South Carolina*).
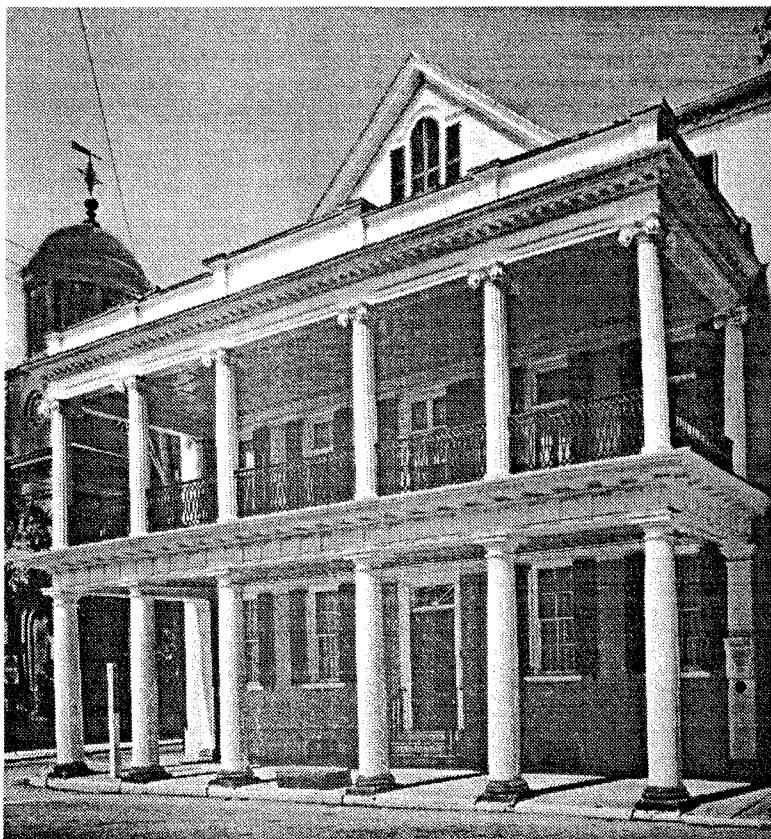
Figure 12.
Plat depicting double house lot, March 1795.
(Deed Book T6, page 56, RMC, County of Charleston).
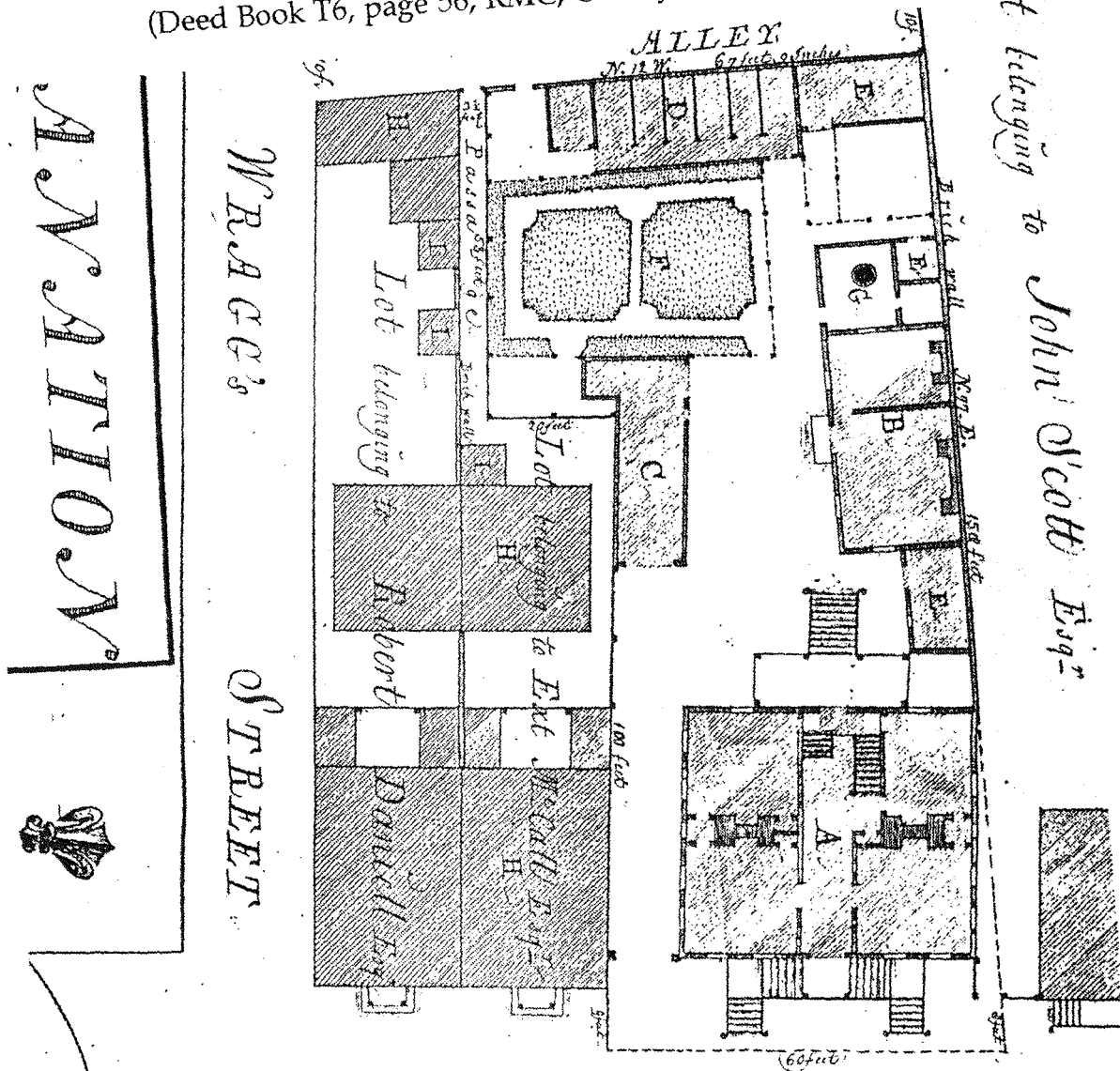
Figure 13.
Plat, August 1789.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 569, August 1789, RMC, County of Charleston).
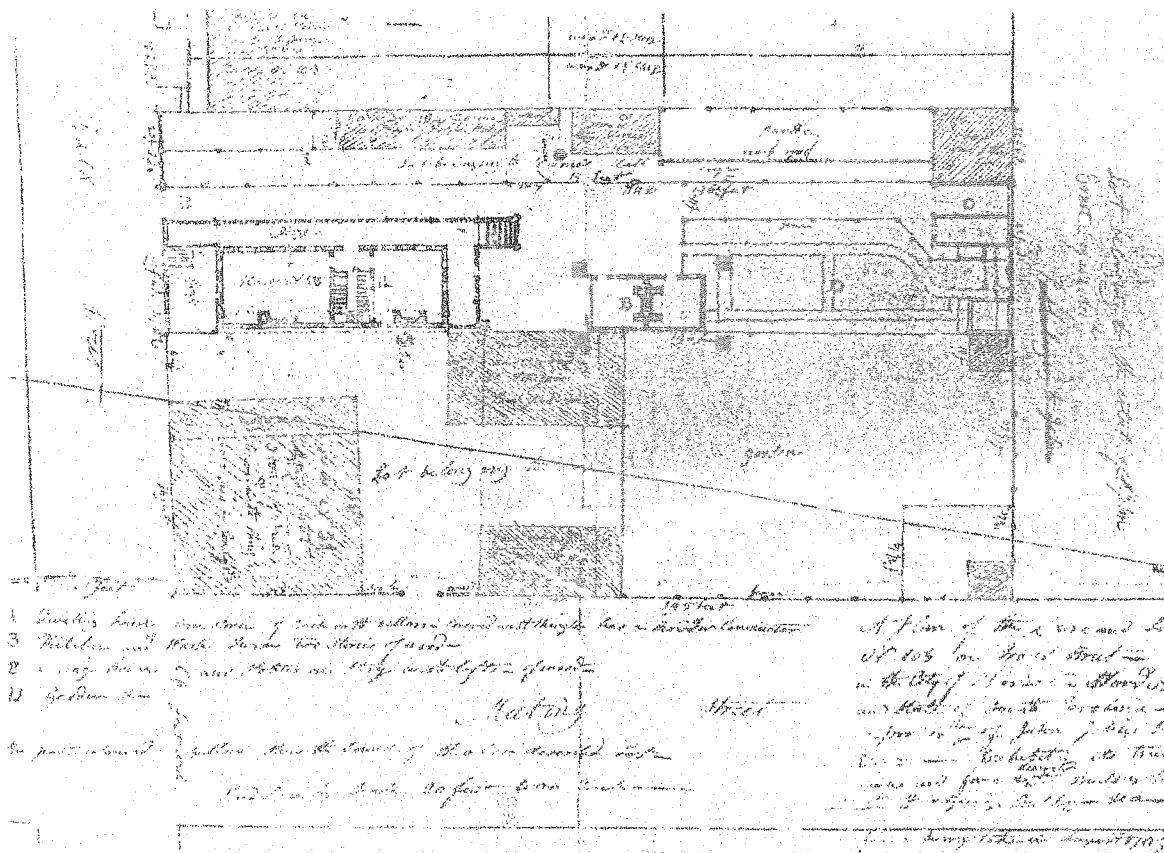
Figure 14.
Engraving, cover of *The Kitchen Companion and House-keeper's Own Book*
(Philadelphia, 1844).
(Reprinted in Garrett, *At Home: The American Family, 1750-1870*).

Figure 15.
Plat, 1850.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 3725, August 1789, RMC, County of Charleston).
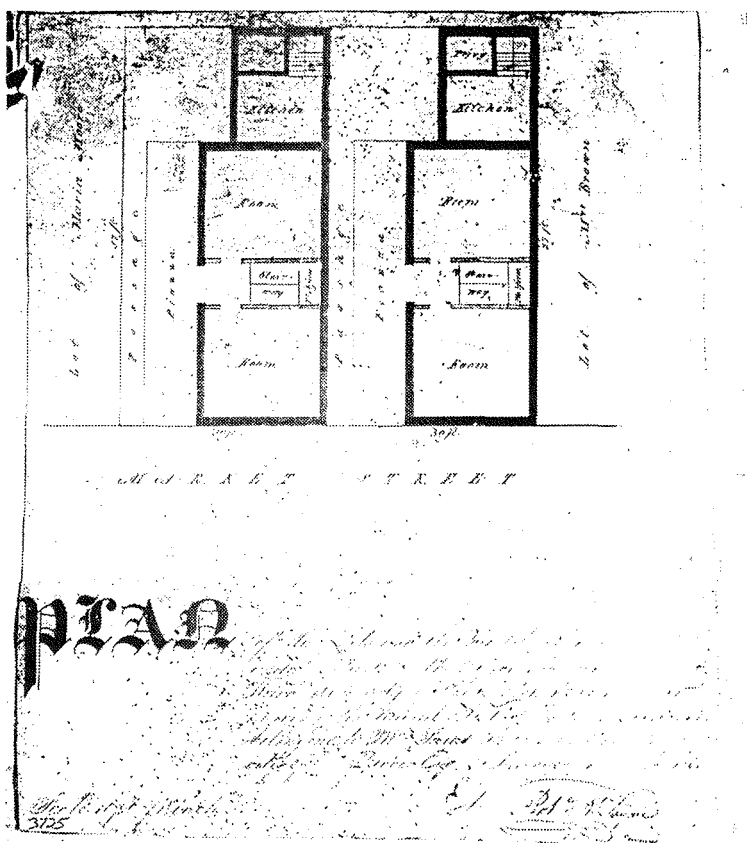
Figure 16.
Plan of carriage house.
(Printed in Webster and Parkes, *The American Family Encyclopedia of Useful Knowledge*).
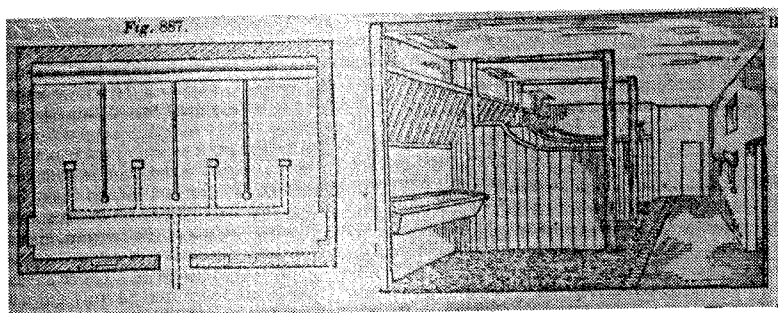
Figure 17.
Plat depicting formal garden, July 1787.
(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 209, August 1789, RMC, County of Charleston).
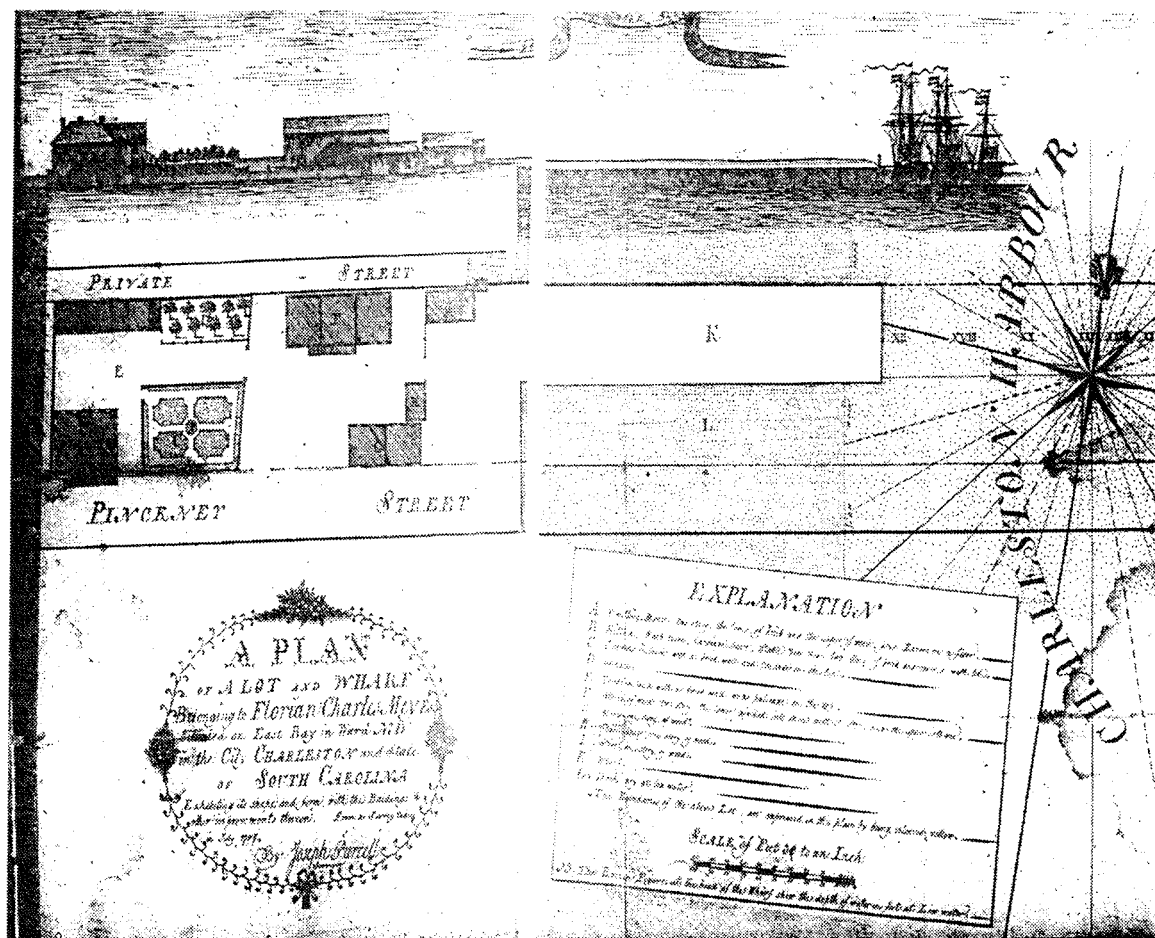
Figure 18.
Photograph of yard, late nineteenth century.
(Printed in Zierden, "Big House/Back Lot: An Archaeological Study of the
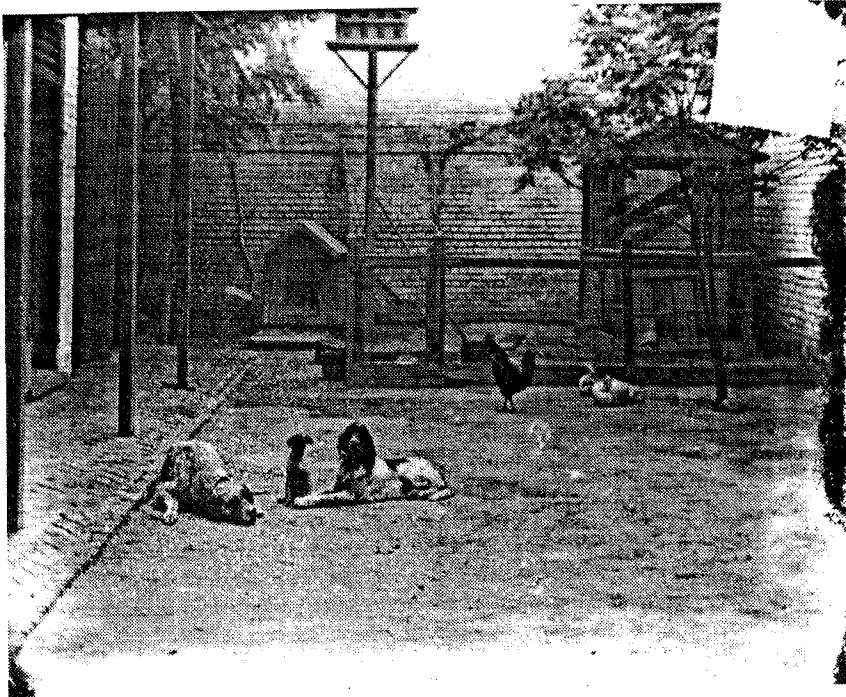Nathaniel Russell House").

Figure 19.
Photograph of yard, date unknown.
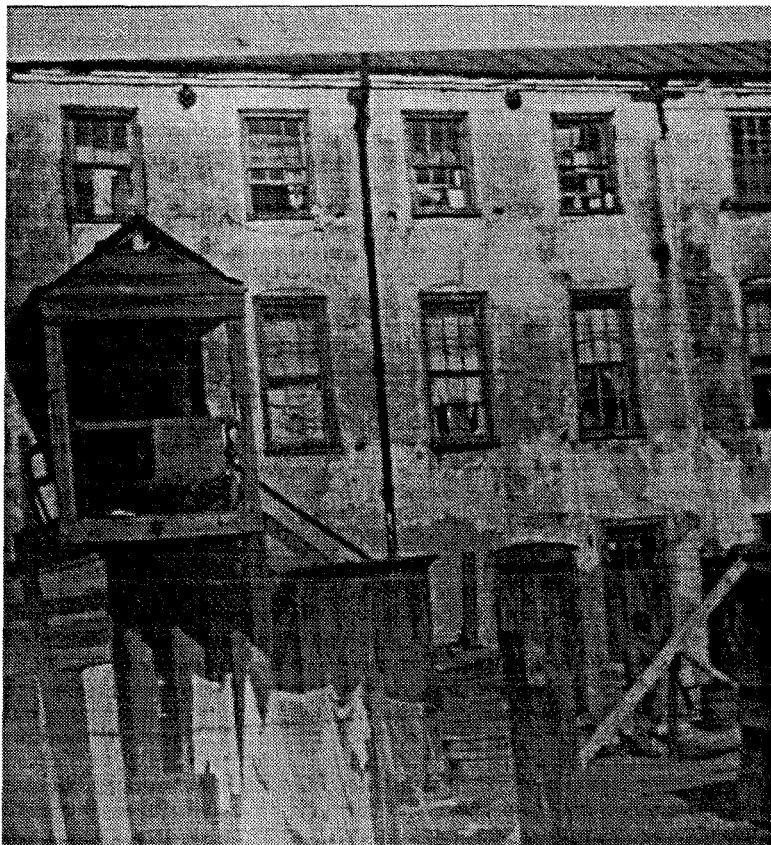(Courtesy of Historic Charleston Foundation, Charleston).

Figure 20.
Plat depicting paved yard, November 1804.
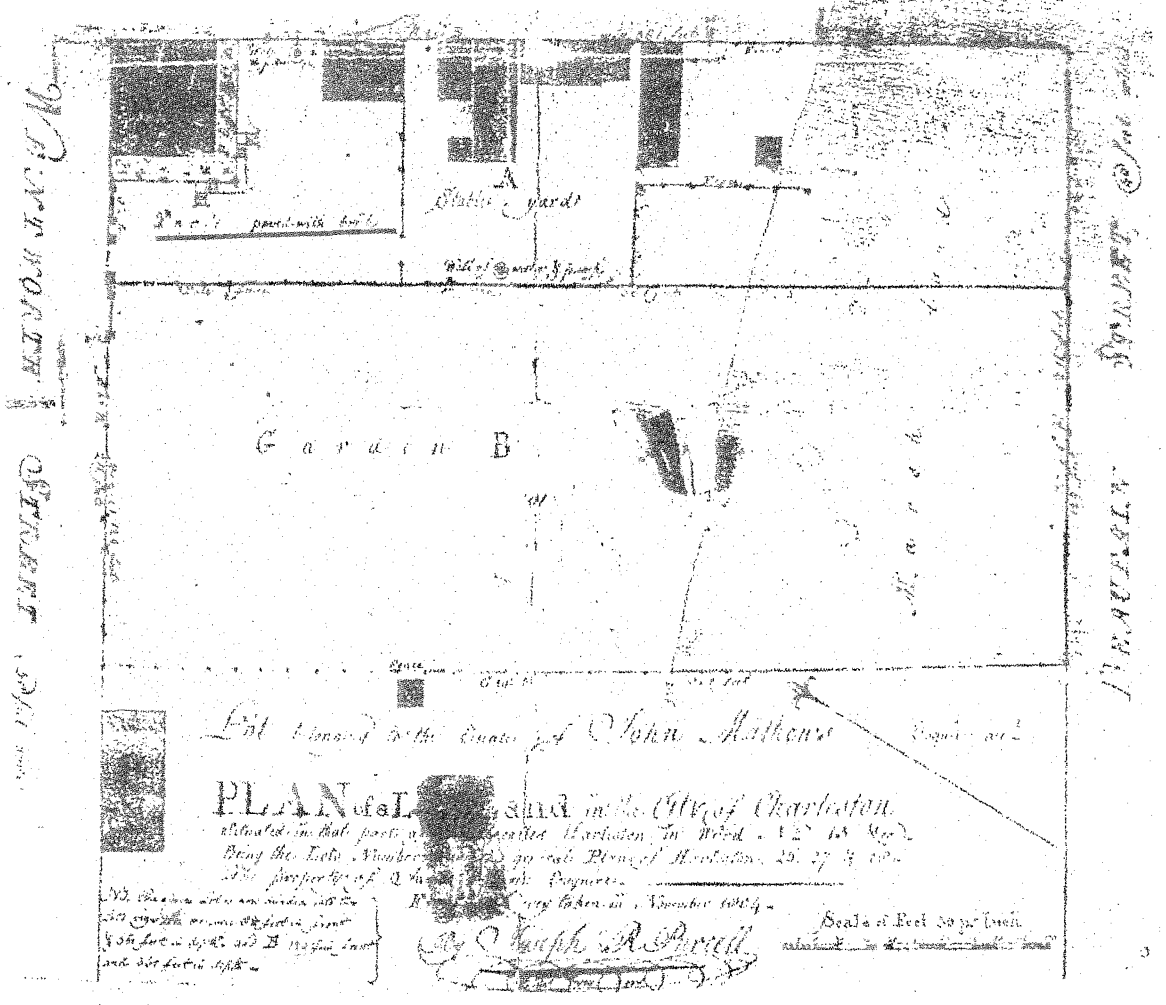(McCrady Plat Collection, no. 7289, August 1789, RMC, County of Charleston).

Figure 21.
Elevation, c. 1850.
(Charles Drayton Commonplace Book, South Carolina Historical Society,
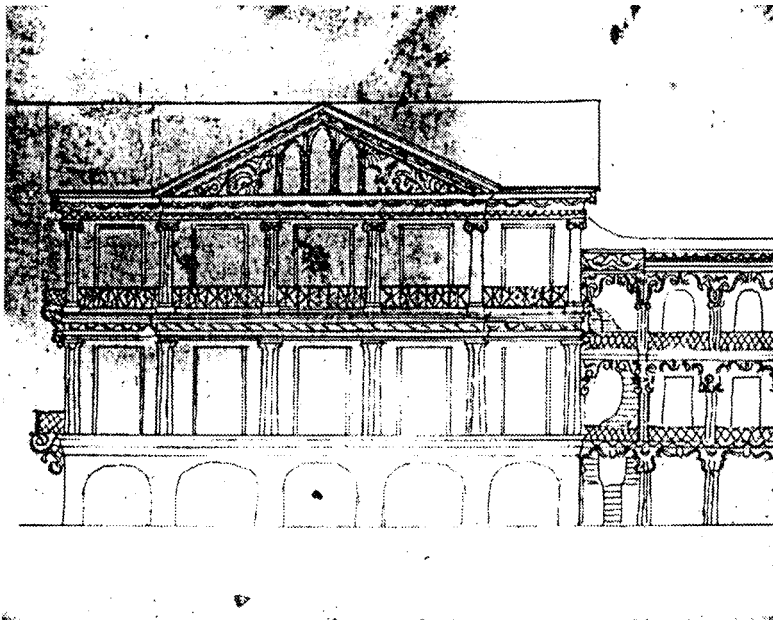Charleston).

Figure 22.
Plan, c. 1850.
(Charles Drayton Commonplace Book, South Carolina Historical Society,
Charleston).

Figure 23.
Plat recorded for William McMage.
(Horlbeck Brother's Day Book, 1842-1848, South Carolina Historical Society,
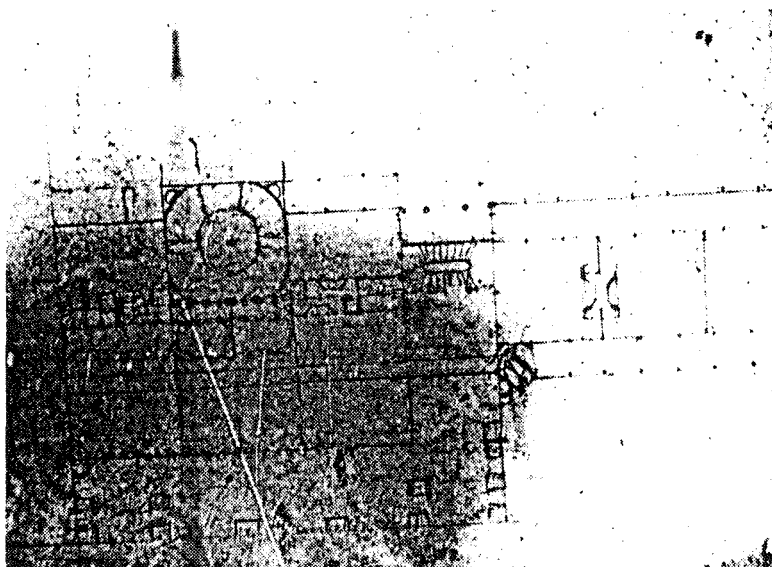Charleston).

Figure 24.
Transcribed inventories of pantries.

**Inventory and Appraisement of John Ball, Charleston, 17 October 183[4].
Inventories, Book A, 1834-1844, pp. 59. Courtesy of Maurie McInnis.**

Pantry: wire safe, Pine Press, 34 table cloths, 13 Side Boards Cloths, 4 children cotton table cloth, 6 [sic]burgs table cloths, 24 Com: table napkins, 12 fine tea napkins, 16 tea napkins, Rufsia Diapers, 15 coarse Brown tea napkins, 18 fine White hand towels, 15 coarse hand towels, 16 crash dusters, 16 Osnaburys Dusters, 12 Knife cloths, 12 Knife trays, 24 white Dry [sic], 24 Cold Do., 19 oyster cloths, Damask-5 table cloths, large table napkins, 18 table Do., 24 Small tea napkins, 5 old hand towels, Crockery: 1 Set Dining China Iron Stone, 1/2 Set broken Do. Liverpool, 2 doz. [sic] dessert plates, 3 doz. [sic] fruit Plates, 2 [sic] fruit Baskets, 2 blue [terrase] edge plates, 18 white china breakfast cups, 2 china tea [sic], 2 china Sugar dishes, 1 china slop bowl, 5 china milk pots, 1 large blue bowl, 1 small china bowl, 4 [cow] Bowls, 3 china cake plates, 2 blue pitchers with covers, 1 stone pitchers, 9 small white cups and saucers tea china

Inventory and Appraisement of Mrs. Ann Ball, Charleston, 15 November 1840. Inventories, Book A, 1834-1844, pp. 110. Courtesy of Maurie McInnis.

Pantry: 4 common presses, 1 wire safe, 1 full set white china, 1/2 set Broken china Liverpool, 21 Dozen pieces table Linen, 1 Dozen tumblers small size, 2 Dozen large knives & forks, 2 dozen small knives & forks, 1 set black Japan [waiters], 1 set red [waiters], 13 Dish covers, 4 lanterns, 5 Tin Candle sticks, 5 Coffee pots, 1 Egg boiler, 1[sic]fser, 1 Pepper mill, 2 Baskets, 2 Tin boxes, 5 tea t[u]bs, 1 Mahogany coaster

Inventory and Appraisement of Mrs. Mary Eliza Davis, Charleston, 12 August 1843. Inventories, Book A, 1834-1844, pp. 443. Courtesy of Maurie McInnis.

Pantry: 14 Dish covers, 1 Pudding moulds, 1 Patent Baker, 1 Plate heater, 1 Mahogany Book case filled with books and papers, 1 Ice house.

Figure 25.
Nathaniel Russell House, South Elevation, Period One, c. 1808-1832.
(Courtesy of Glenn Keyes Architects, Charleston).
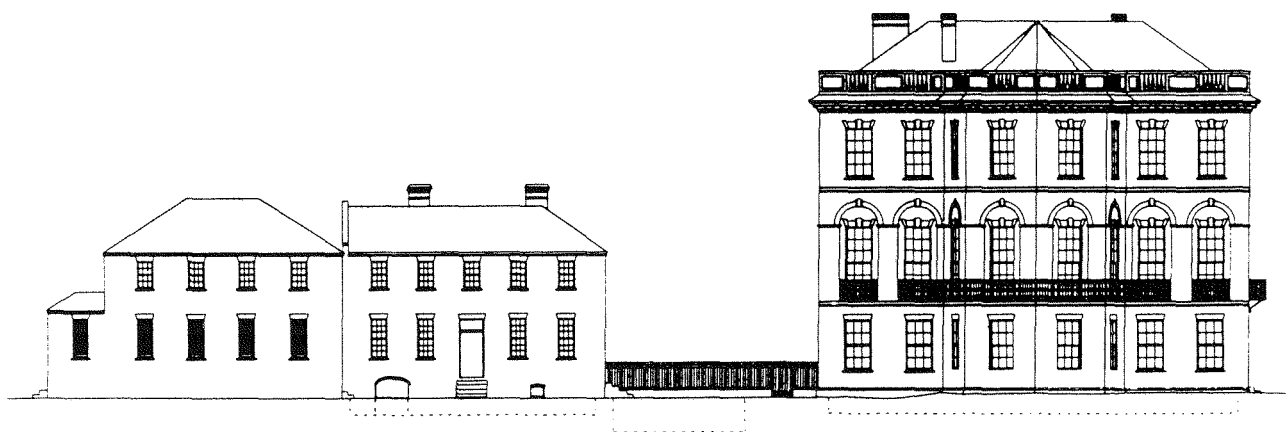
NATHANIEL RUSSELL HOUSE
SOUTH ELEVATION

PERIOD ONE
Ca. 1808 - 1832
RUSSELL

Figure 26.
Nathaniel Russell House, South Elevation, Period Two, c. 1840.
(Courtesy of Glenn Keyes Architects, Charleston).

NATHANIEL RUSSELL HOUSE
SOUTH ELEVATION

PERIOD TWO
Ca. 1840
DEHON

Figure 27.
Nathaniel Russell House, South Elevation, Period Two, c. 1857.
(Courtesy of Glenn Keyes Architects, Charleston).

NATHANIEL RUSSELL HOUSE
SOUTH ELEVATION

PERIOD TWO
Ca. 1857
DEHON

Figure 28.
Photograph, Nathaniel Russell House, South Elevation, c. 1898.
(Courtesy of Photograph Collection, Charleston Museum, no. 15395).