

James Adger Played Role In History of Charleston

James Adger II Adger's Wharf Named For Pioneer Skipped.

Historic Adger's wharf on the Charleston waterfront will soon be razed - and an institution steeped in the story of Charleston and the South will exist only as memory and history. The history of the wharf has been recounted several times in the past few weeks - accounts of the luxurious sailing vessels which docked there in its ante-bellum heyday - the story of the black barge, carrying the body of John C. Calhoun back to Charleston, which tied up at Adger's - and many more events tied in the heritage of Charleston. But the story of the man who gave the wharf its present name is also interesting - as is the history of the old side-wheeled steamer which was also named for James Adger II.

James Adger II was born in Moneynick Country, Antrim Ireland. He came to Charleston from New York in 1802 and became a cotton buyer for the firm of Bones and Adger. He established a hardware business in 1806 - James Adger and Co. - which was located at No. 2 Brounlee Row on King Street. In 1818, Adger became the Charleston agent for Brown Brothers - world bankers and established a business of commission and factorage.

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on Magwood Wharf. Adgers played a large part in organizing the South Carolina Railroad — the first railroad of any length in the world.

Adger was ranked the fourth richest man in the United States. He gave liberally to the Second Presbyterian Church, the College of Charleston and to charity — particularly the victims of the Irish famine.

He was a member of the South Carolina Legislature and president of the Hibernian Society.

Adger died in New York in 1858 and his body was brought to Charleston aboard the steamer James Adger, where he was buried in the Second Presbyterian Churchyard. The James Adgers line was the pioneer steamship line between Charleston and New York, and the forerunner of the present Clyde-Mallory line.

The pride of the fleet was the James Adger, a sleek, side-wheeled steamer which was also rigged with sails. She was described in detail by DuBois Heyward ^{and} in his book, Peter Ashley. James Truslow Adams tells of the part the ship played during the Civil War in his book, The Adams Family.

The official Naval Records and Library in Washington, described her as a side-wheeled steamer, three-masted, rigged schooner. She weighed 1152 tons — had a length of 215 feet, beam of 33 feet & depth of 21 feet.

~~Charleston~~

Apparently, the James Adger ran a regular schedule between Charleston and New York, but when Fort Sumter was fired upon in April, 1861, with J. B. Marchand commanding. During October and November, she cruised the coast of England in search of the U.S. Nashville.

The vessel was later attached to the South Atlantic blockading squadron. She was finally placed out of commission in the New York Navy yard on April 3, 1866 and subsequently returned to her former owners on Oct, 1866.

As one tale goes, a grandson of James Adger. It would stand on the porch of his grandfather's Sullivan's Island summer home and "dip" the flag to acknowledge the gun salute from the James Adger as she went in and out of Charleston Harbor."

The James Adger reportedly was still in active service as late as the 1930's. She was reported to have been seen in New York Harbor with her rigging stripped and being used as a barge.

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