



20 CHARLOTTE WAS HOME OF AIKEN FAMILY

Design of house attributed to James M. Curtis (Staff Photo by Burbage)

FOR THE RECORD

THE CHARLESTON Composite Squadron, Civil Patrol, will hold its awards banquet and ball Monday at 7 p.m. in the Colonial Room of the Ft. Marion Hotel.

TUESDAY FILMS present Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane," at 8 Monday in the B. Auditorium on Calhoun S

CHARLESTON ART Carsten Jantzen is currently exhibiting a series of oil paintings at the Old Salem Shop in Winston-Salem, N

CITADEL CADET E Charles Seel, son of Mr. Mrs. A.W. Seel of 2313 River Rd., has been listed in the 1970 edition of "Who's Among Students in American Universities and Colleges." Seel is a business administration major at military college.

Ambulance Owner Says Competition Is Unfair

LEVERENE M. PROSSER
Pee Dee Bureau
CONWAY — The operator of ambulance service at Conway has charged Horry County officials are about to force a federal and local tax money in a move that will probably force him out of

equipment and trained personnel can be obtained to operate it.

State Representative Phillip Sasser, of Conway, said one ambulance is expected to be sent here within the next few days but that it will take ad-

governments on a matching basis.

He said the federal government had "obligated \$75,500 for 1970 and \$97,000 for 1971" to help fund the project. No figures were given on how much local money will be

an ambulance service v nobody else would and v there was no money in Now that it looks like t is a lot of tax money la around Washington to ma they are willing to push aside," Nixon stressed.

Dwelling Was Wedding Gift

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Second in a series of articles on the early dwellings of Charlotte Street. The third article will appear in this column next Monday.)

Most "characteristic" Charleston period dwellings follow in plan and decorative treatment a basic, conservative concept that has become the most easily recognizable feature of the local townscape; but in every period of construction it is possible to find radical departures from the basic Charleston idea, scrambling the usually safe theories put together about local architecture and demonstrating that the city's residents were open to drastic changes in fashion all through the 18th and 19th centuries.

The large, two-story dwelling house at 20 Charlotte, built for Joseph Daniel Aiken and his bride in 1848 and 1849, may be looked upon as a breaking away from a fixed mode. It cannot be called radical in its style, as the Greek Revival had arrived in force in Charleston a full 10 years before its construction, but we may look on it as original in planning and approach, and it must have seemed to local people as a daring treatment for a town dwelling.

The property on which it stands was sold to Robert Martin, builder of the house at 16 Charlotte, on Dec. 31, 1837, by Thomas J. Roger. In 1848, when Martin's daughter, Ellen Daniel Martin, married her second cousin, Joseph Aiken, a Winnsboro native, the house at 20 Charlotte was built as a wedding gift.

The design of the house has been attributed to Edward C. Jones, to Russell Warren (who is believed to have designed the not dissimilar Miller House at 138 Wentworth St.), and also to Aiken himself, who was an accomplished amateur artist. It is now believed to be the work of James M. Curtis, because of the discovery of a photograph of 20 Charlotte which lists his name and the word "architect".

Whoever is responsible for the design did execute a sophisticated plan. A visitor to the house today will find it well lit and sunny, spacious

privacy possible (the upstairs hall may be divided off into four separate sections), and possessing an easy inter-communication between principal rooms and service areas.

The dwelling's plan is divided into three sections or wings, with a recessed middle connecting the front and rear gabled wings. A center hall runs back to a circular staircase and on the east side of the first floor is a drawing room, dining room, and a pantry, kitchen and service staircase. To the west of the center hall are two large chambers — one perhaps originally a library — and a connecting recessed Italian villa loggia, now enclosed but probably first intended as an open porch (it still retains an exterior wall finish).

On the second floor there are five chambers of good size, a center hallway and a similar connecting loggia on the west.

Do You Know Your Charleston?

The architect fully embraced the boldness of decorative treatment of the Greek Revival for both exterior and interior. The full-height, unpedimented, tetrastyle portico, the full-length doors and windows, the egg-and-dart and waterleaf door trim, thumb mold marble window lintels, and dentil cornice all follow the robust practices of the Greek Revival. In the cast iron balconies and front gate are repeated the popular anthemion pattern and a Greek fret. The capitals of the four front columns were a variation on the Tower of the Wind capitals but with the acanthus and lotus leaves in reversed positions. These have since been removed.

Except for an unfortunate addition of Adam style dados in the parlor and dining room and an Adam fanlight over an upstairs entranceway, the rooms continue the bare, broad-surfaced approach of the Greek Revival. The marble mantles remain unadorned by carving, and decoration is limited to a plaster cornice and high baseboards. One of the more unusual features is the elaborate pediment over the double doors leading from

parlor to dining room. Almost Egyptian in expression, it repeats a modified anthemion pattern.

The gentleman for whom this dwelling was built came to Charleston after attending Mount Zion College, South Carolina College and then studying law in Winnsboro. He is listed as an attorney in city directories before the Civil War but then became financial agent for Gov. William Aiken, a wealthy planter whose lands included the Jehossee Island plantation.

In "Thomas Grange Simons III, His Forebearers and Relations" by R. Adm. R. Bentham Simons, U.S.N. (ret.), we find the following note on Aiken and the house; "Joseph was quite an artist and having the talent for painting and sculpture, furnished his rooms . . . with works from his own hand, such as oil paintings of birds, fishes, etc., for the dining room, while the parlor contained beautiful specimens of waterfalls and other landscapes. Nearby on pedestals would be seen busts of his wife and daughters, the work of his own chisel."

During the Civil War Aiken served with the Ashley Dragoons, Company H, Third S. C. Cavalry, as a lieutenant. Following the war he was a cotton factor and acted as agent for a line of steamers to Florida.

The property at 20 and 16 Charlotte were conveyed in trust to Aiken by his father-in-law on March 12, 1851. Aiken's widow sold the house at 20 Charlotte to Ann Amelia Shingler for \$10,000 on July 5, 1889. It was then the residence for a number of years of W. H. Shingler of the firm of Hesse and Shingler, cotton and naval stores factors and commission merchants.

It was purchased on Oct. 14, 1929, by I. Ripon Wilson. It was the Wilson home for many years, being sold to Earl M. Carter and William J. Bates in 1961. The following year Carter transferred his ownership to Bates.

In 1964 it was purchased by Richard J. Bryan, who presently makes his home there.

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