

John Francis Marion

THE

CHARLESTON STORY

Scenes from a City's History

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Miles Brewton House, 27 King Street, circa 1767. One of the most important houses in Charleston it has been called the supreme example of the double house in the city. Because of its spaciousness and sumptuous interior, the house during the British occupation became the headquarters of Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Rawdon and the Marquess Cornwallis. In 1865 it was occupied by Generals George Gordon Meade and John P. Hatch. It has been the home of some of Charleston's most distinguished families—Brewton, Motte, Alston, Pringle, Frost and Manigault—and has never passed out of the hands of the descendants of Miles Brewton, its builder. Marjorie R. Maurer photograph.

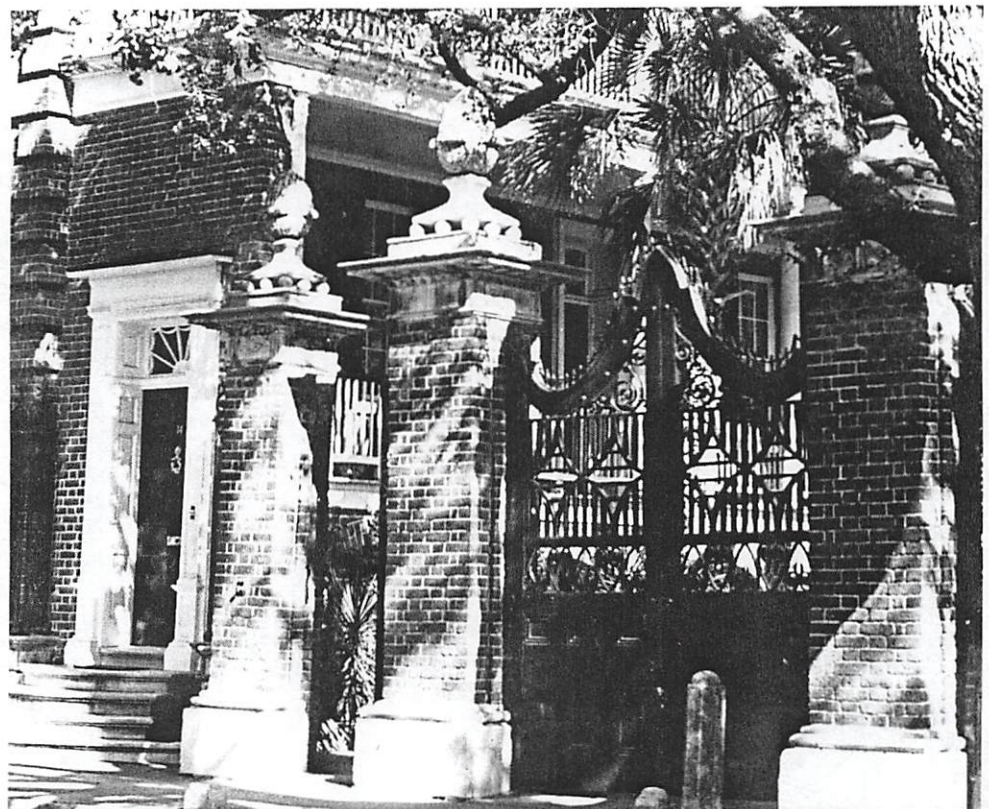


IN Charleston today, on the handsome house at 94 Church Street, opposite both Cabbage Row and the Heyward-Washington House, a wooden tablet reminds the visitor that Theodosia Burr and her husband Governor Joseph Alston lived there. The house itself was built about 1730 and its earlier owner was Thomas Bee, a leader in the colonial government.

Theodosia, daughter of Vice-President Aaron Burr, re-

Gates and doorway of the Simmons-Edwards House, 14 Legaré Street, circa 1800. This property was acquired by Francis Simmons in 1800, and it is thought he built this "very handsome 'single' house upon it shortly thereafter." Simmons, who evidently had a cavalier attitude toward marriage, left his wife soon after their marriage and, according to Samuel Gaillard Stoney, "thereafter maintaining a casual though friendly acquaintance with her. . . ."

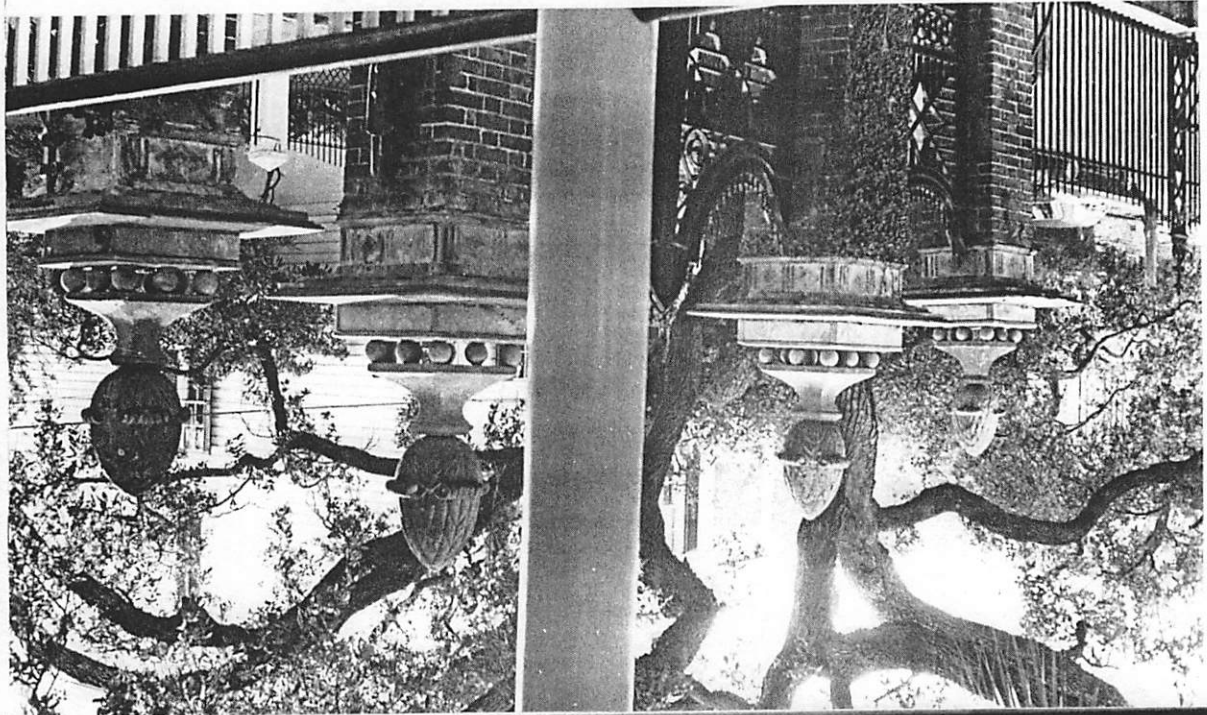
Marjorie R. Maurer photograph.





The Simmons-Edwards House from the garden. George Edwards acquired the property in 1816, two years after Simmons' death. "Tradition says," Stoney writes, "that he ordered this iron work and the elaborate marble cappings of his additions direct from Italy." Marjorie R. Maurer photograph.

We are told that George Edwards sent a live oak acorn to serve as a model for the tall finials, but that the Italian marble cutters bound by custom used the conventional and traditional pineapple instead. Marjorie R. Maurer Photograph.



mains one of the enigmatic heroines of American history. Beautiful, intellectual and far better educated than most men of her time, Theodosia married Alston and left her native New York for, as it turned out, a short life and residence in South Carolina. Her only child Burr Alston died in his tenth year in 1812.

In December of that year, mourning her son and already grieved by her father's fall from favor because of the Blennerhasset conspiracy, she sailed from Charleston aboard the *Patriot*, her destination New York and her father. Theodosia set sail in troubled seas, for it was the time of the War of 1812, and on that voyage she sailed into the unknown and into history as well. The *Patriot* was never again heard from. Legends abounded and persisted. The most popular—but never proven—was that Theodosia had been forced, with other passengers, to walk the plank. This story surfaced more than thirty years later when a dying seaman on the Outer Banks recounted it.

There are graves in Saint Helena's Churchyard in Beaufort, North Carolina, and Saint Paul's Graveyard in Alexandria, Virginia, that are said to be hers. Few reminders survive of Theodosia—a miniature here, a portrait by John Vanderlyn there, and the house at 94 Church Street in Charleston. But she, like Eliza Lucas Pinckney, is one of those legendary women who left their mark on Charleston and whose memory lingers on.

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AN uprising in 1822 dramatized certain undercurrents that lay beneath Charleston's apparent calm. It was, however, "the only really serious threat of servile insurrection which had threatened Charleston since that incited by the Spaniards at St. Augustine in 1739."

Denmark Vesey, who led it, had a highly romantic history and exotic origins. A mulatto of great personal beauty, he