

NEWS and Courier
3/24/75

At Rutledge House

Romanticism Lives

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

The John Rutledge House at 116 Broad St. is essentially a mid-19th century dwelling with 18th century "bones."

The basic structure is that of a double house for which John Rutledge, "dictator" of South Carolina during the Revolution, has received credit as the builder.

However, the 18th century house was altered almost beyond recognition in the 1850s, through the concerted efforts of a Swedish-born architect and a German-born ironworker.

The result is one of Charleston's most romantic structures, the lacy ironwork of which has been compared with counterparts in the Creole cities of New Orleans and Mobile.

According to tradition, the house was built by John Rutledge for his bride. He was married to Elizabeth Grimke in 1763.

Rutledge (1739-1800), was a member of the South Carolina Assembly, the Stamp Act Congress, the first and second Continental Congresses, and the Constitutional Convention.

He was also "dictator," or president of South Carolina, governor of the new state, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, chief justice of South Carolina, and served a term (unconfirmed by the U.S. Senate) as chief justice of the U.S.

It is not known when Rutledge acquired

the Broad Street property, or from whom. He conveyed it, on July 2 and 3, by means of a lease and release by means of a mortgage, to William Greenwood, a merchant.

to Thomas H. Thayer for \$10,000. By deed of a marriage settlement the same year, Thayer and his wife, Mrs. Catherine Barnwell Thayer conveyed the house to Mrs. Eliza Barnwell Livingston, widow.

She conveyed it in 1853, for \$15,900 to Thomas Norman Gadsden. Gadsden, a wealthy real estate broker and slave trader, soon afterward had the house remodelled to its present appearance.

He engaged the architect, P.H. Hammarskold, then the architect for the State House under construction in Columbia. Hammarskold was also director of the Nesbit Iron Works in Spartanburg, and used ironwork freely in many of his projects.

In addition to the ironwork, he added curving marble steps and terra cotta window cornices in the Italianate style, very similar to those which decorated the Mills House Hotel at Meeting and Queen.

The interior was extensively remodelled in the extravagant Greek Revival interpretation of the 1850s. A window at the rear of the house, set into the stair alcove, has a fanlight and sidelights in the Regency style, and was probably added by the McPhersons.

In more recent years, the house has been the residence of the late Charleston Mayor R. Goodwyn Rhett, and the home of Gaud School. It is currently owned by attorneys Paul N. Uriccio Jr. and Robert B. Wallace, who use it as offices.

The News and Courier

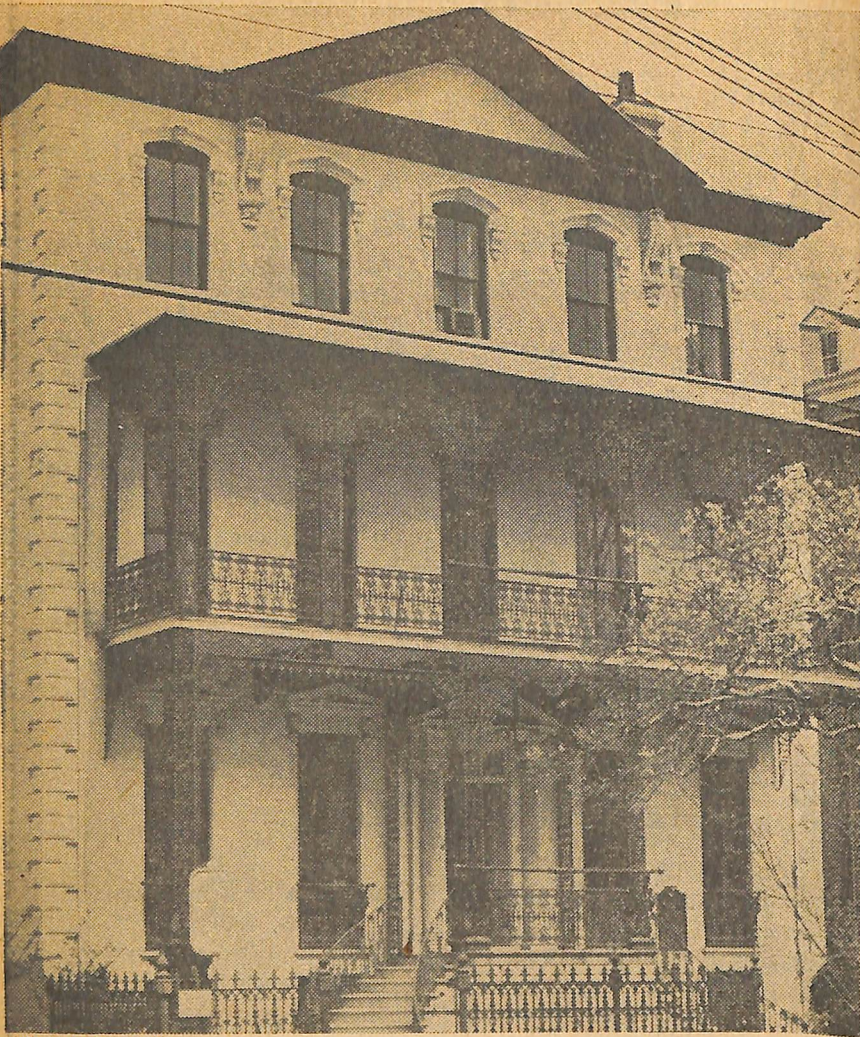
Do You Know
Your Charleston?

There is a gap in the records until 1801, when Gen. John McPherson acquired the adjoining lot to the west (later the site of the St. Andrew's Society Hall), from Edward Neufville. Both the deed and an accompanying plat identify the property to the east as that of Gen. McPherson.

He died in 1806, leaving to his wife, Susannah Miles McPherson, the lifetime use of "my house and lot in Broad Street which formerly belonged to Mr. Rutledge." The will further identifies the house as "formerly the residence of Mr. Rutledge."

After Mrs. McPherson's death, the house passed to her son, James McPherson, whose heirs sold it in 1835 to the Right Rev. John England, Roman Catholic bishop of Charleston, for \$17,000.

The bishop's heirs sold the house in 1843



(Photo by Stockton)

John Rutledge House